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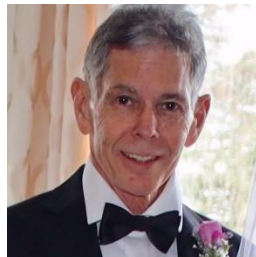
Issue 68

*50+ Living our best lives now and in the future!*

## Mindfully Living His Best Life

*Mindfulness generally refers to being present, focused, or “in the moment.” It is also related to creative pursuits, the willingness to learn new skills, awareness of a relationship with things seen and unseen, and expressions of love and compassion.*

Michael David Avery knew the importance of being in the moment when a championship college baseball game depended on him. Later, as a poet and author of numerous books, he developed a keen sense of language and observation. Having enjoyed various physical activities and sports over the years, he understood the relationship between mindfulness and how his body performed.



After he retired, he married the love of his life, and the two joined together on a quest, creating a website with messages that encourage love, unity, and compassion. Today, Avery and his wife invite others to share their sense of mindfulness and loving-kindness through their [website](#).

## A Defining Moment as a College Championship Baseball Player

Avery was an All-State baseball player in high school. As a shortstop, he earned a spot on the

Linfield College team. In 1971, his freshman year, his team played in the College Baseball World Series.

“It was not only the most memorable moment of the Series, it was the most memorable event in an entire baseball career...only a single obstacle stood in the way—a Tennessee team threatened to end our quest with a late-inning rally...But then fate intervened with ‘the play.’ It was the boldest yet most dangerous call anyone could have made...” Despite “being a timid freshman on a team of seasoned veterans...,” Avery was focused and ‘in the moment’ when it counted. Eventually, he wrote about this defining moment. Later, it was [published](#) in the Linfield College Magazine.

## Discovering Joy as an Author

Even though he had earned a business degree at Linfield, Avery moved to Hawaii at 28 with plans to become an artist. Instead, he discovered opportunities to think and write poetry. He also enjoyed paddling a surfboard into the ocean to catch the next big wave. On one of these surfing adventures, he nearly drowned and had an out-of-body experience, which he described in a [blog post](#) on his website; it was life-changing.



After some of his poems were published and after authoring several children’s picture books with “the best ones teaching children about the power of imagination,” he began writing and publishing books about spirituality and his own spiritual journey; [links](#) to some of these books are on his website. Three of his books were published under the pseudonym Michael Harrington.

Wintering over in Mexico, Avery returned to Oregon and wrote a book, [The Secret Language of Waking Dreams](#), about “the incredible coincidences and synchronicities in life that can be interpreted much like our dreams.” With the success of his book, he was asked to speak all over the United States. In L.A., he spoke to an audience of 5,000 people. “I was forced to face and overcome my greatest fear, public speaking, and do it quickly.”

### Softball, Skiing, and Tae Kwon Do

In addition to playing baseball and softball, Avery also enjoyed Alpine skiing and even tried skydiving once. “If my chute had opened on that first jump, I probably would have continued with the sport (LOL).”

In his mid-forties, Avery began practicing Tae Kwon Do. This martial arts practice requires continuous mindfulness—of being ‘present’ and focused. “I enjoyed it and received a Black Belt in 3 ½ years. After that, my interest in martial arts was limited to watching Kung Fu reruns and old Bruce Lee movies on TV.”

### Seeking a Stable Career

Once back in Oregon, Avery began thinking about a stable career while continuing to write. He chose to study water treatment at Linn-Benton C.C. He was immediately hired “by a large utility in Clackamas, Oregon called Clackamas River Water District, a private water district owned by its ratepayers.” For 27 years, he worked for this district until he retired in 2019. Finally, he could write full-time and was free to meet the love of his life.

## A New Chapter and A lot of Learning

Michael Avery met Pichaya, a loving and deeply spiritual woman from Thailand, five years ago. Three and a half years ago, they married. Together, they focus on their



writing and have developed a website called [Signs, Synchronicity, and Waking Dreams](#) with the subtitle “It’s All About Love on the Journey of the Soul.” The site includes blogs by several guest authors, free e-books, and visual music videos.

Avery writes the lyrics for his music videos. He uses AI programs to create corresponding images and music. While initially challenging to learn, he discovered that studying YouTube videos was all he needed to understand how to use these new programs. One of his popular music videos is “[You Are Not Alone](#).” To enjoy more of his music videos or follow his work, visit his “[Original Songs and Videos](#)” on YouTube.



### For Relaxation

“Pichaya and I walk in the woods or near ponds every day, rain or shine. Our lives revolve around creativity and spirituality the rest of the time. (‘Wow, I am even missing the World Series this year!’)”

### Advice for Others

“Pichaya has taught me that ‘life is all about love.’ Focus on removing the barriers to love as [Rumi](#) [a poet of ‘legendary spiritual understanding’] stated: ‘Your task is not to seek love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.’”

