

JANUARY EDITION

JANUARY 14TH, 2023

# UNITY FOR EQUALITY

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## 2023

STARTING THE YEAR  
RIGHT FOR YOUR  
RESOLUTIONS

**A CLOSER LOOK  
INTO THE MAYA  
CULTURE**

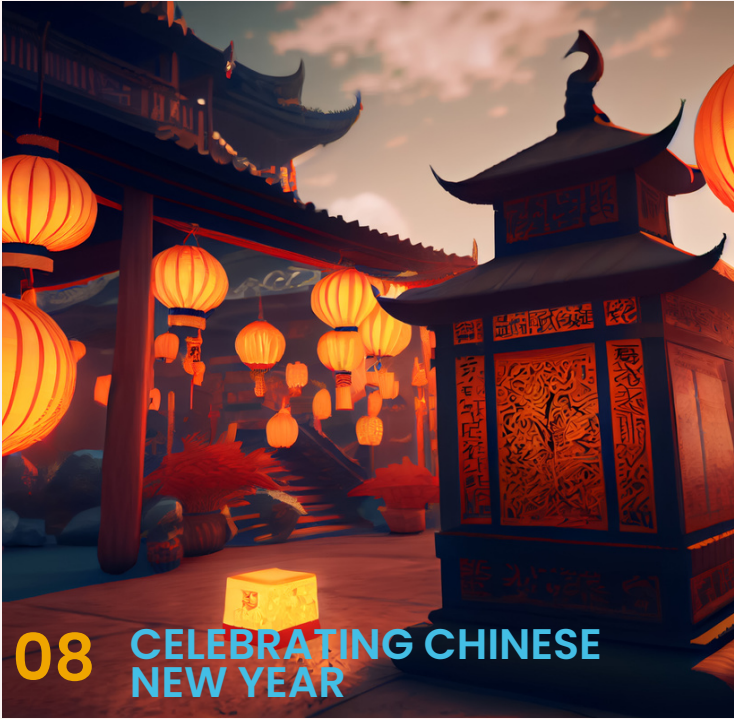
MARTIN LUTHER  
KING JR. DAY:  
A LEADER AND  
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# STARTING THE YEAR RIGHT FOR YOUR RESOLUTIONS

By Ruht Lovos

A whole new year has come to pass, and we have started 2023 off with a bang! With 2022 ending, we've approached the time to set resolutions once again. New Year's resolutions are a social phenomenon which occur each year and allow us to set our expectations for how we want to improve. Meeting people early in the year often prompts the question: "What are you working on this year?" As everyone shares their goals for the new year, it can almost feel discouraging knowing that others may be working on goals that you haven't made progress in. So, now you want to understand how you might best adhere to your resolutions this year.

Resolutions around New Year don't always turn into patterns however. It seems New Year's Day functions as a force to create momentum. We all want to feel a sense of growth as time passes us. Thus, resolutions tend to surround the aspects of our lives we'd like to create change in.

People who feel as if they haven't reached the life they'd like to be living often crave change within their day to day. This is a feeling that many others can relate to. In today's world of social media we can interact with one another on TikTok or Instagram and share our journey of self growth. We participate in challenges that push us to put into practice the changes we'd





like to see. Whether it's the 75 Hard, 30-day challenges, or even weight loss challenges among colleagues, there's a need for camaraderie for some to stay consistent. Typically these can be related to health, fitness, improving a skill, or any other way in which someone might want to grow. Yet, most people are unable to continue doing them past a few weeks.

It's true that New Year's Day provides us with the opportunity to make new choices. Though, many people romanticize what is to come of a new year without realizing it is up to them to make it happen. We write letters to ourselves with the hopes and aspirations we might have for the time to come, but these ideas often stay ideas. By March, the gym will be mostly empty again. Resolutions to learn how to knit or play an instrument are put down and set aside. Most people will revert back to their

usual habits and more than likely fail to maintain their New Year's resolutions.

Simply put, it is not enough to make resolutions. For changes to stick, you must make a plan for how you will implement these changes and be disciplined enough to go through with it. When the focus is shifted not from what we'd like out of life, but rather the steps we might be able to take to get there, the probability of these habits sticking is more likely. As a result, making a schedule or setting alarms to remind you to do something can be helpful in making sure you think about and work on your goal every day. Before you make something an unconscious habit, you might find it useful to have constant reminders every day to work on your goal. Over time, these reminders will gradually lead to you working on your resolutions without the need of a strict

**Though, many people romanticize what is to come of a new year without realizing it is up to them to make it happen.**



schedule.

