

# The LeafSide Insider

To Your Health & Wowness! 🥰



## LEAFSIDER SPOTLIGHT

### POWERING A CLEAN WORLD & A STRONG SELF

By day, Joel H., 48, works to make the world 🌍 cleaner — an energy engineer helping reduce carbon emissions one system at a time. But when the workday ends, he trades equations for earth. In his backyard forest garden — a lush tangle of trees 🌲, herbs, and wild greens — he follows permaculture principles, moving stones, mulch, and water buckets up and down his sloped yard. **“It’s my daily gym,”** he laughs.

That same mix of purpose and discipline shapes how he eats. “I started eating whole food plant-based (WFPB) to avoid the heart ❤️ disease that has plagued my family for generations,” Joel says, **“I don’t aim to live forever, but I hope to maintain a comfortable quality of life into old age.”**

He found LeafSide as a way to stay consistent while traveling for work or skiing 🎿 the snowy peaks of Colorado and Utah. **“I pack LeafSide meals in my carry-on. They’re easy to make anywhere.”**

Joel averages one LeafSide meal per day and uses them even more when life gets hectic. The results? **His bloodwork shows it’s working.** His white blood cell count is 2.7, indicating **low systemic inflammation — a key marker of longevity.** Unlike every male in his family, Joel takes **no**

**medication for cholesterol or blood pressure.** ✅

**“I’m an advocate for the use of nutritional science to aggressively mitigate chronic disease risk.”**

“My younger brother started cholesterol and blood pressure meds at 37,” Joel says. “I’m more than 10 years past that point, and I’m still on none. That’s a big deal.” 👍

He’s quick to credit **nutritional science and daily consistency** for his results. “Years ago, I had dizzy spells from blood 🩸 sugar instability,” he says. **“Now I wake up strong and stay that way all day.”** 🦵

Steady, smart, and sustainable — Joel is proof that **when you fuel yourself with whole food, plant-based nutrition, your body thanks you and thrives.** 🌱

## Plants. Power. Possibility.

🌲 Happy Holidays LeafSiders! Here’s your monthly dose of health & wowness, with stories & science for your **best self.** We’re all about **helping you live healthier, be stronger, and thrive longer.**

- Nutrition made easy 🍎
- Fitness & movement tips 🦵
- Sleep & mindfulness 🛏️
- Connection & purpose 🤝
- Inspiring stories ❤️

## LEAFSIDER WINS!

“Just finished a 13 day trip and **LeafSide made eating well a pleasure.** It was nothing short of fabulous to have WFPB meals at the ready and to have such a variety available. Quick and easy to prepare, LeafSide will always be a part of my future travels.”  
– Anita C.

“LeafSide, I am calling for a **gratitude call. I have gone from diabetic for many years to pre-diabetic** last week. My doctor of 20 years says, ‘You have taught me so much about the plant-based lifestyle.’”  
– Marylin C.

**“Thanks to LeafSide, I’m not only alive, I’m healthy!!** I’m healthy at 74. You guys have no idea how much I appreciate LeafSide.”  
– Vahan T.

### ★ MOST PEOPLE TALK ABOUT GETTING HEALTHY. YOU DID IT.

Share your success and inspire others – be the next LeafSide Star! Visit [goleafside.com/spotlight](https://goleafside.com/spotlight)



“Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others.”

– Cicero

## THE 6 UNIVERSAL CHARACTER STRENGTHS & VIRTUES

Released in 2004 by two pioneers (Peterson & Seligman) in positive psychology, the landmark book *Character Strengths & Virtues* systematically organized virtues admired worldwide. Try the free VIA survey at [viacharacter.org](http://viacharacter.org) to know your own; then note & compliment others on theirs. **By recognizing these strengths in and around you, you reinforce them in yourself.** ❤️

### 1. Wisdom

Use curiosity, creativity, and learning to see life’s patterns and expand perspective(s).

### 2. Courage

Act bravely, speak honestly, and persevere with energy and integrity despite challenges.

### 3. Humanity

Show compassion through kindness, love, and understanding — connecting deeply with others.

### 4. Justice

Champion fairness, teamwork, and leadership to strengthen community and the good.

### 5. Temperance

Practice humility, self-control, and forgiveness to keep balance and peace of mind.

### 6. Transcendence

Find joy in gratitude, hope, humor, and awe — connecting to greater meaning & purpose.

