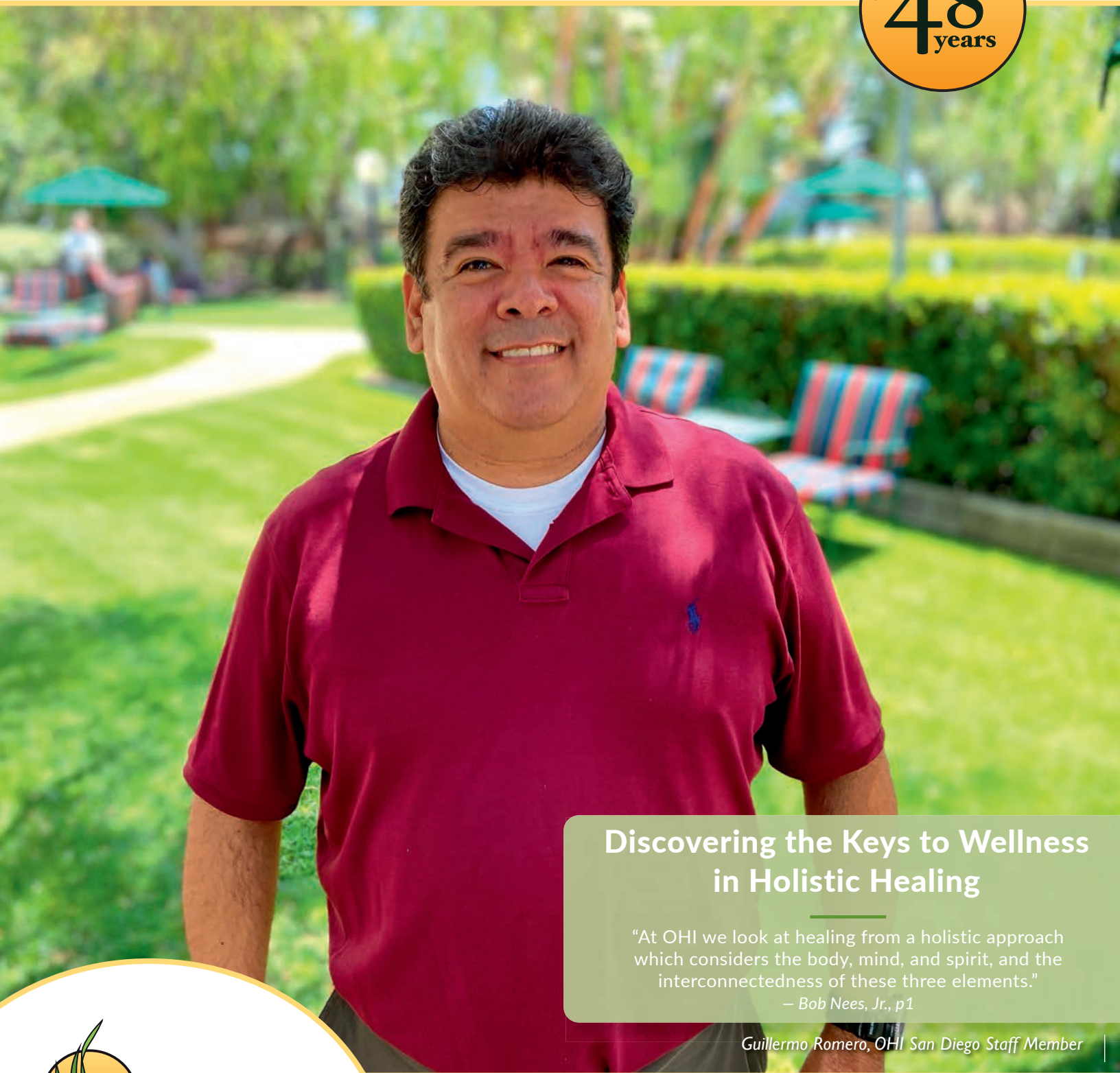


# Optimum Health Institute Newsletter

Connecting the OHI Community | JANUARY 2025



## Discovering the Keys to Wellness in Holistic Healing

"At OHI we look at healing from a holistic approach which considers the body, mind, and spirit, and the interconnectedness of these three elements."

— Bob Nees, Jr., p1

Guillermo Romero, OHI San Diego Staff Member



### In This Issue

- 01** Discovering the Keys to Wellness
- 03** The Seven Pillars of Self-Care
- 05** Tips for Letting Go of Unhealthy Guilt
- 06** Guest Spotlight, Melissa Ferrata
- 07** Missionary Spotlight, Michelle Humphrey
- 08** Scholarship Spotlight, Jennifer Dodd
- 09** Staff Spotlight, Guillermo Romero
- 10** OHI's New Year Savings



## CHAIRMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

### BOB NEES, JR., SENIOR PASTOR

Greetings OHI community, the New Year is here in all its winter glory. There's frost on the windows; the ground is hard as stone; the leaves are all gone; and the naked trees reveal their structure and their strength. I like to see the leafless trees; I like to imagine they are doing some internal healing while waiting for the warm weather to return. And, it's an apt metaphor for this year's theme of holistic healing.

