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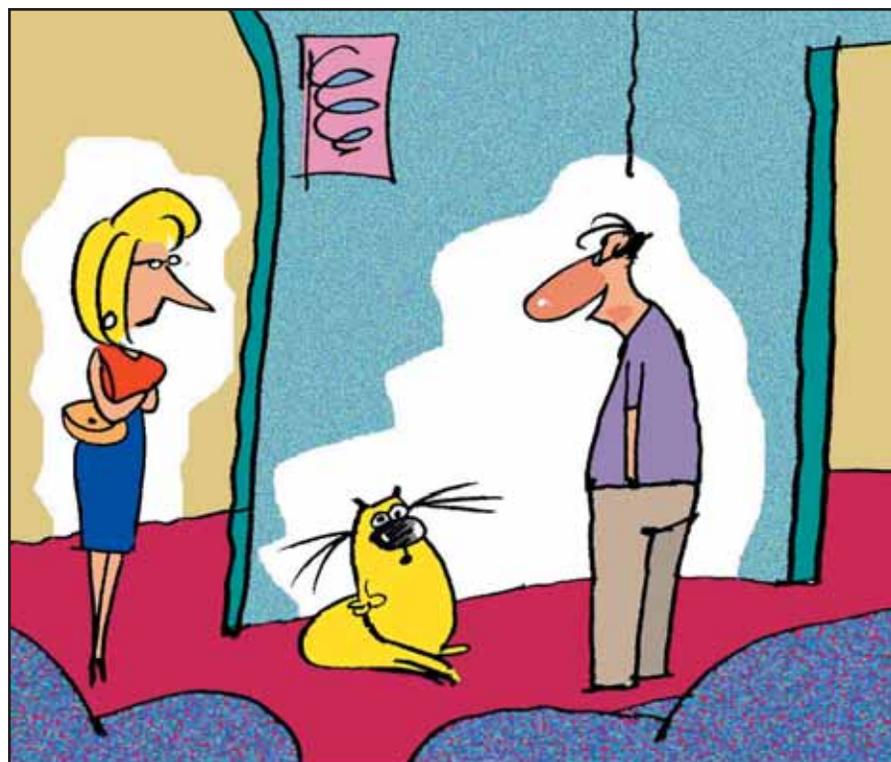
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The Work-Life Balance Institute for Women is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation whose mission is "helping women find balance"... personally and professionally. We define Work-Life Balance as effectively juggling and balancing work responsibilities, business demands and personal life.

The Institute publishes Balance Magazine and www.balancemagazine.com. It raises awareness, informs, educates, inspires and empowers each woman seeking to balance work, family, love and time for herself. We produce products and opportunities that provide a positive outcome and impact in her work life, her personal life and in her community. The Institute also currently produces thirteen times a year, Power Networking™ Luncheons for businesswomen in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties, and the Annual Work-Life Balance Educational Conference For Businesswomen where Balance Magazine comes to life with keynotes, authors and experts speaking on work-life balance topics and issues.



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Women's Services

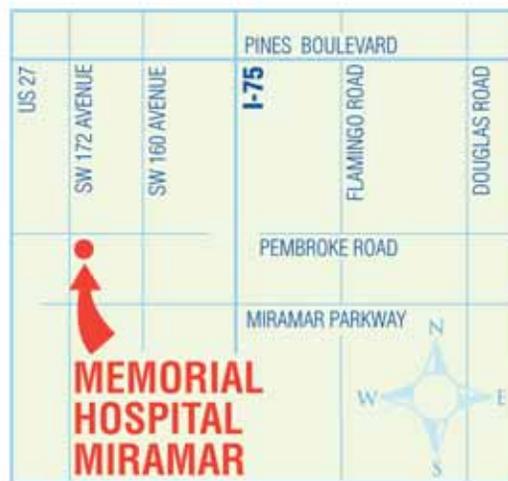
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Rich Chocolate Pie Recipe

Serve this luscious chocolate pie to your chocoholic friends. This creamy pie is made with antioxidant rich cocoa, tofu and soy milk, both high in heart healthy soy protein.

This recipe is diabetes friendly and heart healthy.

Yield: 8 servings

1 tsp vanilla extract
1 block soft tofu (drained)
4 tbsp cocoa powder
1/2 cup sugar
2/3 cup chocolate soy milk
1 graham cracker crust
1/2 cup fresh raspberries
8 tsp slivered almonds

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Combine vanilla, tofu, cocoa and sugar in a blender. Once the added ingredients are combined, gradually stir in chocolate soy milk. Blend all ingredients thoroughly. Pour mixture into graham cracker crust. Bake for 25-35 minutes until the top of the cheese cake appears solid.

Allow pie to sit in fridge for 1-2 hours, before serving.

Serve topped with fresh raspberries and sliced almonds.

Nutrition facts (per serving): Calories: 226; Fat: 8g; Saturated Fat: 2g; Cholesterol: 0; Sodium: 46mg; Carbohydrates: 34g; Fiber: 2g; Protein: 7g

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from the publisher

LIVE LIFE TO THE FULLEST!



If you attended, with the other amazing businesswomen from the tri-county community, our April 22, 2009, 5th Annual Work-Life Balance Educational Conference for Businesswomen held at the Signature Grand in Davie, Florida, then you know it was a monumental and educational day filled with transformations and connections. We spent a chock-full day learning ways to find our purpose and passion, unleash our genius and how to live our lives with more vigor and vitality. There's nothing like a grand ballroom filled with fired-up businesswomen who are ready to jump into the next phase of their lives with enthusiasm, energy and excitement!

It was so wonderful to experience first-hand, how women of diverse careers, backgrounds and a variety of interests, were able to find inspiration, empowerment and common ground. I was also sincerely proud and personally touched by the challenges of "balance" that our five marvelous scholarship recipients live with every day. In addition, we were all on the edge of our seats as the speakers shared their vision and valuable no-nonsense work-life strategies.

I've said it many times...the only thing that is constant is "change." James Arthur Ray and Carolyn Kepcher, our Keynote Speakers, certainly made it clear that the self-discovery, personal growth and the self-development process is ongoing. So what are you doing to find harmony and balance in your work and life? It's never too late to start the process...remember it's the journey not the destination that's important!

The Work-Life Balance Institute for Women is a 501c (3) not-for-profit organization funded by individuals, corporations and foundations. It's obvious that we could not have put this staggering event on without the help of our community-minded Presenting Sponsor, Corporate Partners, Sponsors, Board of Directors and Executive Committee. I would like to personally thank all of them again, for their trust in us and continued support as we continue to produce Balance Magazine®, Be(e) Empowered™ Networking Luncheons, The Annual Work-Life Balance Educational Conference for Businesswomen™, Scholarships and so much more. Visit our website at www.balancemagazine.com or friend "Bee Balance" on Facebook® to be part of our network!

With our biggest annual fundraising event behind us, (and we begin working on 2010!), I highly recommend that you start Summer by attending a Balance Be(e) Empowered Networking Luncheon event. All of our tri-county dates can be found on page 14...Register early as they always sell out!

Life will never be perfect! So, clarify, prioritize and choose what it means for you to live in balance...body, mind and spirit.

Be(e) All That You Can Be(e)!!

Susie Levan

Founder/Publisher – Balance Magazine

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The Buzz

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See Page 14 for 2009 Dates
Register early as seating is limited!!!!
2nd Wednesday every other month
Bankers Club in Miami-Dade
3rd Wednesday every other month
Tower Club in Ft. Lauderdale
4th Wednesday every other month—Phillips Point Club
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GO RED FOR WOMEN LUNCHEON

Friday, September 25, 2009
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www.cancer.org/stridesonline.



L-R Keynote speakers Carolyn Kepcher and James Arthur Ray with Susie Levan at VIP reception.



Broward Health Foundation, Powerful Women's Luncheon
L-R Bernice Schwenke, Carola Woodworth, Traci Allyn Shur and Susie Levan.



May 4th Conference VIP Wrap Party held at Susie Levan's house.
L-R Karen Grosby, Maggie Wiegandt, Delia Inman, Brigitte Lang, Susie Levan and Carol Tirado.



2009 Work-Life Balance Scholarship presentation. L-R Laura Smith, Jacqueline Nelson, Susie Levan, Maria Soldani, Jocelyn Martinez, Tara Heal and LaQueta Braynen.



Susie Levan as a guest of Tia Diaz-Balart at The Congressional Club First Ladies Luncheon in Washington, DC.



2009 Queen Bee Presentation of signed original Romero Britto design. L-R April Bolet, 1st Queen Bee Phyllis Sandler and Susie Levan.



L-R Lenore Nolan-Ryan and Susie Levan supporting the American Heart Association at the Go Red For Women Breakfast.



2009 Work-Life Balance Conference Panel. L-R Arlene Pecora, Tracy Wilson Mourning, Mayor Scott Brook, Susie Levan, Panel Moderator Cindy Krischer Goodman, Dr. Phyllis Schiffer-Simon, Karen Grosby and Cristina Mata, MD, MBA.



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control food cravings and hunger

GET YOUR BRAIN BACK ON YOUR SIDE

By Michael R. Lyon, M.D.



There is a reason why effective, permanent weight loss is so elusive for virtually everyone. Diets fail because they do not deal with the internal signals that tell us when we are hungry or full.

GLYCEMIC VOLATILITY

The notion that optimal blood sugar control plays an important role in the regulation of appetite is not new. What is new is landmark research demonstrating that frequent and rapid swings in blood sugar underlie the magnified appetite and frequent food cravings so typical of individuals who are struggling with their weight. This unstable state of blood sugar control can be referred to as “increased glycemic (blood sugar) volatility.”