Most importantly, self-growth is not usually experienced in one direction, and you'll encounter many obstacles that make it hard to stay consistent. Though we may experience many setbacks, we have to make the difficult choices to strive for change. With the communities created online, these difficulties can be shared with others experiencing similar emotions. Sometimes, it is this sense of community that can help us stay on track with our goals. Other times, it is just realizing that real change comes from the summation of small efforts that reveal their impact over time. It's not possible to fail a resolution a few months into the year.

Instead, reframe the notion of resolutions as slowly refining yourself over the course of your lifetime. Little changes made consistently matter more than trying to completely change in one month and stopping when you aren't making enough progress.

As a new year begins to pass on, it's important to recognize the growth you've experienced as well as plan for the growth you'd like. Although change is easier said than done, as the New Year motivation begins to wear off, remind yourself to make small choices that make you happier overall.





This year on January 16th saw the celebration of an American federal holiday known as Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Though many may rejoice in having a Monday off from school or work, many may not know exactly why the country celebrates such an important day. Still, MLK Jr. remains a vital figure in the history of the nation and for the movement towards racial equality. Thus, the significant achievements and progress created by MLK Jr. deserves this recognition and observation. So, who was Martin Luther King Jr., and what exactly does the holiday mean for us?

### **Who is Martin Luther King, Jr?**

Born in Atlanta on January 15th, 1929, MLK Jr. would go on to become one of the world's most prominent figures in the world, spearheading the civil rights movement through non-violent protest. Helping to lead the Montgomery Bus Boycott, MLK Jr.'s leadership led to the declaration of

of segregating zones on buses as unconstitutional. Despite bouts of harassment and attempts on his life, MLK Jr. pushed through with his protests and firm stance on desegregating society. Fighting police brutality, writing letters from prison, organizing marches for all people affected by the injustices of the current system, MLK Jr. brought massive awareness to the problems sustained by the systems of inequality put into place by those in power. Not only did he bring together people of color in the fight against systemic inequality, he showed the world that millions of people could work together and create a community pushing for what is right.

Though his work was significant, it was also cut short due to his assassination in April 1968 whilst preparing for a march in Memphis, Tennessee. MLK Jr.'s death caused massive upset and rage across America, and though his life ended, his legacy lingers even to this day.



## MLK Day

Just days after his death, ideas of commemorating a day in honor of MLK Jr. was brought up by Congressman John Conyers. This first bill failed, but Conyers would repeatedly attempt to instate an official holiday for MLK Jr. Over the years, he would gather more and more supporters of the bill, though it would continue to get denied until the 15th anniversary of MLK Jr.'s death. That year, 1983, a petition of six million signatures, a hit Stevie Wonder song, and a tense filibuster led to the passing of the bill. President Reagan then signed the bill into law, and the first MLK Jr. Day was officially recognized in 1986. However, pushback still remained as not every state observed the holiday. It took until 2000 where all states had officially observed MLK Jr. Day as a state holiday.

Overall, MLK Jr. Day is a holiday that was created to honor the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. and all of his work he had done in the fight against inequality.

Leading to significant government reform and social mindset shifts, the civil rights movement was and still is a powerful force of change for good. MLK Jr. was able to harness his influence and reach to unite a powerful community. Despite suffering and constant pushback, MLK Jr. was able to endure pain in a world that desperately wanted to keep him down. It is largely because of him that our world has made way for a more progressive society. It is also because of him that we know there is more work to be done and that it can be done by a united community. Thus, when observing MLK Jr. Day in January, it is important to acknowledge all that he has done for the civil rights movement and celebrate the progress we have made as a society..





# CELEBRATING CHINESE NEW YEAR

BY JASON LEE

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Though the New Year's Day that many know and love rings in each year on January 1st, there is another holiday that shifts its starting date every time. Following the lunar calendar which is based on cycles of the moon, Chinese New Year generally occurs some time in late January to early February. In 2023, the holiday starts on January 22nd. However, it is not only Chinese cultures that celebrate during this time of year.