# Discovering the Keys to Wellness in Holistic Healing

2025 marks the first quarter century of the third millennia A.D., and while there have been some highlights to be proud of, it has for the most part been a rocky ride. I know a lot of you are feeling banged up and road weary, but now is not the time to reflect on the negatives except perhaps to consider the age-old adage: "Those who do not learn from the past are doomed to repeat it." I interpret that to mean we should accept the lessons the universe has given us, heal them, and move onto the next. In this way we can focus on a brighter future. It is an understanding of healing – especially holistic healing – that I wish to explore in this issue.

*"Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me."*  
**Psalms 30:2**

Every one of us has something to heal whether it's the last election, a bad breakup, childhood trauma, or a serious health challenge.

At OHI we look at healing from a holistic approach which considers the body, mind, and spirit, and the interconnectedness of these three elements. As Aristotle once observed, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Holistic healing means treating the whole person. This includes any and all symptoms that affect the physical, mental/emotional, and spiritual aspects of our lives. If you only treat one facet of health you run the risk of leaving underlying conditions unresolved. As such holistic healing focuses on finding a sense of inner balance.

#### **Our Bodies are Designed to Heal Organically**

Physical healing is probably the easiest for us to comprehend and relate to because we have all observed the healing process of our bodies. We've watched a cut on a finger scab over as our skin miraculously grows back together. We've naturally gotten over colds after several days of sneezing, coughing, and blowing our noses to clear out toxins and pathogens. All of us have experienced these, or a similar illness or injury, and personally witnessed our bodies healing.

The point is our bodies will organically heal themselves if given the opportunity. I want to say – if we just get out of the way – by removing obstructions such as unhealthy food, toxins, stress, and negativity. In many cases, however, that's easier said than done because most of us have spent a lifetime developing bad habits. Habits which we have to unlearn

through a deliberate and intentional effort. Here at OHI we offer the training to assist you in unlearning those unhealthy habits for good by replacing them with positive ones.

#### **Feeling Your Feelings is all about Healing**

Understanding mental and emotional healing is less straightforward. We know when we are feeling depressed or anxious, but most of us have learned to push those feelings down and move on with the demands of daily life. Renowned psychotherapist, Alice Miller, noted in her book *The Body Never Lies* that unexpressed emotions will manifest as disease (including cancer) in different parts of the body. And when we look to the traditional Western medical model, we find that it does not consider the whole self.

Stress is probably the biggest challenge most of us face today. It can put us so out of alignment that we suffer fatigue and exhaustion, we can lose motivation, and develop anxiety or depression. Stress can lead to heart attacks, stroke, and even cancer. At OHI you'll learn how to manage stress by setting boundaries with your time and energy. You'll learn how to prioritize your needs; and how to say, "No" to the daily demands that overwhelm you.

It's important to learn how to express your emotions in order to heal. OHI teaches several methods for feeling and expressing emotions such as our classes in communication, conscious breathing and vocal toning.

#### **Refreshing the Spirit Ties Holistic Healing All Together**

Holistically healing the spirit might be the most difficult concept for people to grasp. This is because many of us don't even realize when we have fallen out of alignment spiritually.

*"A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."* **Proverbs 17:22**

One of the ways you can recognize an ailing spirit is when you no longer embrace life and its boundless beauty. Spiritual disharmony occurs when life seems to lose its meaning; or when we lose an important connection to life such as the loss of a loved one. Sometimes a big tragedy can make us feel as if we have lost a part of ourselves. And, restoring the spirit is a big part of what we do here on our campuses.

There are many ways to begin the process of reinvigorating the spirit. A good place to start is by practicing gratitude.

Appreciating what you have is good, but even better is visualizing what you want and then expressing gratitude for it as if you already have it.

Another is getting out in nature, hiking, breathing the fresh air, and observing the plant and animal life around you. The soaring trees, magnificent mountains, burbling brooks, or the crashing of the surf on a sunny and sandy beach; it's all about finding a connection to something that is larger than yourself.

Volunteering is another way to bring us closer to our higher power because it expands our empathy, compassion, and sensitivity to the needs of others. Helping others helps us remove our focus from our own problems and provides us with a sense of the love that God wants us all to experience.

Another "set of keys" for holistic healing and wellness are the 5 Ps to Optimum Health: Purpose, Positive Mental Attitude, Persistence, Patience, and Prayer. Finding your purpose reconnects you to the Divine. Your positive attitude supports the healing process. Learning persistence enables you to retain all that you learn here at OHI; while patience helps you deal with negative forces in the world by understanding the timeless mantra of "this too shall pass."