## Choosing A Mindful Thanksgiving Dinner Celebration

What do you imagine when you think of Thanksgiving dinner? Perhaps you anticipate sitting around the table with family or friends to enjoy a perfectly roasted turkey with mounds of mashed potatoes, rich, creamy gravy, moist turkey stuffing, cranberry sauce, numerous side dishes, and your favorite pumpkin or apple pie (with ice cream or whipped cream, of course) for dessert.

Once we are sitting around the Thanksgiving table, it doesn't take long for most of us to gobble up so much food that we later wonder why we stuffed ourselves beyond comfort.



Separate from the time spent visiting with others around the table, most adults will spend about 30-45 minutes mindlessly consuming a significant amount of calorie-laden food that others had spent hours preparing. Not surprisingly, a 2018 Consumer Reports [article](#) revealed that the average American adult consumes between **3000 and 4500 calories** during Thanksgiving dinner.



### The Challenge

Choosing to be mindful and experience thankfulness while savoring each bite we take—the different flavors and textures in our mouths prepared for our enjoyment—sounds simple. Yet, it can take a surprising amount of practice and discipline.



However, the benefits of this discipline are significant.

### The Benefits

Research suggests that mindfully expressing gratitude before and during meals has physical and mental benefits: We tend to eat more slowly and chew more thoroughly, thus helping our digestion. Eating mindfully can also help us 'be in the moment' and reduce any stress we might be feeling. We also become more aware of when we are full. In addition, we tend to enjoy our food more when we savor it and appreciate it.

### The Surprising Cost of Hosting Thanksgiving

A recent *Chain Storage* [article](#) noted, "According to a new survey from LendingTree, potential **Thanksgiving hosts plan to spend an average of \$431 on Thanksgiving food, drinks, and decor**, an increase of 19% from last year.

A September 2024 *Newsweek* [report](#) indicated that cooking a Thanksgiving meal averages three days of preparation and five hours of actual cooking on the day of the celebration.

### Hydration after Fifty

Staying hydrated is essential for our health, especially in our fifties and beyond. Research suggests that as we age, we may lose some awareness of thirst, which can lead to dehydration. When we become dehydrated, our risk for kidney stones, urinary tract infections, constipation, and even confusion increases.

A 2023 National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute [article](#) states, "Adults who stay well-hydrated appear to be healthier, develop fewer chronic conditions, such as heart and lung disease, and live longer than those who may not get sufficient fluids."



An article from [Forefront Dermatology](#) suggests that staying hydrated can help keep our skin looking healthier. “When your body is well-hydrated, your skin is better equipped to retain moisture, preventing it from becoming dry and flaky. Dehydration, on the other hand, can lead to many skin issues, including tightness, dullness, and an increased risk of fine lines and wrinkles.”

As noted in her book *Good Energy* (2024) by Casey Means, M.D., explains that dehydration can lead to obesity. Referring to a book by Dr. Richard Johnson, *Nature Wants Us to Be Fat*, even “mild dehydration stimulates the development of obesity” because fat tissue is one way our bodies can store more water.

### **Bottled and Tap Water**

[Research](#) has discovered thousands of plastic nanoparticles in plastic water bottles. It has also “found evidence of plastic particles in human blood, lungs, the gut, feces, and reproductive tissues like the placenta and testes. However, the potential health effects of these tiny plastic bits are still unproven and unknown.”



Dr. Means warns that drinking tap water poses risks to our health. She recommends investing in a sound filtration system, such as a Berkey or another system that uses activated carbon to remove contaminants like “heavy metals, bacteria, and harmful chemicals” (p. 141).

### **Getting Sufficient Fluids**

The recommended daily fluid intake may depend on our size, gender, and activity levels, among other things. According to the [National Council on Aging](#), a general rule is to drink a third of your body weight in ounces. Another source suggests about 58-70 ounces. The average recommendation suggests drinking between 64-80 ounces per day. Of course, each person’s body is different, and talking with one’s own healthcare provider about hydration needs is the best recommendation.

### **A Thankful Heart is a Happy Heart**

According to UCLA Health, “stress causes inflammation of the arteries, which is linked to the development of [atherosclerosis](#). Being thankful, even for the little things, helps to [lower stress levels, improve blood pressure, and even reduce inflammation](#). This will all add up to improved heart health.”

### **An Enduring Way to Express Gratitude**

We can all think of people, past or present, who have enriched our lives or helped us along our life journeys. Parents, children, teachers, friends, partners, and others may immediately come to mind. In this moment, pause and think about one or two people who have made a difference in your life. Consider letting them know in a memorable way this season what they have meant to you.

Writing a note with specific examples of how someone has made a difference in your life can be memorable and meaningful.

Another way to express appreciation and honor someone who has influenced your life, past or present, is to purchase a commemorative brick that will be installed on the plaza above the historic Oregon City Elevator (at the end of the Oregon Trail). A 4” x 8” brick costs \$100, and an 8” x 8” brick costs \$300. For more information, click [here](#).



**Note:** Purchases should be made before the end of this year, as the installation process is expected to begin early in 2025. While it may still be possible to purchase bricks later, the cost of the bricks and installation is anticipated to increase.

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