Using sophisticated new technology called a continuous glucose monitoring system (CGMS), we have discovered the real key to effective appetite control is improving the function of the appetite control centers in the brain. This medical device allows for a continuous measurement of blood sugar levels over a 24-hour period. What we have discovered and documented for the very first time is that most people who are overweight go through their days with remarkably fluctuating blood sugar. This blood sugar roller coaster results in powerful signals that result in intense food cravings and overeating.

Although the control of appetite is influenced by a whole orchestra of hormones, peptides, and neurotransmitters, blood sugar levels can still be considered as a lead player and perhaps the conductor of this orchestra. Eliminating the blood sugar roller coaster is the first step to living hunger free forever. Our research shows that it is possible to literally flat line a person’s blood sugar levels—something previously thought of as being impossible.

UNCONTROLLABLE FOOD CRAVING

Frequent fluctuations in blood sugar, particularly when blood sugar rapidly drops in a short period of time, can result in serious food cravings even when your body has no real need for additional calories. If these events occur dozens of times per day, you are likely to give in and snack or drink sugary drinks, and those snacks and beverages will likely be loaded with calories. In the face of these food cravings, if you use sheer willpower and hold off until your next meal, your appetite will be in overdrive, and it is likely that you will eat too much of the wrong thing. Eating when your brain is sending out powerful signals to eat is not a good way to control your food choices, portion sizes or speed of eating.

There are several different ways to get off the “blood sugar roller coaster.” If you want to lose weight and keep it off for life, the following five key steps can help reduce blood sugar volatility:

FOLLOW A LOW GLYCEMIC LOAD DIET

The glycemic index (GI) is a numerical scale used to indicate how fast and how high a particular food raises blood glucose (blood sugar) levels. There are two versions of the GI: one based on a standard of comparison that uses glucose scored as 100; the other is based on white bread. Foods are tested against the results of the selected standard. Refined sugars, white flour products, and other sources of simple sugars are quickly absorbed into the bloodstream, causing a rapid rise in blood sugar. In response the body boosts secretion of insulin by the pancreas. High-sugar, junk food diets definitely lead to poor blood sugar regulation, obesity and ultimately type 2 diabetes. And, because of the stress on the body that they cause, including secreting too much insulin, they can also promote the growth of cancer and increase the risk of heart disease. The simple recommendation is don't eat “junk foods” and pay attention to the glycemic index of food that you eat.

INCREASE YOUR INTAKE OF DIETARY FIBER

Eating high fiber foods in abundance reduces hunger and promotes satiety. Fiber also slows the absorption of carbohydrates from food, lowering their glycemic impact. Eat fresh vegetables and fruits as snacks at the first sign of hunger, and add them to recipes whenever possible. When you eat grains, try to choose whole grains. Boiled whole grains, such as brown rice, oatmeal, barley grits, couscous and quinoa are best. Use all-bran cereals for breakfast or mixed with plain yogurt as a snack. And try to use legumes as often as possible.

TAKE THE SOLUBLE FIBER PGX WITH EVERY MEAL

PolyGlycopleX (PGX) was developed by medical researchers and has been shown to stabilize blood sugar, decreasing the levels of compounds that trigger overeating. PGX allows you to eat smaller portions of food and still feel full and satisfied for much longer than if you were to consume the food alone. One of the remarkable effects of PGX is seen in its impact upon insulin sensitivity and blood sugar control. Any food taken in conjunction with PGX will have a substantially lower glycemic impact.

ENGAGE IN A REGULAR EXERCISE PROGRAM

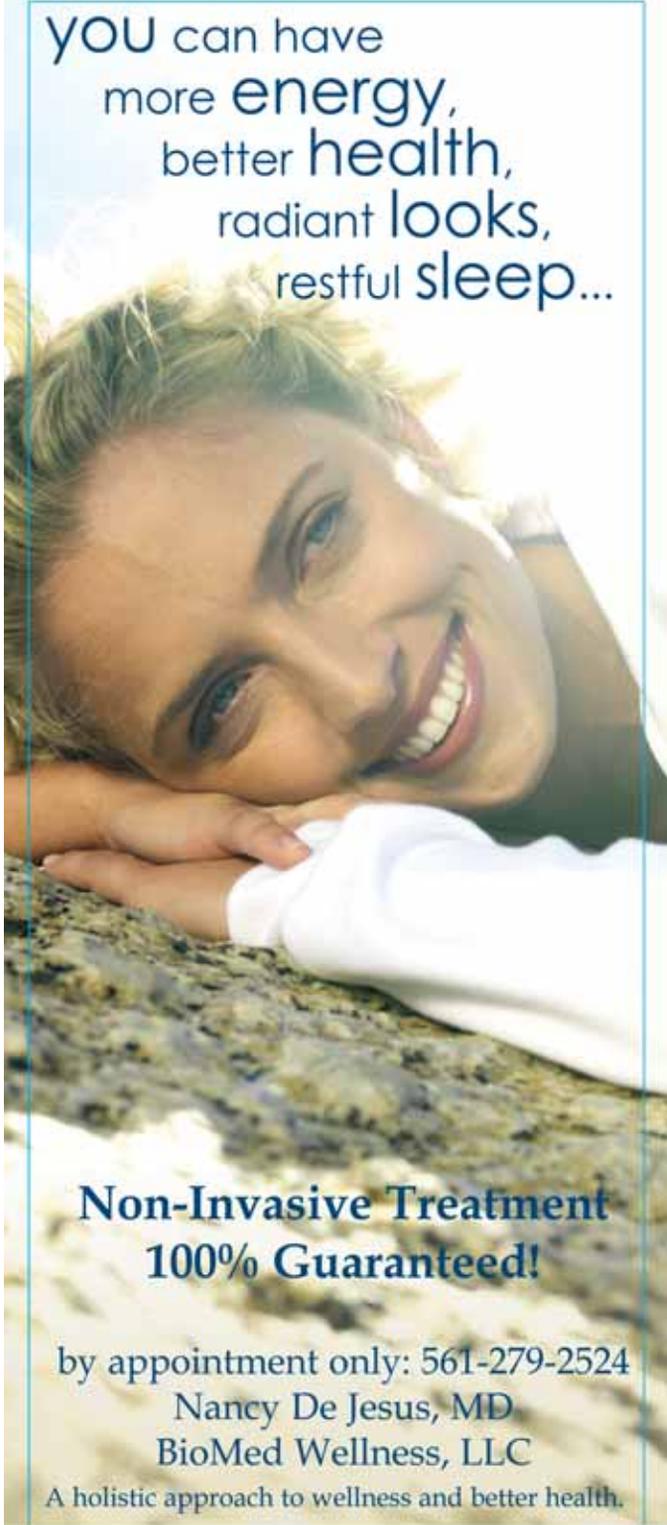
You've got to move to lose. Lack of physical activity promotes insulin resistance. Moderate exercise helps to stabilize the appetite, normalize blood sugar levels, and increase muscle mass, thus increasing your metabolic rate.

TAKE A HIGH POTENCY MULTIPLE VITAMIN WITH CHROMIUM

Proper blood sugar control requires chromium because it functions in the body as a key constituent of what is referred to as the “glucose tolerance factor.” Without chromium, insulin's action is blocked and glucose levels are elevated. A chromium deficiency may be an underlying contributing factor to the tremendous number of Americans who have diabetes or hypoglycemia, and are obese.

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MICHAEL R. LYON, M.D. IS A PHYSICIAN, MEDICAL RESEARCHER, AUTHOR, AND INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED LECTURER IN THE FIELD OF WEIGHT LOSS. HE CAN BE REACHED AT WWW.HUNGERFREEFOREVER.COM.



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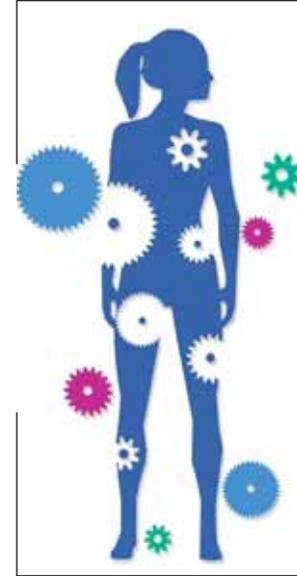
At 19, I fell off a cliff. I survived a broken neck in this near-fatal car accident. Miraculously, I recovered fully, and until the age of 41 my life was pain-free. In one day, however, seemingly out of nowhere, I found myself in excruciating pain that started at my neck and shot through the center of my skull. Months of visits to doctors finally revealed that my neck was still fractured and that I had permanent nerve damage. I spent the next year and a half as an invalid, in bed with the shades drawn. I tried everything I could to get better: fusion surgery, 41 nerve injections, medications, pain-killers, and physical therapy.

Nothing helped.

don't let pain beat you

STRATEGIES TO REGAIN YOUR LIFE

By Lynne Greenberg



One in every five adult Americans lives in chronic pain. Desperate for cures, patients resort to all sorts of options presented by Western medicine to rid themselves of ongoing pain. Although these options did not work for me, I have regained my life, principally by relying on the strategies described below.

TIP #1: EXERCISE

Endorphins are the most powerful form of pain medication that exist. To access endorphins is to flood the body with well-being and heal the mind as much as the body. Because my pain is related to spinal conditions, the forms of exercise that most benefit me are dance classes, Pilates and stretching. I work hard to offset the weaknesses in my neck by building other muscles in my core. If you have a condition that restricts your movements, you will have to be creative about what forms of exercise are realistic. Maybe only twenty minutes of slow walking a day is possible. Maybe a knee injury will force you to focus on your upper body. Whatever the form of exercise, its goal should be to compensate for the condition by building strength elsewhere, keep your heart healthy and not do further damage to your injury.