But it is prayer, along with reflection and contemplation, that revitalizes the spirit most of all. Finding the silence, quieting the mind, and allowing creativity back into your life will guide you back to your higher power.

*"And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven."*  
**James 5:15**

Healing is a lot about learning. And the best place to learn is in a retreat-like setting such as OHI where you are shielded from the erratic outside world in a safe and sacred space with a community of like-minded folks.

*"It is the communal gathering that is so important here at OHI. We recognize that good health is enhanced by creating a positive environment where the entire community is involved in supporting each other. When you become a member of our community you will experience the love, camaraderie, and understanding by gathering together with people who are like you and are seeking to find the holistic harmony of the body, mind, and spirit."*

### It's a New Year and the Perfect Time for a New You

Come to OHI this year and hit the reset button. Our bodies, minds, and spirits need the proper fuel to heal. At OHI you'll learn physical purifying rituals such as our cleansing diet – which is not your everyday diet – but one that will help remove the accumulated toxins from your body. You'll learn to take charge of your health and lifestyle choices so that you will see real improvements in your physical health, mental clarity, and spiritual fulfillment. You'll learn to awaken and heal your mind and spirit by looking inward and raising your state of consciousness. A heightened state of

consciousness lifts the health of the whole person.

Make your reservation today, and begin the New Year with a new you!

### What's New for 2025

At OHI, we are filled with optimism and enthusiasm for the upcoming new year. In 2025, we are implementing a new property management and reservation system. Our new system is focused on our guests' needs; and is designed to keep track of your preferences in order to help deliver positive and personalized experiences. Our check-in process will be streamlined, making it faster and easier for our guests! We look forward to implementing this new system with YOU in mind.

We are also developing a new fundraising plan. Our goal is to provide more scholarships in order to help more people who need to begin their journey of healing. We look forward to launching this in the next few months.

We are also planning to develop virtual classes where guests can attend OHI classes from home. This way you can reset-refresh-revitalize as often as necessary in the comfort of your living room.

**Inside this edition:** Read further about the seven pillars of self-care and five tips for letting go of unhealthy guilt. Get to know staff member, Guillermo Romero; OHI San Diego missionary, Michelle Humphrey; OHI Austin guest, Melissa Ferrata; and how an OHI Scholarship helped Jennifer Dodd find hope at OHI. We remain humbled and grateful to all those who contribute and help people like Jennifer. Please also consider contributing to the OHI Scholarship Fund which helps OHI community members in need. And finally, be sure to turn to page 10 for details on your New Year Savings.

Here's wishing you health, wellness, and holistic healing in this New Year.

Yours in prayer,



Robert P. Nees, Jr.  
Senior Pastor and Chairman  
Optimum Health Institute of San Diego and Austin



### Stay Connected with OHI

Stay connected with the OHI Community on our social media platforms!

- Facebook: **OptimumHealthInstitute**
- Instagram: **@optimumhealthinstitute**
- YouTube: **@OptimumHealthInst**

# The Seven Pillars of Self-Care



*Self-care is a holistic practice that involves nurturing all aspects of your well-being.*

As you ring in the New Year, make self-care a priority for 2025. In this article, we explore the seven pillars of self-care and how you can integrate them into your daily routine to improve overall health and happiness. By addressing the seven pillars of self-care – physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, recreational, social, and environmental needs – you can create a well-rounded, sustainable routine that enhances your quality of life. So, let's dive into why self-care is so vital and how to make it one of your core goals for the year ahead.

## What are the Seven Pillars of Self-Care?

The seven pillars of self-care are interconnected; a deficiency in one area can impact others, creating a ripple effect that may impact your overall well-being. Conversely, nurturing all of them can provide stability and resilience in facing life's challenges.

**1. Physical Self-Care.** Physical self-care is the foundation of your well-being. It encompasses the activities and habits you maintain to support your body's health, strength, and vitality. Key practices include:

**Regular exercise:** Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise each week to improve physical health and reduce stress and anxiety.

**Proper nutrition:** Eat a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains.

**Restful sleep:** Aim for 7-9 hours of sleep each night. Restorative sleep is essential for recovery, mood regulation, and cognitive function.

**Regular medical check-ups:** Ensure you're keeping up with routine physical exams, screenings, and vaccinations.

**2. Mental Self-Care.** Mental self-care involves engaging in activities that challenge and stimulate your mind, fostering a sense of accomplishment, and protecting

yourself from mental fatigue or burnout. Key practices include:

**Mental stimulation:** Engage in activities like reading, playing a musical instrument, or learning a new skill to keep your brain sharp.

