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the value of
outdoor
space

*meet me on
the patio*



Randy & Julie Beckwith
LivingOnThePatio.com

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200th
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Randy and Julie Beckwith

Tom Field

All About That Outdoor Space

By Tom Field

"A lot of us grew up knowing about home décor. But we don't think as much about outside."

That's how Julie Beckwith describes one catalyst for her newest venture: Living On The Patio. She and husband-business-partner Randy Beckwith have produced a micro-business (as they call it) that helps people with planning and celebrating life outside—specifically at your home.

Living On The Patio (LOTP) isn't primarily about adding value to your home by constructing or improving your patio, deck, porch, garden, or whatever square-footage you have around the perimeter of your home's exterior—although that certainly is a beneficial and measurable outcome—it's more mission-oriented than that.

"There are so many health benefits to having an outdoor space you engage regularly," says Julie, who gives talks on the subject. "Being outdoors can improve productivity, too. Just 29 minutes outside," she cites with specificity, "can yield a 45% increase in productivity."

But you need to "consistently schedule that time," she advises. Julie says you can enjoy the benefits of outdoor space with something as simple as placing a chair and table in a good spot. "Just having a plant to look at... decreases blood pressure. Watching a bird feeder or bird bath or butterfly bush... seeing the show... it's so good for you.

"If all you have is a small balcony—set it up!"

There were three other main reasons why the Beckwiths launched LOTP: their move to a new home; the global pandemic; and the rise in the remote workforce.

BENEFITS TO BEING OUTSIDE

- Minds and Bodies relax in a natural setting
- Boost in creativity and problem-solving abilities
- Reduce cortisol levels, muscle tension
- Vitamin D improves bones, blood cells, immune system
- Decrease anxiety, lowered risk of depression
- Improve concentration and attention
- Better sleep (improved sleep/wake cycles)
- 5-minutes: stand with sun on your face; grass between your toes
- 25-minutes: take a stroll; deep breaths; eat lunch or take calls or meet outdoors

—UC Davis Health

The Beckwiths parlayed their past corporate marketing experience into branding this new venture

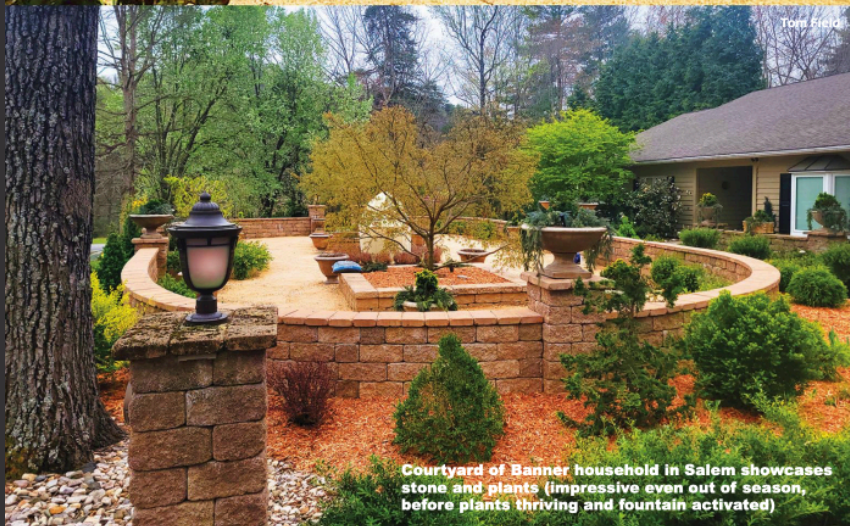




Julie Beckwith and LOTP merchandise at Farmers Market in Vinton



Former FRONT account executive Jane Daller's space at her previous home in Mississippi



Courtyard of Banner household in Salem showcases stone and plants (impressive even out of season, before plants thriving and fountain activated)

"We lived in Denver, Charlotte, Minneapolis, and Florida—and now, Virginia," says Randy, "and we've always enjoyed the outdoors." Each of those places had their own unique environments and characteristics, he says, and he likes helping people capture the best.

With LOTP, "we like to help people understand how to use the space." Randy says he once had a landscape architect come onsite; and though he felt the contractor's work would be fine, there wasn't any real consultation or advice on what and where to configure or build. It was essentially a walk-through where the contractor agreed to build whatever you want, wherever you want it.

And yes, the budget for making your outdoor space is super important for these projects, both Beckwiths say.

"You don't want to spend beyond what you have or what is needed." There are suggested formulas for what percentage impacts your home's value, too, they say.

LOTP has produced handy tools for homeowners' outdoor spaces. Currently, that includes a six-page Research, Prep, and Design worksheet as well as a most informative, interactive 17-page Guide.

LOTP helps people "think through" the planning, Julie says. She tells the story of a neighbor who put in an above-ground pool that was hardly used at all; then the next summer, a deck was built all around it, but still not used; followed by year three, when the whole installation was torn down and hauled off.

Randy describes another example where municipalities implore residents to not install their fences right on the property line. What happens is you can be trespassing on your neighbor's land if you're simply painting or doing any kind of maintenance on the other side. So, rather than simply coming off the line at some indiscriminate distance, Randy says you might want that distance to be one lawnmower's width.

Smart.

Repurposing wine bottles adds ambience to your outdoor space—whether for lighting or structural components



Patio life is better when you craft your popular (or signature) refreshments and libations

Submitted

Much of LOTP's education involves details like these.

"We're navigators," Randy continues. "We enjoy helping people through the process of creating their ideal outdoor space," which, by the way, can change from season to season.

You don't have to build everything at once, thinking this is the final and finished environment. In fact, it's fun to have your space grow along with you.

Having an outdoor space is enjoyed by homeowners for a myriad of reasons; but it's also an excellent idea for the remote, at-home worker. (The US Bureau of Labor Statistics reports incredible growth in the remote workforce since the Covid pandemic... as high as 46.5 % in some professional sectors and 62.5% in computer sciences sector. In 2019, the average of remote workforce across all industries was 6.5% in the private business sector.)

"Some people deny themselves [from spending time outside] because they think 'I'm supposed to be working,'" Randy says. "But that's just it—you ARE working" when you set up the right space.

The Beckwiths hardly limit their discussions on "patio life" to grills and furniture and pergolas and fire pits and steppingstones and planters and lighting and hardscapes and fountains and flowers and plants and bird and butterfly habitats and ... (the list goes on-and-on for fabulous products and structures). Enjoying your space—by yourself or when entertaining family, friends, and guests—that's what matters most.

And those entertaining details include everything from light to sound to food and beverage and refreshment.

A popular entry on the LOTP blog?
Patio Food.

Julie and Randy continue to develop their LivingOnThePatio.com site, even as they're still building out their own backyard at their home in Vinton. The site features information and currently has a Starter Kit (\$38), gardening and landscaping books, and other merchandise for homeowners—both DIY and those looking to bring in help.

It's nice when someone opens the front door to welcome you inside.

But walking around to the patio?
That could be even better. 🐾



AI-generated images of ideal patio / outdoor spaces... not bad

A little protection and a lot of ambience is what this decked structure provides for one homeowner in Vinton



Don't skimp on seating; quality, durable chairs are worth the investment



Whether built-in permanent or movable (like the Beckwiths), a fire pit is always a winner



The Beckwith home in Vinton is "just getting started" with this sitting and entertainment space as the rest of the back yard prepares for more