TIP #2:
ADEQUATE SLEEP

One of the worst aspects of chronic pain is the disruption of one's natural sleep cycle. I spent countless months awake in the middle of the night or awakened out of sleep seized by pain. I would then be exhausted during the day and need frequent naps, making work and parenting impossible. I had to train my body to sleep again at the normal time. Establish a regular schedule and routine for sleep. Go to bed at the same time every night and get up at the same time in the morning. Have rituals before going to bed that relax the mind and body—soft music, a soothing cup of tea, reading, watching television. Splurge on delicious sheets and blankets that make your bed a haven. By re-establishing a normal sleeping and waking schedule, a chronic pain patient can more readily return to all of life's other commitments.

TIP #3:
HOBBIES

Lying in bed, the mind of a chronic pain patient has nothing else to do but focus on pain. It obsesses about the pain and therefore suffers even more. Force yourself to get out of bed and experience life again. Go to the sports event, play or museum show that looks interesting. Stay connected to your hobbies and interests. If you loved playing the guitar, but haven't picked it up in years, sign up for guitar lessons. If you always wanted to learn how to crochet, now is the time. These activities can re-connect a person to those things in life that are worth savoring. They also distract and divert a person in pain from thinking so much about their

pain. If the mind is occupied in participating in some activity, then it can forget about the pain, even if only for a temporary period.

TIP #4:
BE REALISTIC

Sometimes for all my enthusiasm and desire, I just can't do as much as I used to do before, as the pain makes a full day of work, parenting, socializing and domestic responsibilities impossible. One has to be realistic about the limits of one's body and condition. A chronic pain patient does not have the stamina or endurance of a healthy person, so one must learn to juggle. Sometimes, saying no to an invitation that sounds wonderful is necessary. Sometimes trying not to do everything in one day, but instead spread the requisite activities out over a week, is a better schedule. Even asking for and receiving help—from someone you pay, a friend, colleague or a family member—is an important fallback when one's pain levels make it impossible to fulfill one's commitments.

Particularly in a work environment, this is tricky business. Putting aside the legal option of disability, it is important to be honest with your boss and co-workers about your condition and how this may impact your productivity. Rather than hiding your problem or trying to over-compensate for it on good days, it is far better in the long-term to discuss this issue honestly. Perhaps by working together, you and your co-workers will find a better approach to getting the work done.

TIP #5:
RE-CONNECT WITH YOUR FAMILY

One of the first things that underwent a radical shift when I became so incapacitated was my parenting. My condition has taught me that life is too short to watch from the sidelines. I have therefore fully embraced them more than I ever did before. I have even begun to participate in their activities, making them my own, and, as a family, we share in passions that we never shared before.

For example, I used to drop my children off at the beach for their surfing lessons. I would use the time off to do things for myself. Now, my children and I surf together. We all don wetsuits, rub zinc oxide on our faces, grab surfboards and race into the water. Sitting in the line-up of surfers, waiting for a wave, is sacred time—we laugh, joke, sometimes just smile huge grins of contentment at each other. When I catch a

wave, I hear the hollers of support from my son and the giggles of my daughter.

Prioritize and relish in family and friendships. As with too many working parents, I sacrificed my social life for several years in order to be home in the evenings with my children. Now, I refuse to do so. Giggling with my girlfriends is sacred rejuvenation time. By getting lost in our conversations, I also forget about my pain.

How can you participate more fully in the lives of those you love? Can you volunteer to help at your daughter's play or coach her softball team? Can you take the dog for walks again? How about throwing the annual BBQ for your husband's office? Can you make a weekly date with your spouse?

TIP #6:
SEIZE HAPPINESS AND APPRECIATE EVERY JOY

When three years ago my much-cherished life imploded, I didn't know if I would be able to find happiness in my new life. Now, I have a fuller, richer, more Technicolor existence than I could have ever before imagined. I have also learned gratitude. I am more appreciative of all the wonderful aspects of my life—from family and friends to work—than before I had my pain condition. I am also daily surprised by how this condition has led to new joys that would never have come my way.

I combat the new difficulties and restrictions in my life by tasting every sweetness, embracing and fully appreciating every joy and finding that my love for, and even humor in, life is more expansive than ever before. 

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Getting the glow back into your skin

BEAUTY FROM THE INSIDE OUT

By Holly Lucille N.D., R.N.



When most women evaluate their health, they look at a few numbers—weight, waist measurement, blood pressure, cholesterol numbers, etc. However, there is another important number most don't consider: the number of healthy bacteria in their digestive system. This key number plays a vital role in a woman's health, from a healthy immune system to clear skin to increased energy levels.

GOOD BACTERIA

Research shows these good bacteria have a very positive role in balancing overall health. Not only do they assist with digestion and keeping other harmful bacteria at bay, but have been found to help the body absorb the B-vitamins that are essential for energy, healthy nerves, skin and hair.

There are billions of beneficial microflora, also known as active cultures, living in the intestines that are important for digestion, the absorption of vital nutrients and a host of other activities. Having a sufficient level of these good bacteria is one of the most important signs of good health. Poor diet, stress or commonly prescribed medications such as antibiotics, can deplete their numbers. That can lead to digestive problems and yeast infections. All the nutrients the body uses to rebuild and repair are absorbed in the intestines. Thus intestinal health is the foundation for nourishing all bodily systems.

LOOK GOOD INSIDE

How you take care of your internal health plays a vital role in how you look on the outside. Just as the body needs the nutrients absorbed by the GI tract, so does your skin. Skin is the largest organ of your body and it takes the biggest toll. From environmental toxins, sun damage, aging and stress, the skin is constantly under attack. Just as external forces play a role, the skin is attacked internally by free radicals and bad bacteria. This onslaught of free radical damage, both inside and out, cause wrinkles, eczema and premature aging.

Having low levels of beneficial microflora that should be thriving in your intestines may lead to poor digestion, fatigue, gas, constipation, diarrhea and an unhealthy appearance of your skin and hair. If you can't always eat right, you may be overworking your

body's microflora. Your intestines will absorb anything including adverse substances that can affect your overall health. For example, sugary foods can be a feast for yeast and lead to yeast infections. Probiotic formulas may help prevent a problem before you notice the first symptom.

PROBIOTICS

That is why it is important to help protect the skin and replenish nutrients that have been unnaturally stripped. One of the best ways to improve your body's internal balance is through supplemental use. Probiotics are "friendly" bacteria that help support the better utilization and bioavailability of nutrients, including vitamins, minerals, proteins, fats and carbohydrates. Probiotics also increase healthy flora in the intestines. Although there are billions of these active cultures in the colon, many things can deplete their numbers, including a poor diet, stress, disease and some medications like antibiotics.

Furthermore, probiotics help your body deal with environmental toxins. In today's environment, toxins are making our bodies work harder than ever. From hair spray and lawn fertilizer to hormones and preservatives, we inhale, ingest and absorb toxic chemicals every day. While it's true that your body comes equipped with a built-in cleansing system, that delicate orchestra of organs runs the risk of becoming overextended when bombarded with too many nasty substances. And, unfortunately, it's not too difficult to overload, especially when everyone else seems to be doing the same thing.

People are exposed to more toxins than they think but there are tell-tale toxic signs. Have you ever felt fatigued for no reason? Are you less alert and more irritable? Is your stress resistance low? All of these point to the possibility of being taken over by toxins, along with other physical signs such as brittle hair and nails, unexplained weight gain, and abnormal body odor or bad breath.

Probiotics help eliminate waste materials and toxins from the body, and strengthen the immune function. These healthy bacteria crowd out disease-causing organisms in the colon, and can even relieve diarrhea caused by travel and antibiotic use. They may also relieve symptoms of lactose intolerance such as gas, bloating and cramping; and they may help prevent yeast infections.

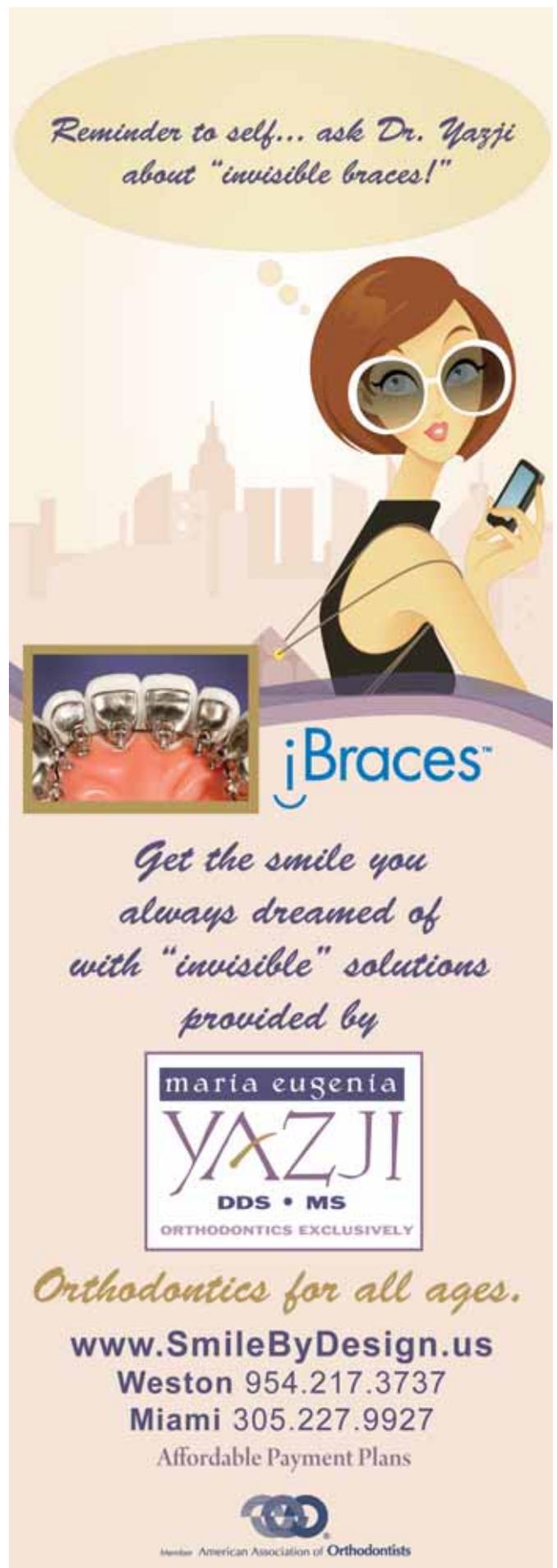
FIND THE RIGHT SUPPLEMENT

Unfortunately, most probiotic formulas intended to replenish these microflora are actually destroyed before they ever reach your intestines. Choosing a probiotic formula with the right strains and an optimal delivery system can help ensure that you get the greatest number of viable microflora to benefit your health.