Encompassing and acknowledging other cultures, this holiday is also widely known as Lunar New Year and is celebrated by Koreans (who call it Seollal), Vietnamese (who call it Tết), and other cultures. Per Chinese tradition, Lunar New Year is also called the Spring Festival. Though people observe Chinese New Year in a multitude of ways, this holiday is most importantly to celebrate family and welcome the opportunity of the future.

Every year is associated with

and cycles through one of twelve Chinese zodiac animals. Because 2023 is the year of the rabbit, many decorations and themes will be centered around rabbits, which symbolize peace and prosperity. Decorations traditionally include red paper, candles, and lanterns. Clothes worn during this time are often red in color. You may also hear or see firecrackers being thrown around as well throughout the New Year's period. According to the legend, these were all used to scare away a terrifying beast known as the Nian who would terrorize towns right before every Lunar New Year.

Before the new year is welcomed in, the previous year must be brought to a close. This is done by cleaning the house in order to clear out any bad luck or energies that may be lingering. Decorations are also hung up during this period. On the eve of Chinese New Year, a dinner is held as a way to close the year with family and reunite with loved ones. Many of the foods







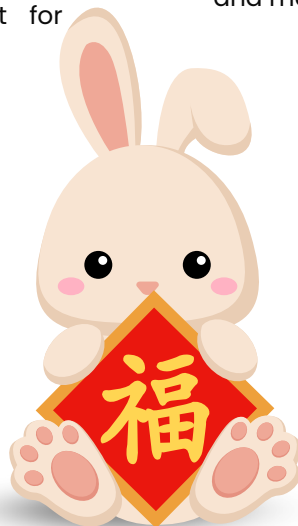
featen are symbolic of virtues and blessings for the new year. Some of these foods include fish (prosperity), dumplings (wealth), tangyuan or rice balls (family), and noodles (longevity). Oranges may be displayed as decoration too as they symbolize success.

The New Year holiday itself is a two-week long celebration. The first day consists of people exchanging customary greetings, enjoying lion dances and other performances, and giving and receiving *hongbao* – also known as red envelopes. For the first few days, it is important not to clean or you risk sweeping away the luck that the new year has brought in. Throughout the next two weeks, many people visit relatives and friends to celebrate the new year. It is also customary to visit the graves of passed relatives and honor them as well. A dinner set and food is also brought out for ancestors to “eat”

alongside family members. relatives and honor them as well. A dinner set and food is also brought out for ancestors to “eat” alongside family members.

On the 15th and final day, Chinese New Year is brought to a close through a celebration known as the Lantern Festival. On this day, people light up lanterns, and many release them either in the air or float them on lakes.

While these are the main traditions of Chinese New Year, it is important to know that there are a variety of ways to celebrate this holiday. Korean and Vietnamese equivalents of the Lunar New Year differ as well as even regional differences within Chinese groups themselves. Despite the differences, Lunar New Year is a special time for all to celebrate family and manifest prosperity into the next year.





# A CLOSER LOOK INTO MAYA CULTURE

BY CHARMAINE SWASEY



It is pivotal to learn about distinct cultures in history because they provide a deeper perception of other ethnicities around us and help develop positive interactions as people acknowledge each other's differences. This doesn't just center on race; in fact, it's markedly cultural. One may discover that certain symbols in their culture are similar to those of another, such as how Egyptian glyphs are similar to those of Maya hieroglyphics. Aside from this, other cultural aspects related to music, dance, rituals, and language can be bewilderingly similar or develop subtle nuances, which is what makes learning about other cultures exciting and rapturous. Let's take a look at the ancient Maya and how their culture came to be.

Before Mexico and Central America, there was Mesoamerica, a cultural and historical region where Maya culture originated and still flourishes today. [National Geographic](#) remarked that some of the Maya's most historically astonishing accomplishments were the early development of crops, wildlife domestication, and forged one of many of its earliest cities. But there is more to say about Maya culture such as the ethnolinguistic peoples, or groups that share the same cultural Maya heritage.