**Mindfulness & meditation:** Practices like mindfulness and meditation can help reduce stress, increase awareness, and improve focus.

**Setting boundaries:** Prioritize your mental health by saying "no" when necessary and avoiding overcommitment.

**Cognitive restructuring:** Challenge negative thoughts and replace them with more balanced, rational, positive thinking.

**3. Emotional Self-Care.** Emotional self-care means acknowledging your emotions, processing them healthily, and practicing self-compassion in moments of difficulty. Key practices include:

**Journaling:** Writing down your thoughts and feelings can help process and release emotions, bringing clarity and peace of mind.

**Therapy or counseling:** Speaking to a professional when you feel overwhelmed or need guidance can offer a sense of relief and provide new perspectives on emotional challenges.

**Practicing gratitude:** Reflecting on the positive aspects of your life through gratitude practices helps shift focus away from negative emotions and promotes emotional resilience.

**Accepting and expressing emotions:** Don't bottle up feelings. Acknowledge them and express them through conversation, art, or other creative outlets.

**4. Spiritual Self-Care.** Spiritual self-care is about

connecting with something greater than yourself – whether that’s through a spiritual practice or a sense of purpose – to cultivate meaning in life. Key practices include:

**Meditation and mindfulness:** These practices allow you to reflect on your values and beliefs.

**Exploring your values and purpose:** Take time to reflect on what truly matters to you, what you stand for, and how you want to live.

**Engaging in spiritual practices:** This may include prayer, rituals, or connection to nature.

**Volunteering:** Giving back to others can foster a sense of purpose and fulfillment.

5. **Recreational Self-Care.** Recreational self-care involves engaging in activities that allow you to relax, have fun, and recharge, fostering creativity and combating stress that builds up over time. Key practices include:

**Hobbies:** Whether it’s painting, gardening, cooking, or playing an instrument, dedicating time to hobbies that bring you joy can be deeply therapeutic.

**Travel and exploration:** Even short trips or day outings to new places can help refresh your mind and broaden your horizons.

**Creative expression:** Engaging in creative activities like writing, drawing or crafting not only provides a sense of achievement but also serves as an emotional outlet.

6. **Social Self-Care.** Social self-care involves nurturing healthy relationships with family, friends, and the wider community, buffering stress, promoting happiness, and increasing feelings of belonging. Key practices include:

**Spending quality time with loved ones:** Make time for your family and friends, whether it’s through social gatherings, shared activities, or even virtual meet-ups.

**Building a support network:** Surround yourself with people who uplift and encourage you.

**Setting healthy relationship boundaries:** Recognize toxic relationships and take steps to protect your emotional health by setting limits on interactions that drain you.

7. **Environmental Self-Care.** Environmental self-care involves creating a space that promotes physical, mental, and emotional well-being. This includes your home environment as well as workspaces and outdoor areas. Key practices include:

**Decluttering your space:** Keep your home, office, and personal spaces tidy and organized. A clean environment can reduce feelings of overwhelm and increase productivity.

**Nature and outdoor time:** Spending time in nature or bringing elements of nature into your living space – such as plants or natural light – can help improve mood and reduce stress.

**Ergonomics:** Ensure your workspace or home environment is comfortable, with proper seating, lighting, and organization.

### Here’s how to integrate the seven pillars into your 2025 self-care routine:

**Set Clear, Achievable Goals –** Setting specific, measurable, and realistic goals for each pillar can help you stay focused. For example:

- **Physical:** “I will walk for 30 minutes every day.”
- **Mental:** “I will read one book each month.”
- **Emotional:** “I will journal three times a week to process my emotions.”
- **Social:** “I will schedule one social outing each month.”

**Create a Routine –** Develop a routine that incorporates elements from each of the seven pillars. You don’t need to do everything every day but aim to touch on each pillar regularly. For example, your weekly self-care routine might look like this:

- **Monday:** 30-minute walk (Physical) + write in your journal (Emotional)
- **Wednesday:** Attend a yoga class (Physical) + meditate for 10 minutes (mental)
- **Saturday:** Call a friend (Social) + spend time in nature (Environmental)

**Check In With Yourself Regularly –** Self-care is an ongoing practice. Set aside time each week or month to check in with yourself. Are there any areas of your life where you feel out of balance? Adjust your routines as needed.

**Embrace Flexibility –** Life is unpredictable, and there will be times when you can’t stick to your routine as planned. That’s okay. Self-care is about progress, not perfection.