Most active cultures used in probiotic formulas are easily killed by exposure to air, light, heat or moisture. One of the biggest obstacles is that your stomach acids are designed to kill these cultures. And the enteric coatings meant to protect the microflora from the stomach acids often fail, killing off most of the cultures before they can perform any benefits in your intestines.

By taking probiotics and maintaining a natural balance of bacteria in your digestive system, you will not only improve your outer appearance, but may also prevent digestive problems and other health concerns. So when it comes to total health, start from the inside. 📺

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stinging insects

DON'T LET THEM RUIN YOUR FUN IN THE SUN

By Dr. James Sublett

Stinging insects are as much a part of summer as picnics and pool parties. For most people, irritating insects cause no more than an exclamation of "Ouch!" But for those who are allergic, stinging insects—including honey bees, wasps, hornets, yellow jackets, and fire ants—send more than half a million people each year to hospital emergency rooms and cause at least 50 deaths each year, according to the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI).

To protect yourself and your family, be aware of the danger signs of an allergic reaction and take steps to prevent stings in the first place. An allergist, a doctor that specializes in diagnosing and treating allergies and asthma, can help you recognize an allergic reaction to a sting and recommend treatment.

NORMAL REACTION VS. ALLERGIC REACTION

A normal reaction to an insect sting will result in pain, swelling and redness confined to the sting site, but an allergic reaction to an insect sting requires immediate medical attention and may include symptoms such as:

- Hives, itching and swelling in areas other than the sting site
- Tightness in the chest and difficulty in breathing
- Swelling of the tongue, throat, nose and lips
- Dizziness and fainting or loss of consciousness, which can lead to shock and heart failure

If you have an allergic reaction to an insect sting, you should see an allergist. People

who have experienced an allergic reaction to an insect sting have a 60 percent chance of a similar or worse reaction if stung again. So even if this time you just had mild symptoms, like a rash, next time you could experience more severe or life-threatening symptoms.

WHICH CRITTER STUNG YOU?

Unless you're an expert on bugs, you may be unsure if you were stung by a yellow jacket or a wasp, for example. To find out what type of insect stung you, an allergist may suggest a skin test. There are two types:

- Prick - pricks the surface of the skin with a tiny amount of the insect allergen. The test is done on your back or the inside of your arms. If you're allergic, redness and swelling appears at the site of the prick.
- Intradermal - injects the allergen with a very fine needle under the first few layers of the skin. This type of skin test may be used when the result of a prick test is not clear.

An allergist may suggest a blood test. Although skin tests are more sensitive than blood tests, a blood test might be appropriate if the reaction to your sting was severe and you should avoid more exposure; if you're taking a medicine that could interfere with allergy test results; or if you have very sensitive skin or a serious skin condition.

After drawing blood, the sample is sent to a lab to look for the antibodies of specific allergens. It takes a few days to receive blood test results. Allergists are experts at deciding which insect allergens should be tested, reviewing the results, and helping you find the right treatment for relief.

IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM TREATMENT

The most immediate treatment for an insect sting allergic reaction is a shot of epinephrine. An allergist can prescribe an epinephrine auto-injector and teach you and your family members how to administer an injection to treat severe reactions. If you are stung and receive an epinephrine shot, you should still go to the nearest emergency room to make sure you don't need another dose.

In addition to epinephrine, an allergist also can discuss whether you're a candidate for venom immunotherapy. These are allergy shots that treat insect sting allergy and may prevent future allergic reactions. These shots slowly introduce tiny purified extracts of insect venom in gradually increasing doses. The shots encourage your own immune system to become resistant to a future allergic reaction, and studies show these shots are 97 percent effective in preventing potentially life-threatening reactions to insect stings.

HOW CAN I AVOID INSECT STINGS?

The best step to avoiding reactions to stings from bees, wasps, hornets and yellow jackets? Don't get stung.

Here are some tips for avoiding summer insect stings:

- Keep food covered when eating outdoors.
- Don't drink soft drinks from cans. Stinging insects are attracted to the sweetness and may crawl inside the can.
- Cover garbage cans stored outside with tight-fitting lids.
- Avoid sweet-smelling perfumes, hair sprays, colognes and deodorants.
- Avoid wearing bright-colored clothing.
- Don't walk barefoot in the grass.
- Watch for signs of stinging insects when gardening, mowing the yard, or doing outside house maintenance. They don't like to be surprised.
- If you live in the South, be cautious around fire ant hills so as not to disturb them.

If your child is allergic to insect stings, be sure to alert teachers, coaches and camp counselors of the allergy and teach them how to use epinephrine. Also talk to your child about how to avoid situations where he or she is likely to encounter bugs. 🐝

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Anaphylaxis is an emergency condition requiring immediate professional medical attention.

Educate family and friends on what to do if you begin to have an anaphylactic episode.

If your doctor has prescribed self-injectable epinephrine, carry it with you at all times and know how to use it in an allergic emergency.

Wear a medical bracelet or necklace that identifies your anaphylactic triggers. These bracelets provide crucial information in the case of an emergency.

Friends, family and caregivers of children who have severe allergies should be given a list of the child's emergency contacts and allergy triggers, and a plan for dealing with an allergic emergency.

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documents you've been slaving over
for the past week,
you can feel tension building
inside your chest.



summer heart balance

DON'T LET LEISURE TIME
OVERWHELM YOU

By Kirk Laman, D.O. F.A.C.C.

Life never seems to go exactly as we expected. It's not unusual to feel tension at work when our best-thought-out plans go awry. Even during summer, a time we normally associate with leisure, our lives can be tension filled. For professional women, summer often means more juggling. The kids are off school, so there are late nights, sleep overs, and running to sports. Vacations have to be planned and squeezed into already busy schedules. What should be a time of relaxation has the ingredients to create feelings of overwhelm and burnout.

While many people recognize the feelings of a life out of balance—tense shoulder muscles, fatigue, and an incredibly short fuse—they may underestimate the physical consequences of stress. Stress doesn't just affect us psychologically. Feelings of overwhelm can impact our bodies, particularly our heart.

A BROKEN HEART

Recent medical research has confirmed a direct link between our negative emotions: fear, anger, grief, anxiety, stress, depression, and others with actual heart disease. We've all heard stories about someone dropping over dead after hearing the shocking news of the loss of a loved one. Now it's been medically proven. A broken heart can kill you. And when we

say, “broken heart,” we don’t mean a woman’s heart that is saddened just because of a relationship that has crumbled. Hearts can be broken in many ways—loss of a parent or child, a debilitating illness, even feelings of hopelessness. Anyone who feels overwhelmed or traumatized because of severe emotional stress can have what could be called “a broken heart.”

And now it is clear that these feelings can put your health at risk. The chances that you could end up lying on a hospital gurney, clutching your chest because of a heart attack are heightened if you’re going through what Thomas Moore calls, “A Dark Night of the Soul,”—a time of profound emotional upheaval.

DON’T BE A WORRYWART

Even the current economic meltdown could be putting you in harm’s way. Something as simple as worrying has been shown to damage your heart. A recent scientific study asked over 2000 participants a simple question, “How often do you worry?” People were watched for seven years and those people who reported worrying “often” or “all the time” had twice the chances of ending up in the hospital with a heart attack or even dying.

Work-related stress is another common risk factor for developing heart disease. In reports in the *British Medical Journal*, people who were followed for a ten-year period who felt “burned out” at work with no hope of advancement had double the chances of dying from heart disease when compared with people who felt satisfied in their job.

Anxiety and depression can be particularly worrisome. In WISE (Women’s Ischemic Syndrome Evaluation), a direct link was found between depression and systemic inflammation in women who developed heart disease. Inflammation is a new “buzz word” in cardiology. Just as your upper respiratory tract can become inflamed, your heart arteries can also be afflicted with inflammation and this is the culprit in the development of heart disease.

So if you’d like to be sipping margaritas while lounging by the beach down at Key West, but instead you’re stuck in bumper-to-bumper traffic in 100-degree weather and you can feel your emotional temperature moving toward its boiling point

because you’re late to pick up your daughter at softball practice, what can you do?

TAKE A DEEP BREATH

Remember summer’s supposed to be fun. It is a time of relaxation and recuperation. Don’t let the dog days of summer get you down. If you feel your inner temperature rising, take a few deep breaths in and out. Breathing deeply for 30 seconds to a minute is a good way to relieve frustration and break the cycle of stress and tension.

DON’T IGNORE YOUR FEELINGS

Head off trouble before it reaches a crisis stage. If you feel like your life is caroming out of control, don’t ignore the problem. If you don’t acknowledge that you have issues, you can’t find a successful solution. If you’ve suffered a loss, perhaps your mother or father has passed away or you’ve been laid off from your job, recognize that this is a tremendously stressful time. You may need professional help in dealing with your feelings. Contact your physician, your minister, or a close friend and ask their opinion about what you are experiencing. If someone who knows you well suggests that you could benefit from counseling, therapy, or even medication, consider seriously their suggestions.