In Belize, the Maya people known as Q'eqchi', or [Kekchi](#), were an indigenous tribe forced to flee to Belize from their home in the Guatemala region of Verapaz because of German and Spanish attempts to enslave them. Though the Kekchi are considered the most indigent and marginalized ethnicity in Belize, they were able to adjust well in their new surroundings and harmonized with the [Mopan](#) Maya society periodically. Like the Kekchi Maya, the Mopan people originated from Guatemala in the Peten region, who moved to the western area of Belize and currently inhabit the Cayo district of Belize in a village known as San Jose Succotz. In addition, the [Yucatec Maya](#), originating from the southern side of Mexico currently populate dwell in Belize's northern districts towns of [Corozal](#) and [Orange Walk](#).

Furthermore, corn was the Maya's main staple which represented more than just an abundant crop; it manifested the birth and demise of a human being. Hence, corn, or maize as the Maya called it, developed a "fundamental role in their beliefs" as stated in [Smithsonian Magazine](#). These beliefs regard the devotion towards their gods, which Maya believed would influence climatic and societal events. Thus, it makes sense that Maya worshiped the Maize God who was accountable for the growth of crops, seasonal change, and rebirth. So, it is through the belief and guidance of gods such as the Maize God that Maya would proudly preserve their agriculture and other communal aspects of their culture. This may explain how Maya were able to thrive despite living in a sequestered position.

In addition, a recent article developed by [History.com](#) determined that chocolate was another staple highly valued by Maya, typically because it was prepared from local cacao trees in Central America. In addition, written history marked down by actual Maya described chocolate being used in drinks for "important transactions and ceremonies." Thus,

even though chocolate was well used by the wealthier Maya, it was available to everyone. In fact, many Maya households had incorporated chocolate with “chili peppers, honey, or water” in most of their meals. Further evidence expressed in a recent article for Science.org showed that chocolate was also used for currency because Maya people had never used coins as money. Rather, they were believed to have bartered popular commodities such as corn, tobacco, clothing, and chocolate. As further evidence, various Maya artworks related to the southern Maya lowlands of the Classic Maya period “from about 250 C.E. to 900 C.E.,” one of which was a mural painting portraying an Indigenous Mexican pouring a brown substance in a clay cup. Thus, experts deem the brown substance as chocolate since Maya “usually consumed their cacao as a hot drink.”

Moving on, the sport known as Pok-a-Tok held influential significance to Maya because it paid respect to the gods and for resolving conflicts between militant groups and noblemen. Regained historical sources ascertained that sports such as Pok-a-Tok often end with the team leader of the winning side being killed and sacrificed to the gods since it’s only fitting that the best are offered to the sacred. According to AMA Travel, Pok-a-Tok was a cross between the modern sports of basketball and soccer, yet it’s much more difficult to play precisely because one can only pass and shoot the ball using their “thighs and hips.” The ultimate goal is to ensure that a rubber ball enters a small hoop built on the upper edge of a high wall of the Maya ruler’s palace. Normally, the Maya ruler and his family were in attendance as well as Maya civilians.

Though Maya civilizations had eventually reached their downfall due to warfare, trade shift, and environmental debasement, the legacy of the Maya is not entirely lost. In fact, there are countless ruins and temples still surfacing today. Travel guides suggest that there are “4400 ancient Mayan ruins in Central America,” many of which are in parts of Mexico such as the Coba ruin which was constructed between “50 BC and 100 AD” near Cancun and Riviera Maya, and northwest of the Tulum ruins which stands on a “39-foot-high cliff” right on the Caribbean Sea coastline. One of many ruins in Belize is Caracol located deep inside Belize’s Chiquibul Forest. According to a travel guide written by Joni Sweet, Caracol was abandoned by the Maya “around the year 900,” though tourists today are still able to traverse on and around the ruin’s “25,000 acres.” Other archaeological Maya sites are the Lamanai Maya ruins located in Orange Walk, the Santa Rita ruin located in Corozal, and the Tikal and El Mirador ruins in Guatemala. Thus, the hidden mysteries of early Maya settlements are still being uncovered in Central America by archaeologists keen to continue interpreting how the Maya people had maintained a prosperous lifestyle based upon their individual methods and secluded nature. Hence, with understanding comes admiration once one learns about the lifestyle of historic civilizations such as the Maya.

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# JOB FIELDS THAT GREW DUE TO COVID

ARTICLE BY DANA ROLLER

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a massive disruption in the global economy, leading to job losses and business closures. However, it has also drastically changed how we work, and it has also opened up new opportunities for job seekers.