### Self-Care Makes Life BETTER!

As you set your intentions for 2025, make self-care a non-negotiable goal. When you prioritize self-care, you are better equipped to handle life. At OHI, there are many classes that support your self-care resolution. Our Lymphatic Exercise class as well as all the Juicing, Food Combining, Sprouting, Fermented Foods I & II, and Dehydrated Foods I & II classes addresses physical self-care. The Emotional Detoxification and Self-Esteem classes supports your emotional self-care. The Communications class will help your mental self-care. The Tools for Change class focuses on environmental self-care. The Alpha I & II and Conscious Breathing I & II classes help in your spiritual self-care journey. And the Mind/Body Connection and Focus I & II classes support your overall self-care goals.

Come to OHI for an immersive self-care experience! Our wellness retreats give you the time and education you need to implement meaningful change in your life. **Call us today (800) 993-4325.**



# Exploring Healthy and Unhealthy Guilt: 5 Strategies to Release Unhealthy Guilt



Guilt is a powerful emotion that everyone experiences at some point in their lives. While it can sometimes be a sign of a healthy conscience, it can also become a destructive force if not properly managed. Distinguishing between healthy and unhealthy guilt is essential for maintaining emotional balance, mental clarity, and overall well-being.

## What is Guilt?

Guilt is an emotional response triggered when you believe you have violated your moral standards, societal norms, or the expectations of others. It involves feelings of regret, remorse, or responsibility for an action, behavior, or decision that has caused harm or disappointment. Guilt can manifest in a wide range of emotions, from mild discomfort to intense shame or self-loathing. At its core, it can guide you toward reflection and self-improvement, encouraging you to make amends, change your behavior, and take responsibility for your choices.

## Healthy vs. Unhealthy Guilt

While guilt serves a constructive purpose, it can become unhealthy when it is excessive, misplaced, or prolonged. Healthy guilt is proportionate to the situation, allows for emotional processing, and ultimately leads to positive changes. Unhealthy guilt tends to be excessive, irrational, or persistent, preventing personal growth and emotional well-being.

## Healthy Guilt

**Proportional and Situational:** Healthy guilt is a natural and manageable feeling that serves as an opportunity for reflection and improvement.

**Motivates Change:** Healthy guilt prompts us to make amends and take responsibility for our actions. It encourages positive changes in our behavior and relationships.

**Temporary:** Healthy guilt typically fades once we've taken steps to repair the situation or learn from the experience. It does not linger indefinitely.

## Unhealthy Guilt

**Excessive and Overwhelming:** Unhealthy guilt is disproportionate to the situation. It can occur even when no harm has been done or when our actions are beyond our control.

**Constant Self-Criticism:** Unhealthy guilt leads to ongoing self-criticism and feelings of unworthiness. It causes individuals to constantly question their worth or moral character, often leading to anxiety and depression.

**Paralyzing:** Unhealthy guilt prevents individuals from moving forward. Instead of learning and growing from their experiences, they may remain stuck in a cycle of guilt, unable to make progress or let go of past mistakes.

## 5 Tips for Letting Go of Unhealthy Guilt

While healthy guilt can foster personal growth, unhealthy guilt can be detrimental to your mental and emotional health. Here are some strategies to help you release unhealthy guilt and improve your overall well-being.

1. **Spiritual Self-Care.** Spiritual self-care is about connecting with something greater than yourself – whether that's through a spiritual practice or a sense of purpose – to cultivate meaning in life. Key practices include:
  - Is this guilt related to something I can control or change?
  - Did I truly harm someone or violate my values, or am I assuming responsibility for something outside my control?
  - Have I done what I can to make amends, or is the guilt lingering because I haven't allowed myself to move forward?
2. **Practice Self-Compassion.** Unhealthy guilt often arises from self-criticism. Practice self-compassion by treating yourself with kindness and understanding.
3. **Reframe Your Thoughts.** Challenge negative or irrational thoughts by replacing them with more balanced and rational perspectives.
4. **Make Amends and Take Responsibility.** When appropriate, take steps to repair the damage caused by your actions – offer a sincere apology, and take responsibility for your part in the situation.
5. **Let Go of Perfectionism.** Let go of the need to be flawless in all aspects of your life. Accept that mistakes are a natural part of being human and are essential for growth.

By practicing self-compassion, reframing thoughts, and taking responsibility for your actions, you can let go of unnecessary guilt and foster a healthier, more positive mindset. OHI offers several classes that can help you process guilt: The Mental Detoxification class teaches you how to cancel, reframe, and replace negative thoughts with positive ones to facilitate healing, as well as develop a positive mindset through journaling and visualization. The Self-Esteem and "You" Validation classes validate your self-worth for personal growth. Come to OHI to learn to let go of unhealthy guilt and enhance your overall quality of life.