TAKE STOCK OF YOUR PHYSICAL RISK FACTORS

If you really want to reduce your chances of developing heart disease and you’re someone who’s burdened with excessive stress, making sure you don’t have other cardiac risk factors is critically important. All of us are familiar with the typical cardiac risk factors: high blood pressure, age, family history of early heart disease, smoking, high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes and physical inactivity. Risk factors that aren’t as commonly known include: high sensitivity C-Reactive Protein, fibrinogen levels, high LDL cholesterol, stress and negative emotions. If you possess 3 or more risk factors for heart disease, you fall into a high-risk group. Your likelihood of developing cardiovascular problems is significantly higher than someone without risk factors.

EXAMINE YOUR EATING HABITS AND LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Although many people like to think that heredity plays the biggest part in determining if they will develop heart disease, it just isn’t true. Greater than 90% of all

heart disease is preventable based on our eating habits and lifestyle choices. If you want to avoid getting heart disease, one of the most important things you can do is to adopt a Mediterranean Diet. The Mediterranean Diet is an eating plan that has been proven to reduce the systemic inflammation that attacks the inner lining of the blood vessels. In numerous clinical research studies, people who adopt the Mediterranean Diet, by reducing their intake of saturated fat, eating more fish, increasing nut consumption, utilizing whole grains, and ingesting olive oil have shown a 75% reduction in their chances of getting heart disease. Many books are available that outline the tenets of this way of eating and offer delicious recipes for getting down the road to better health.

You should also get more active. Don’t forget it is summer! Make a concentrated effort to squeeze physical activity into your hectic schedule. Get out from behind your desk and take a fifteen-minute walk at lunch or consider joining in with some of your children’s activities. Almost any kind of exercise has been shown to reduce your chances of developing heart disease. What’s important is to get more physically active.

FIND A WAY TO DE-STRESS YOUR LIFE

Stress can indeed be a killer. And if you’re someone whose life is slightly out of kilter, you need to find a way to reestablish balance in your life. Thankfully, many useful modalities are available to help you get back on center. Psychotherapy, meditation, yoga, biofeedback, regular exercise, music, aromatherapy, massage, hypnosis, acupuncture, meditation, guided imagery, and anti-depressant medications have all been proven clinically to help. Many other therapies may also be successful but just not as well studied clinically. Centering prayer, tai chi, Sufi Remembrance and many other methods could also be successful. Yet, nothing will work unless “you work it.”

Summer is here. Let down your professional guard. Kick back and let all of life’s tension drift slowly away. Not only will the balance be rejuvenating, you’ll also be reducing your chances of developing heart disease. 

DR. KIRK LAMAN IS A BOARD CERTIFIED CARDIOLOGIST, LECTURER, AND AUTHOR. HE CAN BE REACHED AT WWW.DRLAMAN.COM.

it's summertime... let the fun begin

By Erica Braun

Enjoy your break with family and friends. Whether spending your time at home or traveling, try the latest summer must-haves, take exercising to a new level and join in the humanity of helping others in need.



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retirement in a bad economy

7 STEPS TO MAKE IT A REALITY

By Bill Losey

If the recent mood swings in the stock market and your declining 401k balance are making you feel like you'll never be able to fully retire, you're not alone. This market volatility is causing a lot of angst but there are some things you can consider doing to make retirement a reality.

CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS

During this volatile period and every volatile period there is always a cycle of greed and fear. Greed and fear are the two things that move the market. We have periods where the markets get ahead of themselves and investors become too optimistic—and other periods where investors begin to panic, throw the baby out with the bath water, and become overly pessimistic. We are obviously in the throes, or very close to the latter scenario. This volatile period will pass like all the others have.

CONSIDER INCREASING YOUR ANNUAL SAVINGS

This is one area over which you have direct control. It may require that you reduce your current spending or earmark your raise for savings, but putting more away now will allow you to buy more shares at cheaper prices (since the market is lower). The younger you are and the earlier you start saving, the more years your money can grow tax deferred inside your 401k or IRA. This tax-deferred compounding can mean thousands or tens of thousands of extra dollars for you to spend come retirement time. Also, every dollar you invest in your 401k/403b plan today is one less dollar included in your income this year so you can lower your tax bite. Employees' elective contributions are limited to \$15,500 per year in 2008 (\$20,500 for those people age 50 and over). How much are you saving? Can you save more?

CONSIDER REALLOCATING YOUR 401K/403B TO HIGHER YIELDING INVESTMENTS

I realize that this may be counterintuitive to what you're feeling given the recent market slide, but perhaps you should invest more aggressively. Over time, stocks have historically outpaced bonds and inflation. Certainly, the greater the potential return on your money, the more risk you'll be taking. However, if you have 10 years or more until your retirement date, you may well be rewarded for taking this additional risk. Certainly, past performance is no guarantee of future results and I'm not saying you should get more aggressive; but you should take a few minutes and review your asset allocation. Most people have no idea what they're invested in, what they can expect to earn, and how much risk they're taking with their portfolio. This can all be quantified. What percentage do you hold in stocks versus bonds? If you're not sure, talk with a professional or trusted advisor and get his or her guidance. Recognize that every extra 1% you can earn on your money over time will go a long way to helping you enjoy the retirement you envision sooner.

CONSIDER RETIRING LATER

Don't retire when what you really need is a break. All too often I see people in their fifties and sixties who retire or take an early incentive offer because they think they're ready to stop working. After a few months or a few years they find themselves bored and restless and wanting to go back to work. Before you decide to fully retire, discuss a phased retirement or flexible work schedule with your employer. Explore all of your options before retiring. Gaining an extra day or two a week of free time may be just what the doctor ordered. Realize that every year you earn an income is another year you defer money into your 401k/403b, lower your tax bill and allow your savings to grow tax deferred. The longer you work, the less you would need to accumulate to afford your desired lifestyle. If you love what you do, why would you ever completely retire? If you don't love what you're doing, why are you still doing it? What's holding you back (time, money, confidence, knowledge, connections)? Research indicates that there is a direct correlation between our happiness, our health, and our financial wellness. When was the last time you examined your situation?

CONSIDER LOWERING YOUR INVESTMENT COSTS

Do you have any idea what you're paying in dollars and cents for your investments and/or investment management? If you're like most people I see, you don't have a clue. Recognize that each investment has its own internal cost structure. Usually this information is contained in small print in the back of the prospectus which most people never take the time to read. Additionally, these fees usually get skimmed off the top and you don't even realize it. Take some time and review your investments. Quantify what you're paying and determine if you're getting good value. Understand that every dollar by which you lower your investment costs is another dollar in your pocket.

HIRE A RETIREMENT COACH

Make no mistake. Retiring from a successful career into your first "retirement" is unlike any transition you've experienced before. According to Retirement Coach Lin Schreiber, www.RevolutionizeRetirement.com, "Retirement is filled with challenges and pitfalls you'll need special skills to handle. Retirement coaching is not for everyone. It requires learning new skills, letting go of old ways of doing things, and facing your fears about aging and change. It demands flying in the face of what society says about how you 'should' live this next stage of life."

So, is retirement coaching right for you? If you're eager to retire the part(s) of your life that no longer fit (including your work), and reinvent them; if you're looking for a guide who clearly sees who you are, who you're capable of becoming, and all the amazing options that are open to you; if you're ready to have someone listen to your ideas and ask questions that push you into a higher level of thinking and acting; and if you're willing to be accountable for what you say you'll do to get where you want to go...then you're a good candidate.

CONSIDER REDUCING YOUR RETIREMENT INCOME NEEDS

At the end of the day (or work week), you can only control what you can control. If you can make astute lifestyle choices, control your spending, eliminate your debts and live on less, you may feel more in control of your future. My happiest private clients are those that have downsized, organized and simplified their lives. 📌

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spotlight



Maria Celeste Arrarás

A PRIME TIME LIFE

By S J Strock



Walking into the studios of Telemundo is like entering a world of its own. Similarly, sitting down with Maria Celeste Arrarás is like being a part of her Prime Time Life. She is completely focused on our conversation while at the same time, cognoscente of the breaking story for her afternoon show, *Al Rojo Vivo con Maria Celeste Arrarás* (Red Hot Live with Maria Celeste Arrarás), and is in touch with the constant comings and goings around her. No camera makeup or perfectly coiffed hair, she is still a beautiful woman who exudes warmth and intelligence. Her energy is contagious while her honesty and forthcoming sincerity is overwhelming. She takes me to the world of television, behind the scenes with all that is glamorous, as well as that which is anything but glamorous.



A DAY IN THE LIFE

Maria, an Emmy-award-winning journalist, a star to millions of people across America, and recently named one of the “Twenty Most Powerful Women” of the next generation of leaders by *Newsweek* magazine, is also a super mom of three young children, ages eight through eleven. I couldn’t help but ask the obvious, how she does it all, every day. In her rapid, energetic manner, Maria spoke openly and candidly, “No two single days are alike, except that most are hectic. The reason is that when you are dealing with kids in the morning and at night, then news during the day, they are all completely unpredictable.” She pauses, reflecting on a thought, or perhaps the day at hand. “I think that is actually the beauty of the day for me, never knowing what is next. I get up early and I’m on the go till well into the night. I’m the managing editor for the show, which is a news show, so every step is spur-of-the-moment. Interviews, photo shoots, putting it all together as the information comes in. And as you know, what may be a hot story in the morning is flat by the evening. It’s an entity that is ever-changing, evolving and in constant motion. The deadline component is what can be stressful, but I love this business, and I would do it no matter what—that I believe is how you know you have been successful in finding your true calling.”