The pandemic created opportunities for entrepreneurs who want to start their own businesses in this space. With the rise of remote working and stay-at-home opportunities, many were able to take advantage of the digital revolution and start their own online businesses. This led to a rise in self-employed goods workers. With low startup costs and access to a global market through the internet, there was no better time to get started with an eCommerce business. Websites such as Etsy saw unprecedented growth during the height of the pandemic, spurring a surge in eCommerce.

This sudden increase in demand for online goods and services has resulted in a surge of new jobs related to eCommerce. From online product listing and delivery services to customer service roles, there are now more opportunities than ever before for those looking to start a career in this field. The growth of eCommerce due to the pandemic has been unprecedented, with some of the biggest players like Amazon seeing exponential growth in their sales figures. The biggest players in eCommerce are Amazon, Walmart, eBay, and Apple. These companies have seen massive growth due to the pandemic as more people turn to online shopping for their needs. This growth has



created thousands of new jobs in fields such as software engineering, marketing, customer service, logistics and more.

Other virtual fields have also experienced significant growth because of the COVID pandemic. The virtual fitness market is one of the largest growing fields over the past few years due to the significant increase in online gyms and fitness classes. These remote exercise opportunities have been popularised as a result of the pandemic and many prefer these home-based workouts. This rise in personal and private exercise has led to growth for equipment manufacturers in addition to personal trainers and app-based workout plans.

Delivery services such as food delivery and grocery delivery have also experienced an increase in demand during the pandemic as people were relying on them for essential items, creating new job fields that simply did not exist before. The convenience that these services have offered means that these jobs will continue to be in high demand even after the pandemic is over.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on the global economy, and one of the most significant changes has been the growth of eCommerce. Many businesses have had to pivot to an online model, and as a result, there has been an explosion in new job fields related to eCommerce. With the shift to remote work, many businesses have been able to create stay-at-home opportunities for their employees. Additionally, online businesses have seen a surge in demand as more people are shopping online. Whether we like it or not, the pandemic has undoubtedly caused a shift in the way businesses must navigate the market and in what jobs are available to people now.



# Healthy on the 'Gram

By Ruht Lovos



A million pictures of the perfect plate are shot before you even begin to eat. An obligatory gym selfie is taken to prove you showed up to the gym. A post is made to celebrate a huge achievement. Do any of these sound familiar? As users spend time on platforms like Instagram, they can relate to other users who might share similar hobbies or goals. Often, this allows users to easily create communities around these topics. A topic like wellness for most of us on the internet is linked to aspects such as fitness, body image, and clean eating. Yet, health has to do with more than just the physical being and involves mental health as a critical component. Thus, it's important to know how to navigate social media in ways that promote healthier lifestyles, mentally and physically, when it is used.

It's no secret that social media has become embedded as part of our day to day routines. Users who are focused on aspects of life such as clean eating, exercising, and overall health will feel compelled to share those traits. For example, there are many influencers who dedicate their content towards clean eating. It's no secret that social media has become embedded as part of our day to day routines. Users who are focused on aspects of life such as clean eating, exercising, and overall health

will feel compelled to share those traits. For example, there are many influencers who dedicate their content towards clean eating recipes and motivational posts to show their audience their lifestyle. Because many users on social media seek to connect with other people of similar hobbies, they are often surrounded by others also posting similar content. This allows platforms like Instagram to serve as a tool to help spread information and knowledge. People who are unhappy with their current situations might seek information or tools to improve themselves. People who want to work on their fitness might look up different workouts or ways to reach their goals. This is just one example of the limitless ways in which social media might be utilized as a tool in promoting a healthier lifestyle.

One way users navigate social media is by using tags in their captions so that their posts are then added to a larger collection of images which are sharing the same tag. A good example of this is [#mentalhealth](#). This tag focuses on sharing information regarding different struggles people might have and also share their experiences, motivation, and even progress they might have made to better themselves. It creates a space for users to find others with whom they might be able to relate



to and create connections. In utilizing tags, users are able to more carefully choose which posts they interact with for their own wellbeing.