Nurture your body, mind, and spirit with kindness with a wellness retreat at OHI San Diego or OHI Austin – **Call us today (800) 993-4325.**



## Meet Melissa Ferrata, a devoted guest at OHI Austin!

In 2010, Melissa Ferrata was faced with a significant health opportunity – Stage 4 Colon Cancer. “I was considered terminal,” said Melissa. “My doctors used me as a guinea pig and threw every possible treatment they could at me. I had massive doses of radiation, and every possible chemo that was meant to treat cancers that I didn’t have. Somehow, I made it through and after a year was considered cancer-free. Within four weeks of ringing that bell, I thought I was dying. My body was gutted from the toxicity of the treatment. I knew I had to be my own health advocate and was reading everything I could to find an alternate way to heal my body. I found a brief description of OHI in the back of the book I was reading. It was a God moment. I picked up the phone and checked into OHI Austin

Melissa Ferrata

the following Sunday. I didn’t know what to expect, but it completely changed my life. I truly believe, the OHI cleanse and diet was God healing me from the inside out. Over the last 13 years, I have returned to OHI whenever I felt stuck or that I was getting off track. I’ve been a return guest 10 times. If anyone ever asks about my cancer journey, I tell them that OHI saved me. I would not have survived if I didn’t come here. The wheatgrass juice cleanse flushed the toxins out that were killing me, but truthfully that wasn’t enough to save me. It was putting living raw veggies, fermented foods, and sprouted foods into my body that healed me. The living food put life back into me. I think everyone should make OHI the foundation of their better health.”

Each time Melissa visits OHI, she makes it a point to immerse herself in the classes. “Every class on the roster is an invaluable education,” said Melissa. “OHI has taught me so much about food prep and juicing. I can’t believe I never learned about nutrition, digestion, and elimination in health class back in high school. Now I understand what my body is capable of and how the nutrition found in raw vegetables heals and fuels my body. If everyone understood this, I think people would make very different choices in the food they put into their body. I also love the lymphatic exercise classes, and bought a CD so that I can do lymphatic exercise at home. Beyond the body classes, I also love all the mind and spirit classes. Journaling and meditation have helped me so much and are now an important part of my life.”

Melissa has made juicing a regular part of her routine at home. “I do a weekly cleanse at least one day a week,” said Melissa. “God made our bodies to heal, and when I juice I can feel my body getting stronger.”

One of the best things to come out of Melissa’s many stays at OHI are the friendships she has made with fellow guests. “On some visits, I’ve been with a larger cohort, and other times I’ve shared my stay with a smaller group,” said Melissa. “I’ve loved my experience at OHI with a smaller group. You bond so tightly. You’re willing to open up so deeply when it feels like a small family gathering. Yet I’ve also loved the joy and exuberance to be found in experiencing the program with a larger group. The laughter and the fun of a big group makes it feel like you’re floating through the week together. Whether the group is big or small, life stops when you walk into that OHI safe bubble. I honestly believe that it always works out the way it’s supposed to, and the group that arrives on the same day are the people you’re meant to meet on that trip.”

*“The friendships I have made with OHI guests are forever. The experience truly bonds you. And while I’m gushing about how wonderful the fellow guests are, I need to give a shout-out to the OHI staff. They are the heart and soul of OHI. Their positivity, their kindness, and their patience are the reason why I have a wonderful experience every time I go there. And the depth of their knowledge is astonishing.”*

“No matter how many times I’ve taken a class, I always learn something new. The education and training they have is so impressive. The facilitators not only educate you how to achieve your better health but inspire you to want better for yourself. The staff inspires me, and when I share the story of my health journey with others it inspires them. What a beautiful way to create a full-circle experience of positivity. I hope everyone who reads this story is inspired to book a visit to OHI. No matter what your health opportunity, the visit is sure to be life-changing.”

# Get to Know OHI Missionary, Michelle Humphrey

OHI Missionary, Michelle Humphrey, completed her three-month missionary term the week of Thanksgiving. “It feels so appropriate that my last week at OHI is during Thanksgiving, because I have so much to be grateful for.”

Michelle had been a guest at OHI six times, starting in 2016. “A visit to OHI was the annual gift I gave to myself,” said Michelle. “It was the perfect place for me to get away, eat well, and recharge my batteries. The thing that kept me coming back time and time again was how great I felt every time – physically, mentally, and spiritually. And I always looked forward to experiencing the amazing community of people that come here. Everyone is so kind, so supportive, and so present in the moment. It was very inspiring.”

Michelle’s health took a sudden downturn a year ago. “What I didn’t know at the time was that I was suffering from heavy metal toxicity with mercury,” said Michelle. “I had no idea I had high levels of mercury in my system from years ago. Plus, I was in

Michelle Humphrey



perimenopause and my hormones were out of whack. I could hardly get out of bed for months. My brain felt like it was on fire. I started losing cognitive function, and I was not speaking coherently. After seeing five different doctors, spending thousands of dollars on tests, and trying every supplement and hormone therapy, my husband and a family of friends were panicking and considering sending me to a mental institution. I begged them to send me to OHI, but they were worried that I needed more supervision than OHI could offer. We finally agreed that OHI was always a great boost to my health in the past, and I was hopeful OHI could help with my current health opportunity.