THE JOURNEY

As with all successful people, there is a journey. In spite of the difficult obstacles she has confronted in her life, Maria has been able to move forward and triumph against all odds as a woman, a mother and a professional. It is because of the bumps in the road that she decided to write a book, which is an empowering and uplifting guide for succeeding in all areas of life. When she explained the path which lead her to opening up so vividly about her personal and professional life, her rationale was absolutely pure. “The reason I decided to write the book is really two-fold; to answer questions from those who think I have it all, without being cliché, and to offer my children sound advice when I am not with them. Over the years, a lot of people have the perception that I have always been successful. And they ask me, ‘How do you do it - the perfect career and the perfect children?’ I realized that many things have happened to me, leaving me with valuable lessons for life.”

Make Your Life Prime Time, has thirty-six anecdotes, which equate to Maria’s life-lessons, and that is what she shares with read-

ers. Although reviews have compared the book to “having a big sister by your side, offering guidance through her own experiences,” Maria says, “I also wanted to be able to share with my children that it is possible to be successful as a professional and at the personal level, but not before you first become successful as a human being. I delve into the lessons I’ve learned and want to teach my children through my own life’s stories.” Maria adds, “Some are funny, some are very dramatic, some surely suspenseful, and some are touching. It is a legacy I give to my kids for the day I’m not here. I touch upon so many topics including love, career, ethics, faith, instinct and forgiveness.”

Maria is not touting her third book—she is also the bestselling author of *Selena’s Secret* and *The Magic Cane*—she is simply sharing with me, one career woman to another and one mother to another. With an almost confidential air to our chat, she leans forward, holding my attention in her warm pool of liquid chocolate eyes, revealing, “When I was finished writing the book, I was kind of shocked at the experiences I survived. I use the word survived, but I really never felt like a victim. I talk about my divorce, when I had three kids still in diapers. How he left me for another woman. I discuss how liberating it was to choose to make peace with the other woman, because really you need to forgive, for yourself, or you are the only soldier in your own war. I write about how my assistant, whom I trusted and loved, stole my identity and hundreds of thousands of dollars from me. It’s like a movie!” She laughs. The drama continues, “I share the story of our nanny who abused my baby. And, there are also some wonderful stories; I recount the incredible story about my son

that we adopted from Russia.”

CHILLS AND THRILLS OF GREAT LOVE

If anyone were to peek in on Maria and me, they would surely identify us as long-lost friends, catching up on the last twenty years. Our comfortable banter back and forth was punctuated by laughter and knowing nods from both of us. We swiftly moved from the effects our parents had on us as children to the effects we know we have on our own sons and daughters. We chatted about local news scandals and personal trials. And then, as most women will eventually bring front and center, we talked about great love. I reclined a bit, waiting for the delicious details of past or present love stories. Maria gifted me with this tale: “I went to Russia when it was still the Soviet Union, as a reporter, and I had this certainty that I would return. I looked out of my hotel room window, which had a direct view of Red Square, and I almost started to cry because I had an overwhelming feeling I would come back. In my heart, I felt it would be for a great, romantic love. At the time I was married to my first husband, and things were not working out well for us.” Pausing, possibly for effect, but most probably because she was lost in her memory, she continued, “Then fast forward fifteen years. I am back in Russia for the adoption procedures of my son, with my second husband, and pregnant with my daughter. We stopped to take a picture in Red Square. Just as I turned to take the photo I view the hotel window I had looked out from all those years before. It was a different perspective of the same overwhelming feeling and then I realized that I was returning for a great love, my son.”

Her story gave me those delicious chills up and down my arms, which I showed Maria, in appreciation of her experience. As a good





friend would do, she guaranteed there were many such stories in her life and told me many of them could be found on the pages of her book, *Make Your Life Prime Time*. What Maria found in her own story was the knowledge that everything happens for a reason and when you put all the dots together there is a beautiful picture, but when you are too close to it, you can't see the beauty, because it is all jumbled. Like an impressionist painting, once you step back, you can see the scene portrayed before your eyes, as it is meant to be seen. As for the picture which is the masterpiece of Maria's life, she says, "It is the very down-to-earth situations that hide a deep message. Those messages, through my situations, are what I am sharing with the public and with my kids."

A GUIDING LIGHT

As all mothers, we hope to guide and protect our children forever. Knowing this is not reality, Maria wanted to give her three children, who are growing and maturing before her eyes, a compass to navigate by when they hit turbulent seas. She hopes her book can be that compass for anyone. At the end of each chapter, each anecdote, there is a message, a lesson—giving light when it is dark. Is it a self-help book, I wondered out loud. Maria is quick to address my pondering, "Although I wrote this book to my children, it truly is for the masses. I wanted to touch on how some people overcome and are triumphant over adversity. I never saw myself as a victim, because I don't give difficulties much energy."

Moving on by forgiving and forgetting is a theme by which Maria lives her life. She talks the talk and walks the walk of the power

of forgiveness. Maria is adamant when she explains, "Forgiveness is the tool you need to live a fulfilled life. Your mind is very powerful, it can bring you joy or destroy you. I do not pretend to be a guru. I wouldn't tell you how to live your life. I suppose the book is kind of self-help, but I don't tell people what to do, I only recount what I've done." It's her story, how she dealt with happenstance and the lessons she learned along the way. She is hopeful that her children and readers get the messages they need by osmosis or by identifying with her experiences.

SO, WHERE'S THE BALANCE?

I knew and Maria knew that while we discussed balance in an abstract context, we were going to tackle it full on, and so we did. I enumerated some of the blessings in her life—three amazing and beautiful children, a dream career, everything she wanted it to be and more, having loved very deeply and having been loved equally as intense as well as a strong spiritual foundation...so, where does she find the formula for balance? As a wide smile lights her face, she exhales and says simply, "I compartmentalize a lot. And in each compartment, I have to hyper-focus. Most important, you have to learn to forgive yourself your imperfections. The way I deal with it is, I recognize that even if I'm not 100% perfect in one area, I know in my heart that everything I do is for the best. That my intentions are always from the right place and for a good purpose." This formula works for Maria and keeps all the balls she juggles in the air. "I am comfortable and at peace knowing what I do is with the right intention. It's an ongoing challenge and I do believe I have the blessing to deal with problems in a very special way." With further explanation, she compares her many life compartments to being in a house, "Even though you are in one room, the other rooms are still a part of the house's structure. I have the discipline not to let one area of life override another, otherwise I would certainly lose the balance I strive for, and my house will rock."

As one of the most trusted media personalities of Hispanic audiences who has successfully crossed over into the English-language market, she says, she was able to achieve this by not taking it too seriously. Again, giving balance to that which deserves her energies. "I wanted it, but I learned at some point that when you become obsessive about something, you stand every chance to lose it. I just recognize what I want, I put it out there, and then the universe kind of takes

care of making it happen for me. So now, I feel like I have the best of both worlds. I am very established within the Spanish-speaking market, and I am finding new challenges in the English-language market. Also, the public gets to know me in different lights, both being very dynamic experiences. Like a boyfriend, I have to keep the public interested and change it up a bit," she jokes.

My mouth and soul were watering for more of Maria's anecdotes, but I knew time was short and she had a news show to put on in just a few short hours. True to her exterior persona, she truly is a warm, giving and perceptive woman. I knew what was coming next, even before she donned her reading glasses, so I relaxed and listened intently as she read an excerpt from *Make Your Life Prime Time*:

You have heard it said that life is a journey. So rarely, though, are we taught what to pack for this trip. I find myself at a peaceful point in my voyage, but I can look past the stern of my ship and see in the distance where the storms met my course. I've brought along only a suitcase. It is well-worn, stretched, and scratched in places, bumped where I have fought to lift it and myself off the ground, polished and smooth in other places where I have mended it, those remind me what is important to keep — and what we must leave behind...

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What to focus on to Make Your Life Prime Time:

- Love shouldn't be the sole master of your destiny; never put your life in the hands of a man or woman.
- Navigate your life in a dimension where there is no gossip or you will lose valuable energy.
- Don't make decisions based on your ego, because ego distorts reality.
- Learn everything there is to know about your career, so that you can be in command of it.
- If you want to go places, don't let the word "No" stand in your way.
- You only have one life to live—live it a little dangerously.
- Listen to your sixth sense.
- Be the best of the best or the worst of the worst, but never mediocre.

communication styles



WHAT IS YOUR IMPACT ON OTHERS?

By Stacey Hanke

We cannot “not” communicate. Our non-verbal behavior speaks volumes whether we realize it or not. We’ve heard it before: “Know who you’re talking to and adapt your communication style to your listener’s style.” Imagine where you could take your relationships with others if you took the time to listen to what works for them.

We have preferences—certain skills and behaviors that make us who we are. Recognizing styles in yourself and others can help you influence and build relationships and become a better communicator. Swiss psychologist Carl Jung defines four communication styles. These styles are based on tendencies to be task-oriented vs. people-oriented and easygoing vs. take-charge. While these are simplifications, tendencies of the four styles are:

- Controller takes charge and wants control of themselves, others and situations. They are task-oriented, drivers and are only focused on the end goal.
- Collaborator is easy-going, relationship-oriented, and enjoys working with people to work towards consensus.
- Analyzer is detail-oriented, a logical thinker and analyzes others and situations. They work best alone to come up with solutions; therefore, may take more time to make a decision and take action.
- Socializer is outgoing, thrives on change and enjoys meeting people. They get their energy from others and therefore work best when brainstorming with others to make a decision and take action.

By being aware of your communication preference, you’ll have a better understanding of how others perceive you. This results in a positive experience and strengthens the relationship.

You cannot be 100% sure what a person means through their non-verbal behavior, but look for consistencies in their gestures, eye movement, tone of voice and facial expressions.