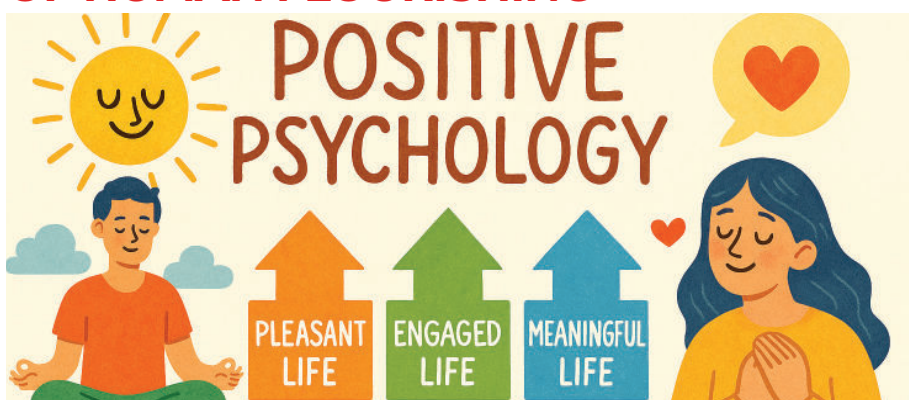
## PARADIGMS OF POSITIVITY, & AWAKENING THANKS

Despite today’s allopathic “healthcare” paradigm of treating symptoms in isolated body parts with drugs & surgery, we all know from experience and formal research, that **the mind plays a powerful role in our health**. Negative thoughts & emotions can certainly make you ill, physically and/or psychologically. And as billions spent on placebo-controlled studies have proven, positive expectations can certainly make you well. 💖

Thoughtful readers like you may realize too, that if placebo beliefs, thinking well of self or others, regular meditation, or other anomalies of mind can measurably “rewire the brain” — doesn’t that **subvert the entire current paradigm/faith of mind=brain=computer?** And raise deep questions of free will, and the nature of consciousness? 🤔

This holiday season 🎄, you’re invited to explore some relatively **new frontiers of science-backed health & wellness**. May you see & act beyond these mere squiggles on paper, to open your heart and mind to the wowness of being. 🧡🌱

## POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY: THE SCIENCE OF HUMAN FLOURISHING



Much of 20th century psychology focused on dysfunction and a disease model, diagnosing problems and attempting fixes, with mixed success. But in the 1990s, psychologists 🧠💡 like **Martin Seligman** wondered what would happen **if we studied what makes people thrive?** Building strengths, and measuring types, degrees, and interventions of and for happiness?

Thus began **positive psychology, the science of human flourishing**. Researchers started rigorously studying practices like meditation or giving thanks 🙏; positive mental states like “flow”; and long-term outcomes like resilience, optimism, and life-satisfaction. A remarkable key finding was that **3 distinct forms of happiness exist:**

- The **pleasant life**: Pleasures & their positive emotions, but they fade fastest.
- The **engaged life**: Using your strengths to enter the timeless flow-state.
- The **meaningful life**: Using your highest strengths for a larger purpose.

Check out UPenn’s [authentichappiness.org](http://authentichappiness.org) Questionnaires for their free assessments of your strengths & happiness! 🌱

## PRACTICAL THEORY, FOR YOUR HEALTH & WOWNESS

### GIVING THANKS, WITH NERDY KNOW-HOW 🤓

In the toolkit of positive psychology, gratitude is the Swiss Army knife — compact, seemingly simple, yet a surprisingly versatile & powerful tool 🛠️. **Gratitude practices** can be done solo in your mind, or in a journal; 1-on-1, or to a group; in 2 minutes or 20. **The benefits scale with effort, and compound with time.** Even more remarkable about gratitude is that as you consciously practice it, it **measurably changes your brain, and body.**

#### The Measurable Magic ✨

Gratitude acts like a gentle anti-inflammatory, cooling the fires 🔥 of chronic stress. 😞 It reduces anxiety while simultaneously increasing motivation.

**It blesses both giver and receiver,** immediately and with lasting effects, like extra energy for your morning walk, patience with your partner or colleagues, and resilience when life throws curve balls. Plus you'll sleep 😴 better tonight and think clearer tomorrow.

The timeline? Just 2-3 weeks of daily practice to see measurable changes. **Gratitude is the compound interest of wellbeing** — small deposits that multiply over time 📈.

The best part? It's so easy to put the power of gratitude 🙏 to work for you. Here are **three gratitude practices you can start today** that will begin uplifting your health and well-being:



**The Evening Three:** Before bed, note three specific good things about your day. Not just “my health ❤️,” but “my knees didn’t ache on today’s hike.” Include **why** it mattered. This simple ritual plants seeds in your subconscious that bloom into better sleep.



**Mealtime Gratitude:** Before your next meal, LeafSide or otherwise, you can pause with intention: See the colors 🌈 of the food, feel the weight of the bowl. Consider the soil, the plants, the farmers 🚜, the choice you made to eat clean and consciously. It's anchoring your healthy habits in appreciative awareness.



**The Gratitude Letter:** Write a 1-2 page letter 📄 to someone you want to thank. Surprise them with a visit or call, and read them the letter (have tissue handy). By combining multiple modalities, you'll create a powerful experience with benefits lasting months or years.