I arrived in February 2024 with only 15% of my life force flowing through me. I felt awful and cried every day, but little by little the program started to work. By the end of two weeks, I was feeling 60% better. I went home for a few months to continue my recovery, but I didn’t improve. By July 2024, I wasn’t sure if I was going to survive this health crisis. I went from being someone who was a transformation leader for others to feeling so ill, weak, and lost that I had no idea how to honor my true self anymore. A coach said to me ‘You need to find your YES and say YES to your YES.’ It took me weeks, but I finally heard my intuition say, ‘Become a missionary at OHI for three months.’ I felt the full YES as my heart and soul was calling me to OHI. I was worried about leaving my husband and son for three months, but my friend reminded me that taking care of myself is the best thing I could do for my family. OHI was the place that saved my life in just two weeks, so I knew I could fully recover

if I gave myself over to the program for three months.”

Michelle arrived at OHI as a missionary on August 31. “I understand that the role of missionary is to work in service to the guests,” said Michelle. “I knew if I could jumpstart my own recovery, I would have the energy and the drive to help others. I have been very intentional during my time here. I am ALL IN! I eat the food and drink the water, I take the classes, I listen to my body, and I have fully opened my heart to this healing experience. When you live it, it WORKS! Being a missionary at OHI was an answer to my prayer, and I wasn’t going to squander a minute of it. If people stayed in detox for 3 months like I have, it would change their life. The divine perfection of the program is so clear. Your tastebuds crave nutrient dense GOD food. GOD food honors who I am as a person.”

Michelle has some words of advice for anyone considering taking on the role of missionary at OHI. “Being a missionary is a healing journey that will help both the guests as well as yourself,” said Michelle. “I made more progress toward better health in the first 40 days as an OHI missionary than I had in the past four years on my own. I am stronger and happier than I have ever been.”

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*“The OHI program is the most efficient and effective way to heal, and that allows you to be the best person you can be for the guests. The missionary program will change your life for the better in ways you can’t even imagine. I know my best days are now in front of me, and I will get to be a light for others.”*

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Thinking about applying for OHI’s Missionary Program? **Call us today (800) 993-4325.**



# Scholarship Recipient Jennifer Dodd Thanks OHI for Saving Her Life

Scholarship recipient, Jennifer Dodd, always lived a spiritual life, but after her stay at OHI, she feels more aligned and connected with God and her true self than ever before.

“I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2022,” said Jennifer. “For years, I have been very committed to maintaining excellent health. So, the diagnosis of cancer was shocking and shattering to me. In 2022 and 2023 I invested all I had into my healing, and saw the cancer disappear within 6 months. Then, in August 2024, I was told that the cancer had re-emerged in my lymph nodes. I was shocked, and knew I needed to embark on a much deeper detoxification journey. There were a number of other extremely stressful events that occurred in 2024, including the death of three friends, three unexpected surgeries, and family members with lives on the edge. I had reached a point where I felt I couldn’t hold the stress of this cancer diagnosis in addition to everything else I was dealing with. I realized I need to ask for help! A friend of mine was once a missionary at OHI, and she had been encouraging me to attend OHI for years. I didn’t have the funds, so I applied to OHI for a scholarship.”

Jennifer was granted a scholarship and soon arrived at OHI Austin. “My life is forever radically shifted for the better as a result of this experience,” said Jennifer. “The moment I stepped into the house at OHI Austin, I felt the spirit of

healing. Each class was profoundly impactful to me. The social interactions were also very uplifting. The space and time to just BE in silence in the downtime allowed me to experience a deep and radical reconnection with my own essence. I reconnected with my own passionate heart and ability to fully heal.”

Jennifer is forever grateful to OHI for the scholarship. “I believe my life is a gift, and I honor all of this as a sacred journey,” said Jennifer. “I feel so deeply and fully blessed by my time at OHI. Thank you for the scholarship, OHI. I am truly grateful.”



Jennifer Dodd

## Share the Love, Share the Feeling, Share the Gift of Healing

Please consider contributing to the OHI Scholarship Fund to help those in need experience the benefits of the OHI for Life program. Over the course of our 48 years, OHI has provided scholarships to individuals who could not afford to otherwise attend. In most years, we have been able to fulfill all requests for assistance through the generosity of our community. OHI invites you to join with us in celebrating our healing mission with a tax-deductible gift. Your contribution will help to make our community stronger, healthier, and more vibrant. Thank you so much for your generosity!