- Controller is direct, prefers to be in control, has a sense of urgency, louder volume and expression is limited to no emotion.
- Collaborator appears relaxed, asks a lot of questions, has a win-win attitude, hesitant to make decisions and highly emotional with an expressive tone.
- Analyzer is cautious, a logical thinker, soft-spoken, uses a monotone voice, limited eye contact and facial expressions.
- Socializer is outspoken, quick to make a decision, assertive, fast talker, expresses how they’re feeling through gestures, facial expressions and tone.

When communicating with a Controller, get to the point, state what’s in it for them and ask straightforward questions. Communicate con-

fidently with a clear and concise message. A Collaborator wants you to show an interest in them, listen patiently and give them a good “feel” about your message or what you’re asking them to do. When communicating with an Analyzer, avoid small talk, present facts and data, provide details and the process you’ll follow to service them. And finally, when speaking with a Socializer, show interest in them, be upbeat, and tie their personal experiences to your message.

YOUR PERSONAL STYLE

What does your communication style communicate to others? Ask for feedback from your peers, audiotape yourself to hear what others hear, and take time to observe the behaviors of people you admire and follow their lead.

Five characteristics for being flexible and open to others’ style:

- Good listener – ask questions to learn more, listen to non-verbal behavior.
- Open to change – be willing to change your mind, look for alternatives and work with others to resolve conflict.
- Learners – be willing to learn new behaviors and what makes others tick, ask for feedback.
- Positive – learn from your mistakes and move on. Be proactive and take responsibility.
- Respectful and sensitive – accept differences and show appreciation for others, and change your behavior to match your listener.

If your listener’s facial expressions, eye contact, tone of voice or gestures concern you, check it out. Ask if they have questions. Ask for their opinion, thoughts and what’s important to them. Ask if they need clarification.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Take this five-minute challenge: During your next conversation listen to the other person’s non-verbal behavior. Pay attention to your reaction. Are you willing to adjust your style? Are you willing to adapt your message to grab their attention? Is your message for you or them?

You can develop most of the above skills that don’t come naturally to you. They’re worth taking the time to develop because of the positive results you will receive. You’ll influence your listener to take action, avoid misinterpretation, and build a stronger relationship.

“Minds are like parachutes; they work best when open.”
Lord Thomas Dewar 

STACEY HANKE IS FOUNDER OF THE PROFESSIONAL SPEAKING COMPANY, 1ST IMPRESSIONS CONSULTING, INC. SHE CAN BE REACHED AT WWW.STACEYHANKE.COM.

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Elizabeth Gilbert



EAT, PRAY, LOVE AND LIVE!

By S J Strock

At a recent women's lecture, in a sea of pastel shirts, dresses and pashminas, Elizabeth Gilbert strolls to the stage in her khaki slacks, long green embroidered jacket and blonde hair tucked into loose knots away from her face. She is refreshing in her demeanor as well as her metro, laid back style. Her banter with an audience of a thousand women has the same feel as if she were sitting in a friend's living room chatting over coffee and cake. More often than not, the room was filled with laughter as she recounts anecdotes of her personal and professional life. When she and I chatted, it was with the same easy-going manner and humorous overtones we have been privy to in her bestselling book, *Eat, Pray, Love*.

Before the lecture, Elizabeth and I had an opportunity for an impromptu chat, which covered an array of topics. Additionally, to the group of women enthralled with her adventures, she reveals a little of herself, starting with the simple fact she is now living in New Jersey explaining, "Really, after traveling to Italy, India and Indonesia, finding my true self, where else would be the logical place to settle down, but New Jersey?" To the audience, she quickly answers the question most of her readers want to know, "What happened between her and the love she found, Phillippe?" As Elizabeth begins to reveal the post script to her popular memoir that reads like a novel, she is interrupted by an audience member having difficulty hearing her. This takes our speaker on another anecdotal tangent. "Oh, you can't hear me well?" She says directly to the woman way in the back of the room. Adjusting the microphone, she continues, "You know, it amazes me to see so many of you here today just to listen to what I've got to say. I'm humbled, because you may not know this, but my first three books sold dozens of copies, usually to people who have my same last name." Elizabeth quips, "And you know, there was this one time, in the early days, that the publication house had sent me to Chicago during a blizzard. The bookstore manager was overly optimistic in setting up chairs. So I found myself reading aloud to forty-nine empty chairs and the one weird guy who came in out of the storm. He positioned himself in the last row and yelled 'I can't hear you, can you speak up!' So, really, if you can't hear me, don't be shy, just interrupt at any time."

The room filled with laughter from one tale leading into the next. I found Elizabeth to be a wonderful story-teller, not only on the pages of her books, but during our conversation as well as during her presentation that afternoon.

EAT, PRAY, LOVE

I learn from Elizabeth that she did indeed marry her Brazilian love interest we know as “Phillipe” from the final chapters of her *New York Times* bestselling book, *Eat, Pray, Love*. Just as I’m wondering what his real name is, she chimes, “His real name is Jose. Pronounced, Joe-say, or have I been mispronouncing my husband’s name these last few years?” Again, I couldn’t help but guffaw.

If you haven’t yet read *Eat, Pray, Love*, then you might not know the catalyst from which it developed. After a difficult divorce—as opposed to everyone else’s easy, breezy divorce—Elizabeth took a year of travel to reclaim her life. Finally emerging from a crushing and immobilizing depression, Elizabeth set out to examine three different aspects of her nature, set against the magnificent backdrop of three different cultures. Her pursuit of pleasure, including much eating, was outlined during her travels in Italy. Next, she dove into meditation and devotion, while seeking spiritual insight at an Ashram in India. Lastly, while seeking balance in Indonesia, she falls in love on the island of Bali.

HAVING IT ALL TOGETHER OR NOT?

“I have to start by telling you that when my sister’s kids come to my house, I’m the kind of aunt that sits up with them all night and allows them to drink orange soda and watch PG13 movies. So, during a book tour, there was a leg from San Francisco to Santa Barbara, and then after that, I was going to see the kids. I got to the airport early and settled in waiting to board.” She hesitates and then confesses, “I zoned out and completely missed my flight. I wish I could tell you I was in a meditative state. I wasn’t. Nor was I going over my notes for the event I was flying to as the keynote speaker. I was simply thinking about the Nerf guns I promised to buy for my sister’s kids. So, I simply lost track of time, looked up and found my plane had left without me on it.” My eyes widened and I unconsciously mouthed the words, “Oh My God!” Reacting to my response, Elizabeth exclaimed, “I know! And here’s the kicker. I was only a few feet from the gate, and didn’t know it was boarding or taking off. Honestly, I felt a huge amount of guilt and like a big failure, especially when the woman who was organizing the event flipped out when I called to let her know I would be late. Very late.” On top of everything else that could have gone wrong, she goes on to tell me that she lost her notes for the speech and lost her favorite comb, in the rush to make

alternative plans to get to the event. “I was miraculously only fifteen minutes late. So I ran on the stage in an adrenalin rush, without my notes, and with noticeably uncombed, disheveled hair to speak to hundreds of women who paid money to listen to me talk about how I’ve got my life together!”

SQUELCHING THE MYTH WHILE GIVING HOPE

Elizabeth realizes there is a common, albeit ridiculous, perception that she really does have it completely together: That her one year of introspective travel and writing about it, led to the emergence of a different woman.

“I worry about our culture, that the belief in pressing a switch to make a change is viable. And really, anyone who has had a true life-changing experience knows you need to transform your life and it is a difficult, long road. I didn’t transcend to a magical point. It was most definitely a process. The funny thing is that people think since I have my life together, if they talk to me, I can tell them how to get their lives in order, too. Now that sure is a myth if ever I heard one!”

I wanted to know more of what she meant by fans wanting her to help them get their lives in order. So true to form, Elizabeth guided me through another wonderful tale. “At a book signing, a crazy-faced woman came to me and said, ‘I don’t want to bother you, I know you are busy, but do you think I should get a divorce?’ My heart really went out to her, but I couldn’t tell her what to do or how to handle her life. I remember what it was like wanting to go to a stranger and have them take over all my decisions and give them the power to do the difficult things I had to do. I wanted to call security and at the same time reach out to this woman, crazy face and all, to let her know that everything would be okay once she took back the power of choice she was trying to give away.” Although the telling of her story turned up the corners of my smile, I knew her compassion is absolute.

IT’S ALL ABOUT CHOICES

Elizabeth was eager to share, while traveling to Vietnam and similar cultures, she saw women who have no choices. She innocently inquired of these same women, “What do you think the secret is to a happy marriage?” She laughed as she reminisced, “These women looked at me like I was nuts! Finally one said, ‘It really doesn’t matter, unless you get a really terrible husband, it’s basically all the same.’ What I realized from this

woman’s statement is that people, in general, are basically the same. Options and choices are not in everyone’s world like we take for granted they are in ours. The fact is that once we have choices, we don’t want to give them up.”

Her tone changes to a more serious note, “We struggle because we create an environment that makes us second-guess ourselves. There is “life envy” and that is the feeling that if we had what someone else had, then we would be happy. If only I had more, then life would be good. More of what every one else has. And how do I choose without giving something up?”

SEEKING SOME SORT OF TRUTH

Just this year, Elizabeth Gilbert finished another book. This one is about marriage, now that she is married again. She thought that since failing so hugely at marriage the first time, she would try to get some perspective on what marriage the second time could be. As her professional style has stayed on track, she locked herself away, did a ton of research, wrote almost non-stop and barreled through it. Once it was complete, she read through a five-hundred-page manuscript she had worked on for nearly two years and all Elizabeth knew was that it was wrong. But she didn’t know what was wrong. As Elizabeth explains, “Truth be told, I physically felt sicker and sicker as the day to hand in the manuscript came closer. As my body rebelled against me, telling me with stomach aches that the work I did just wasn’t worthy of submitting, I feared that my writing career was finished.”