Though social media can be used as a tool for those trying to reach their idea of health, it does not always work that way. As social media continues to grow and more influencers create their own content, it's possible that unhealthy behaviors are being promoted. People who suffer from mental health disorders are found to "use social media platforms at comparable rates as the general population, with use ranging from about 70% among middle-age and older individuals to upwards of 97% among younger individuals" (Naslund 2020). As users who are focused on their health share their gym progress, what they eat throughout their day, their gym and sleep schedule, some people might relate through experiencing similar routines. Others, however, might not relate and might feel guilty for not doing the same as someone else. Thus, social media does come with risks and can be harmful to users' mental health when it's used as a mode for toxic comparisons.

Moreover, these unhealthy comparisons are often exaggerated due to the average user comparing themselves to edited photos of fitness experts and influencers. Influencers typically create optimized content to receive maximum engagement from their followers which means they spend a lot of time finding the perfect shot or even spend hours editing their posts. This could mean editing the way someone's body looks, sharing progress which might be unrealistic for others, and even sharing workout routines they might not personally utilize. Some of the tips and tricks are not tailored towards everyone's goals nor do they account for their specific situations. Someone who

struggles with their relationship to food might not be eating enough for their own body as they try to follow recipes meant for someone else. Not only that but in terms of mental health, influencers often seek engagement by asking their followers to share comments about their struggles. Though it allows users to come together and connect through shared experiences, this can also become harmful for users who might struggle more than others or feel the need to compete with others.

How this information will be perceived is going to depend on the user and their own mindsets. For some users, it is important to limit exposure to certain areas of social media that can be harmful to their growth. If influencers were to share behaviors that were unhealthy, it is possible for their followers to engage in the behaviors too. For example, someone might upload a picture of their weight loss transformation and glamorize the fact they might have not been consuming enough calories. Even as users share their encouragement to one another to reach their goals, they may be encouraging behaviors such as not eating enough calories, overworking themselves, or even failing to create healthy patterns.

Users must come to terms that although they might want to reach a certain goal, they might not be able to do so in the same ways as those they might be idolizing. Social media is part of our daily lives and will continue to grow, change and develop alongside us. This means that users will have to set their own boundaries as to what content will be healthiest for them to consume and what to avoid. Overall, social media can be a powerful tool in improving our health, but it's crucial for users to know how to navigate it properly.



# Gardening: A Natural Tool For Betterment

By Eponine Seccafico



When you find yourself lost or in need of a distraction, most people may not think about gardening. The sun may seem like the last thing you need and the outside often feels like it is a world away from where you are. Although it may not appear all that appealing at first, gardening promotes positive change in both your body and mind!

How can this be? Well, the answers are more in-depth than you would assume. Learn how gardening can bring you benefits for both your physical and mental health!

## A Boost In Physicality

Once you decide to give it a try and go outside, you will find how much deeper you can breathe. It is said by medical professionals that when people are outside surrounded by all that nature has to offer, this deeper breathing allows for a clearing of the lungs. This makes it not only easier to breathe but presents several other benefits:

- Improvement in Digestion
- Increase in Oxygen Blood Levels
- Strengthening of Immunity

With these, you will be able to move around more freely with less effort, stirring the desire to go out and experience the wonderful space of floral life around you. An increase in movement also strengthens your heart and can even improve your weight. A little fresh air and the serene scenery a garden possesses can do wonders for your body.

## An Improved Mind

A boost in physicality is not the only benefit to come from gardening. An improved mind is one as well!

Caring for a garden is a great way to add some fitness into your routine, and exercise leads to a great reduction of stress. Stress is something that can plague the mind to seemingly no end but gardening provides an intricate relief. Observing and tending to your plants can soothe



your mind and boost your mood. Watching life form and blossom (as well as being the reason behind it) stirs not only a feeling of validation but also social connection.

If you have loved gardens for a while or if you have just discovered a liking for your newfound green thumb, you are bound to find others to feel the same! Having a hobby and seeking out those who share that same passion can help to develop new friendships and strengthen your skills with people. Sincere social interaction, no matter how small, does wonders for the mind as well as your self-perception!

## Give It A Try!

Even if you feel like gardening is not right for you, you should give it a chance! No matter if this is the perfect hobby for you, even an attempt at exploring your interests can help you discover ways to improve your health. There are many plants for you to care for and many arrangements you can create for your garden to thrive along with your own health. All it takes is an open perception and a willingness to try.



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