Provide the Gift of Healing today by supporting the OHI Scholarship Fund with a **tax-deductible one-time donation, or sustainable monthly contribution.**

*Optimum Health Institute is a non-profit, religious organization. Your donation is tax deductible.*

Share the Gift of Healing



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# Meet OHI San Diego's Guest Services Director, Guillermo Romero

Just mention Guillermo Romero's name to any of the guests or staff at OHI San Diego, and you'll see that person's face light up. As one staff member said, "Guillermo is a people person. His optimistic attitude and great sense of humor make it easy for him to connect with people. He handles every situation with grace and makes everyone he interacts with feel seen. OHI welcomes vastly different people from all over the world, each shouldering their own health opportunity, worries, and fears, and somehow Guillermo just instinctively knows how to bridge every divide and make an individual connection that is genuine, warm, and supportive. He's just a really great human being."

Guillermo blushes at the compliment. "I honestly love my job," said Guillermo. "I believe in the healing power of the OHI program. I enjoy the guests. I appreciate the staff. I'm just really grateful to be here."

Guillermo joined OHI in 2013 and puts his heart and soul into his role. "80% of those who walk through the door on Sunday are returning guests," said Guillermo. "If they love OHI enough to return, then I want them to know how grateful we are to host them time and time again. I make it a priority to get to know each and every guest. I pay attention to their preferences. Whether someone requests a soft mattress, or ten pillows, or extra towels, I make a note of it in their profile. So, the next time they arrive, the soft mattress, the mountain of pillows, and the extra towels are already in their room. I want them to feel like every return is a homecoming. No one should feel like a guest after they've been here just once. After that, they should always feel like one of the family. The OHI staff goes to great lengths to make each person feel special and valued."

When guests first check in, Guillermo sets the tone for the week by encouraging individuals to unburden themselves with him. "OHI is a wellness center that focuses on healing," said Guillermo. "Many guests are anxious because of the health worries they have carried for so long, so I am here to shoulder that burden for them, allowing them to focus solely on the program and their better health. Whatever I can do to help each person feel comfortable, I'm going to do it. That's what's noteworthy about the OHI program – whether your body is detoxing from caffeine, sugar, nicotine, chemo chemicals, or other toxins, you are going through a lot physically. The staff knows it's important to support you mentally, emotionally, and spiritually as they make your body as comfortable as possible. No one shows more heart than the OHI staff. Look, I've done the program myself. My personal health opportunity was a severe caffeine addiction. I'm not going to lie – detoxing was hard for me. But with the support of the staff, I came out the other side so much better for it. Without the caffeine in my body, I had the motivation to do a juice cleanse fast three days every week for five months. I lost over 50 pounds, and now my inflammation is gone, my glucose and cholesterol levels are under control, and my high blood pressure is no longer an issue. I continue to fast at least one day a week to keep my body feeling strong and healthy. So, when I say that I'm here to help, I mean it. The OHI staff is dedicated to helping every guest achieve optimum health. I know how hard breaking an addiction



Guillermo Romero

can be, but I also know how great it is to honor your body and do the very best you can to heal yourself – body, mind, and spirit."

What is the one addiction Guillermo still has? "I use my Spanish-English dictionary every single day," he laughs. "I emigrated to the United States from Peru over 20 years ago. I speak both Spanish and English, and sometimes I can't quite put my finger on the word I'm looking for in English. And the dictionary also helps with my pronunciation. As you might have noticed, I have a tiny accent. A guest recently asked me if I could refill the shampoo in her room, and I said I would send a house man right away. She thought I said I was sending my husband. We had a good laugh about it once we finally understood each other. So, I'm not breaking my addiction to my dictionary any time soon!"

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*Guillermo has simple advice for those looking to visit OHI for the first time. "Invest in yourself, and make the time to come here," said Guillermo. "Whether you are facing a health opportunity or just want some 'me time', you won't believe how much better you can feel every single day of your life."*

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We are a non-profit religious organization and your donation is tax deductible. On behalf of all those who benefit from the OHI Scholarship Fund, we offer our gratitude!

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Jan 2025

**Visit Us: Sunday Open House**

Visit our weekly Open House every Sunday starting at 4:00 p.m. in San Diego and Austin. The OHI Program offers visitors, guests and adherents a personal tour of the facility, lecture, prayer circle and an all-raw plant-based meal. A \$5 donation at OHI San Diego and \$7 donation at OHI Austin is appreciated, but not required.

**Contact Us: (800) 993-4325**

We'd love to hear from you. To receive special offers and updates, email us at newsletter@optimumhealth.org or call us at (800) 993-4325. For more information about the OHI for Life Body-Mind-Spirit Program, please visit our website at www.optimumhealth.org

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Kick-Off the New Year at OHI

See Page 10 for details or call (800) 993-4325

**Our Mission**

We serve as a change agent for holistic healing by creating a safe and sacred space.

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