

**D** SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2009 •••  
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# Living



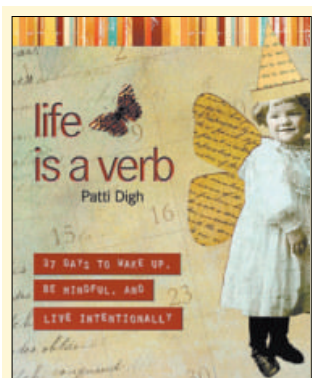
On [ajc.com/living](http://ajc.com/living): Check out the styles and trends of some of Atlanta's best-dressed people.

Faith & Values Finding meaning in spirit, family and community

## Finding value in our days

**What started out** as a way to share life's lessons with her children turned into a blog and eventually a book for Patti Digh.

By PHIL KLOER  
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**EXCERPT**

"What one thing could you do that would start you on the road to greater wholeness, to your real life? Can you do it for just 37 days? Because, as writer Annie Dillard reminds us, 'How we spend our days is how we spend our lives.'"

"Perhaps it's something simple like cleaning out one drawer every day in your house for 37 days. Perhaps writing one haiku every day for 37 days. ... Or eating five fruits and vegetables a day or writing for 10 minutes each day or walking for 10 minutes a day or writing a postcard to a friend each week. ... Whatever it is, however small, just do it. Just for 37 days."

Center for the Book. But we caught up with her recently at her home in Asheville, N.C., where Tess was home sick from school and Digh was slightly winded from rushing to get the phone while carrying laundry upstairs.



JOHN PTAK

"We should have awe for breakfast preparation or doing the laundry. ... Those things that we call mundane are actually the soul of who we are," said author **Patti Digh**.

**Q:** This book emerged out of your blog, which is of course the dream of every blogger. How did that happen?

**A:** The publisher came to me. My intention was not to write a book and my intention was not to get a large audience for my blog. My intention was very one-minded, to write these stories down for my girls. It's been a great lesson for me in the power of the single intention. Had I gone after blog readers and a publisher, I'm not sure this would have had the kind of life that it has.

**Q:** Do you see "Life is a Verb" as a self-help book?

**A:** My friends all laugh because I so recoil from the self-help category. But it is actually a book that helps people. My publisher says

this is sort of a new category, part inspiration, part how-to, part memoir.

**Q:** There's so much about mindfulness in the book. Did you get that from Buddhism?

**A:** People ask that a lot. I lived in Sri Lanka when I was 16 as an exchange student and studied with Buddhist monks. So while I wouldn't consider myself a practicing Buddhist, I think it's just how I see the world. There's been a lot of people who have responded from a spiritual place.

**Q:** And yet you're not writing about what is usually called spirituality, let alone religion.

**A:** We wait for these great moments in our lives: anniversaries, graduations. What

► Please see **BOOK, D8**

► **"Who Moved My Cheese?"** by Spencer Johnson (1998). Extended parable of a mouse in a maze (that's you, in your life) teaches that change is inevitable, and your attitude determines whether it's a blessing or a curse.

► **"All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten,"** by Robert Fulghum (1988). Unitarian minister posits that simple truths are the most important.

— Phil Kloer

**SELF-HELP HITS**

Self-help is a category created by publishers that encompasses a staggering variety of approaches and topics. Here is a small sampling of self-help books that have broken through to different audiences.

► **"The Last Lecture,"** by Randy Pausch (2008). Popular professor at Carnegie Mellon, dying of pancreatic cancer, gave a lecture in 2006 titled "Achieving Your Childhood Dreams" that became a huge YouTube

video and a book.

► **"The Secret,"** by Rhonda Byrne (2006). Phenomenally popular, somewhat controversial best-seller about envisioning yourself as successful to achieve wealth and happiness.

► **"The Purpose Driven Life"** by Rick Warren (2002). Pastor Warren's frequently gifted guide to living a better Christian life is now famous for its opening line ("It's not about you") and the millions of Christians who have used it as a study guide.



**INSIDE**

**Bearing his burden**

Film on cross-carrying evangelist is an overdue, if uneven, appreciation of a man of faith. **D4**



RENEE HANNANS HENRY / 2008 AJC photo

Third Day — **David Carr** (clockwise from top left), **Mac Powell**, **Mark Lee** and **Tai Anderson** — is featured on "Revealed."