#### The Power Of Now

At midlife and beyond, when the body can't be taken for granted, and time feels more precious, gratitude enriches others and ourselves.

So here's one more challenge: Notice three good things. **Not tomorrow. Today. Now.** 😊

That's where transformation begins — in a single, grateful pause. 🌱

## GRATITUDE IS CONTAGIOUS!

Share these powerful words of wisdom about appreciation and positivity:

“Enough is as good as a feast.”  
– Thomas Malory

“If the only prayer you said in your whole life was, “thank you,” that would suffice.”  
– Meister Eckhart

“If you cannot be grateful for what you have received, then be thankful for what you have been spared.”  
– Yiddish Proverb

“Forget injuries, never forget kindness.”  
– Confucius



“The least I can do is speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves.”  
– Jane Goodall, 1934-2025

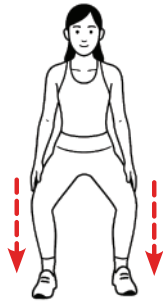


## THEORY INTO PRACTICE: EASY, EFFICIENT, & EFFECTIVE HEALTH HABITS

### FULL-BODY QIGONG: RISE, RELEASE, AND RENEW

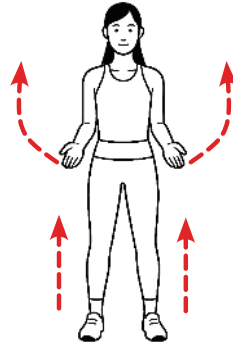
**Qigong** (“chee-GUNG”) is a Chinese healing art of mindful movement, breath 🌬️, and balance ⚖️ that has helped people restore calm and energy for millennia. Here’s a form you can do right now in your bedroom or backyard.\* It’s called “**Gathering Qi**” and it’s a **perfect complement to your daily gratitude rituals**.

**Bonus:** If you subscribe to our Saturday emails,\*\* you may have read about the deep benefits (literally – it goes to your bones) of infrared light (IR). Try Gathering Qi in the rising or setting sun 🌅 to stack it with a safe power-up of IR!



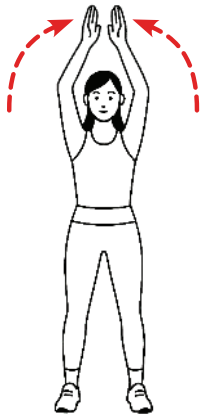
1

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and shoulders relaxed. Feet either pointed forward or flared out slightly. Start the Gathering Qi movement by squatting slightly to a comfortable depth.



2

Then, straighten your legs to stand tall. **While rising, inhale slowly through your nose** as you lift your arms outward and up in a wide circle, palms facing the sky.



3

Continue the movement, bringing your hands together over your head. Feel your spine lengthening and chest opening. As you rise, say or think “**receive.**”



4

Exhale through your mouth and sink back into a squat while lowering your hands down the centerline of your body, palms facing the earth. As you lower, think “**release.**”

*Return to step 1 and repeat the movement 3-5 times.*

*\*Please consult with your healthcare professional before starting any new fitness program.*

*\*\*Missed our free Saturday emails? Get more health and wowness at [goleafside.com/saturday](https://goleafside.com/saturday)*

### THE CARE & FEEDING OF YOUR GUT-BRAIN-AXIS

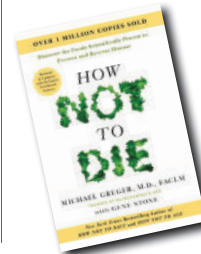
While brains may not ultimately cause minds, the two are certainly correlated. Your microbiome (a legit 2nd brain), cardio & nervous systems, & brain make your “**gut-brain-axis.**”

At just 3 lbs of mostly fat, burning 20% of oxygen & calories, it’s obvious your brain needs clean & steady food as fuel, AND protective antioxidants, to avoid blood sugar yo-yo’ing 📉 and chronic inflammation. 🔥 Cutting processed pseudo-foods, refined sugars, & saturated/trans animal fats cuts brain fog, mood swings, & depression.

To thrive, **eat the rainbow** 🌈, i.e. high variety of whole plants. Only plants bring fiber for your good-gut friends to make direct brain, heart, & immunity inputs like short chain fatty acids, or 90% of your serotonin (the feel-good molecule). Plus phytonutrients & antioxidants like anthocyanin (e.g. blueberries 🫐), carotenoids, etc. quench inflammation in your brain & body. **Result? Steady energy, clear thinking, and better mood.** 🌱



“The most ethical diet just so happens to be the most environmentally sound diet and just so happens to be the healthiest.” – Dr. Michael Greger



Check your favorite bookstore this **Dec 9th** for the **10th anniversary** revised & updated edition of Dr. Greger’s global bestseller **How Not to Die!**

### GET MORE NOURISHING NERDINESS! 🧐

Scan the QR code to learn more about the articles, topics and sources discussed this month, and a **free bonus** that may transform your life!