## Christian rockers Third Day focus of new GMC show

By RODNEY HO  
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**TV TONIGHT**

"Third Day: Revealed," 8 p.m., Gospel Music Channel

When East Point-based Gospel Music Channel needed some help launching its new show, "Revealed," it stayed close to home, asking Atlanta's most successful Christian rock band, Third Day.

The group had no qualms, given the five-year-old network's body of work. "They're as committed to quality and uniqueness as we are," said bassist Tai Anderson.

"Revealed," starting tonight, will be a series of one-hour specials similar to MTV's "Unplugged" and VH1's "Storytellers." (Future acts: Jars of Clay and Israel Houghton.) It's a mix of songs and stories behind those songs set in a 1,500-square-foot studio inside GMC headquarters. The space is so intimate, some of the 40 attendees literally sit on rafters above the stage.

"The secret sauce in what makes us different is the faith element," said Brad

Siegel, GMC's vice chairman and a former president of Turner Entertainment Networks. "When there is scripture behind a song, they can tell the audience. The more they reveal, the more satisfied the viewer."

Third Day has 25 No. 1 Christian songs and nearly 7 million albums sold over 17 years. Anderson said the band was able to do two or more takes of each song ("It's the beauty of not-live television") and try different versions than they would normally do in a big theater.

GMC, the fastest growing cable network in the country, is now seen in nearly 45 million households, double the number in January 2008. It has gained increasing support from mainstream advertisers and has plans for its first scripted sitcom later this year.

**PANTRY POWERHOUSES / NON-DIET SODA**

## Clear out slow drain, car battery terminals

Some plain, unassuming household objects have hidden superpowers. And most of these items cost less than a couple of bucks. There are cult followings of vinegar and duct tape. Entire tomes have been written about the virtues of baking soda.

Throughout March in Living, you will find 102 extraordinary uses for 26 ordinary household items. These double-duty ideas will help you go green while you save some green.

**Four uses**

1. Clean car battery terminals. The acidic properties will eliminate corrosion. Pour some soda over the battery terminals and let it set. Remove the sticky residue with a wet sponge.
2. Loosen rusted-on nuts and bolts. Soak a rag in the soda and wrap it around the bolt for several minutes.
3. Make cut flowers last longer by pouring about a half-cup into the water in a vase full of cut flowers. The sugar in the soda will make the blossoms last longer.
4. Clear out a slow drain by pouring a 2-liter bottle of cola down the drain to help remove the clog.

— McClatchy/Tribune



bigstockphoto.com

You can make cut flowers last longer by pouring half a cup of soda into a vase of water.

**Coming Monday:** New uses for vinegar.

**CONTACT US**

This month we've given you tips on how to get the most out of ordinary household items. Do you know of others? Do you have a new use for things like honey, cotton balls, baking soda or dryer sheets? Tell us about your favorite pantry powerhouse. E-mail Holly Steel at [hsteel@ajc.com](mailto:hsteel@ajc.com).

## Cantor's songs lift many hearts

Her repertoire spans religious and secular

By CHRISTOPHER QUINN  
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Donna Faye Marcus sings life's soundtrack.

She comforts and celebrates people on every stop between birth and the grave, intoning prayers to welcome babies into this life, blessings on couples who wed and psalms to the families of those whose grandparents are nodding toward eternity.

Marcus, a Jewish cantor and chaplain, is not averse to lightening hearts with an occasional aria or show tune as well.

Hospitals, hospices,

synagogues and homes are her stage, and her audience crosses faith's borders.

She jumps in where needed or asked, her auburn eyebrows dancing up and down as she sings.

Christians often request "Amazing Grace," she says.

"Occasionally, I'll forget the words," she acknowledges with a giggle.

"So I hum. I do a lot of humming."

To make folks happy, she takes requests for secular songs, too.

Marcus sang prayers and German opera to German-born Marianne Bennett last year as Bennett fought lung cancer in a hospice center.

"It was just like an angel came," said Bennett's daughter Carol Bennett of Marietta.

"And she sang them in



RICH ADDICKS / raddicks@ajc.com

**Donna Faye Marcus** sings a prayer in Hebrew to **Aaron Huowitz**, a patient at St. Joseph's Hospital.

the old German tunes that you don't hear anymore. Oh, my mother just lit up."

In February, Marcus showed up in the intensive care unit at St. Joseph's Hospital and introduced herself to Eileen Broudy

Shaw of Alpharetta. Shaw's mother, Troudy Broudy, had Alzheimer's and had suffered a stroke.

Shaw said her parents met after World War II while her

► Please see **CANTOR, D8**