What Elizabeth did next is, for certain, the actions of a woman that really does have it together. She listened to her instincts and put the manuscript away until she knew how to make it a book she could be proud of. After six months, she went back to the project and wrote a completely different book about the same subject. With a note of pride, she boasts, “It is fascinating and creative.”

As she winds down, and leaves me with a tease for the book to come, Elizabeth gently reminds, “To thy own self be true....and I also say, especially to women, to thy own self be kind. If you don’t listen to the whispers, soon you will be listening to the screams.” 

SARAH “SJ” STROCK IS THE ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER AND PMS EDITOR FOR BALANCE MAGAZINE AND GRANTS MANAGER FOR THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN. SHE WRITES WEB COPY, NEWSLETTERS AND MARKETING MATERIALS FOR HER CORPORATE CLIENTELE AND IS A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO LIFESTYLE PUBLICATIONS. SHE CAN BE REACHED AT SARAH@BALANCEMAGAZINE.COM.

shameless self promotion at work



TACTICS TO ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE HIGH PROFILE

By John M. McKee

Today, more than ever before, it's important that those who are in a position to benefit your career know who you are and what you've accomplished. Successful professionals understand the importance both of being visible and letting others know about their achievements. As importantly, they know how to reach this objective in an appropriate way that is not construed as bragging or conceit.

Here are tips for establishing a positive high profile and effectively conveying "workplace wins" with powers that be, both inside and outside of their current place of employment.

DEVELOP AN ELEVATOR SPEECH

The chance to make a great impression can come up at unexpected times—including an elevator ride. It's important that you can take advantage of any opportunity to promote yourself succinctly and effectively. Develop a message that is about 2 or 3 sentences long and memorize it, so that you may capitalize on fortuitous chance meetings.

PACE YOUR BOSS

To really stand out from the others and get the all-important promotion, employees should ensure they are in the office whenever the boss is in. Let her or him see that you share the same work ethic. Simply put, if your boss is at work, you should be as well. If (s)he has decided that it's necessary to be there after hours, on weekends, or early in the morning, it is entirely to your advantage to be there at the same time. This is a great opportunity to distinguish yourself from others in the workplace and capitalize on one-on-one time with the boss.

OVER-COMMUNICATE

Keep anyone who is in a position to help you move ahead well-apprised of what you are planning or currently working on. Take advantage of every legitimate opportunity to have face time with your direct superior or other decision makers inside the organization. The more people know you, and are aware of your projects and results, the better the chances of your name being suggested when new opportunities arise. A good way to do this when working remotely is to create a regular "status update" memo, which helps those in other locations keep track of your progress and performance.

SHINE BRIGHTER BY SHARING CREDIT

No one likes a "glory hog." One of the fastest ways for a subordinate to become disliked and disrespected by a boss is by taking the sole recognition for a team effort. Good employees are recognized for their ability to share the success with others. Learn to cite those who have helped create successes, most definitely to include your boss. Sharing these accolades will ultimately further your career growth.

LOOK THE PART

One's "presence" plays a big part in who gets promoted and who doesn't. In a nutshell, presence is a combination of how we look, how we carry ourselves, and our communication skills. Many decision makers still associate one's appearance, demeanor and speaking ability with their overall ability—a formidable challenge for those who have physical or other stereotype-based attributes that are difficult, if not impossible, to change, such as height or weight, blonde hair color, or simply a high pitched voice. Irrespective of these barriers, condition yourself to carry yourself with best posture, speak and gesture in a confident and authoritative manner, and wear attire that imparts your success.

ARRIVE RESTED AND PREPARED

Far too many arrive at work—and those all-important meetings—tired, foggy and under-prepared, which hinders performance on all fronts. Quality sleep in a conducive sleep environment not only leaves you well-rested and focused, but also improves your ability to think critically and "connect the dots." Whether it's a group meeting in the conference room or a one-on-one sit down with your boss, the more rested and prepared you appear, the more likely you are to be seen as the one who is in the best position to perform what's needed—now and in the future.

TOSS THE TECH

Those who think that communicating via e-mail replaces the need to actually talk with people around them—including the boss—fail to recognize the importance of personally connecting with others in today's highly automated and technological environment. Communicating in person whenever possible is imperative for success-seekers, no matter how intimidating or unaccommodating your boss may be.

DELIVER THE GOODS

In business, it's all about accountability. Bosses love those who keep in mind that they are there to perform a function, not come up with excuses as to why they couldn't deliver results. If for whatever reason you have fallen short in a task, admit it. Don't use hollow-sounding excuses, but rather show that you take responsibility for the shortfall and are willing to "make good." The boss will respect your approach.

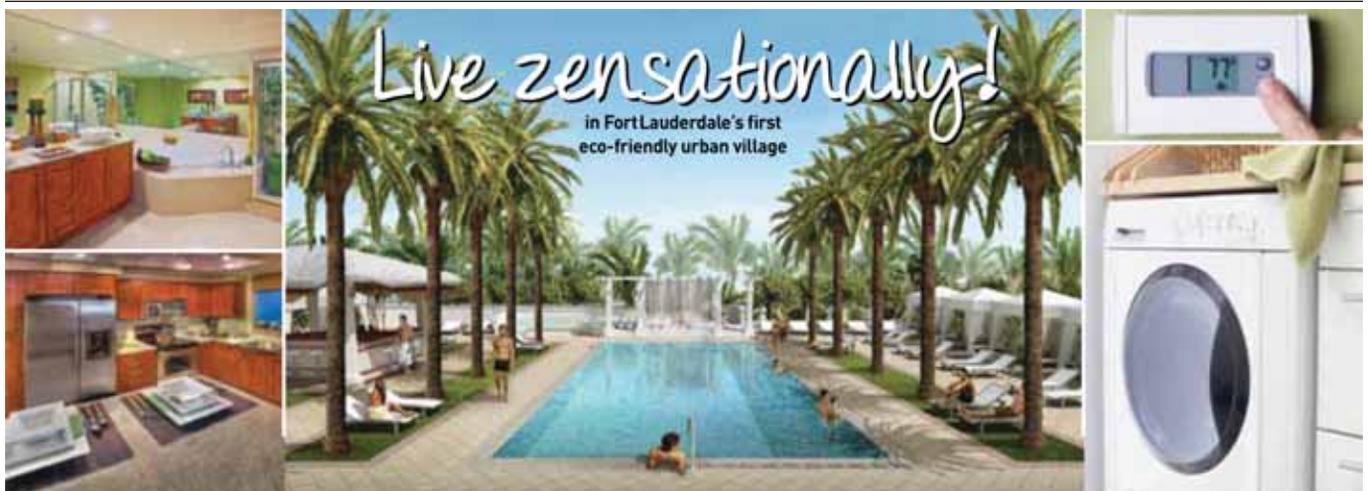
KNOW WHAT YOU'RE WORTH

Employees who know what's going on in the market gain additional respect from their bosses. By keeping on top of the job market, who the rising stars and key players are, who's hiring, and what your value is to the company, you present yourself as a professional who is seeking career opportunity, which can increase your perceived value to the company. Just be careful not to position this information as if you're "shopping around" for a job elsewhere, lest they feel you're not committed to the organization and lose trust in you.

NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK

This remains one of the best and most effective ways of sourcing jobs outside your existing employer. If you don't have any connections outside of your current company, start to develop them both online and off! Attend industry events, read industry periodicals and online journals to be aware of changes. If you don't have a page on a social networking site like LinkedIn or Facebook, make one. More and more hiring decisions are made using internet searches. And always have an up-to-date, well planned and thoughtfully articulated resume ready for any request—from someone inside or outside your company.

JOHN M. MCKEE CAN BE REACHED AT WWW.BUSINESSUCCESSCOACH.NET. 



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are you a gigger?

ATTRIBUTES OF WOMEN GOING FROM GIG TO GIG

By Adriane Berg

I was at an American Women in Radio and Television event when I learned that I was a “gigger.” A gigger is not exactly an entrepreneur, nor a consultant, nor an employee. A gigger can be all of these at one time, run multiple businesses, and work on all kinds of projects. Then she moves on.



It makes sense that media folk would see themselves as “giggers.” They go from gig to gig. Careers depend on how often they are in the right place at the right time, and how aggressively open they are to accept and see opportunities.

After I realized that I have been a gigger for thirty-five years, I started to ask my fellow members what they thought made a successful gigger. Here are the top three attributes:

#1. Giggers don't believe you need money to make money. Giggers do not need venture capital; they are perpetually undercapitalized, yet they always get along. You have heard this a million times: “The reason that businesses fail is that they run out of capital.” This is not gigger thinking. Giggers are not building a business; they are building a personal “go-to” reputation. They rarely pour money into their business itself, except for the occasional Chanel suit or Botox.

Giggers are snails, carrying their business on their backs like a shell.

#2. Giggers believe that Know-How is much more important than credentials. A gigger doesn't need a formal education. They study parallels between all they undertake and adapt their skill sets to the task at hand. The golden thread in their work is flexibility. Their credential is their experience, not their office or the size of their staff. But I balked a bit at the credentials part. I prided myself on having a six-page resume.

But in my heart I know that there are lots of lawyers, authors, marketers, financial journalists, travel consultants, TV/radio hosts, columnists and boomer life-style experts, but very few who have all these gigs. The value of the gigger is her willingness to hop on a plane at a moment's notice, get the job done, and fit into your tight budget. The gigger understands the part she plays, and incidentally may carry a piece of paper, a diploma, or license that says so.

#3. Giggers know how to be a brand. One of my first law assignments as a young associate was to work on the famous Chiquita Banana trademark case. Giggers know the Chiquita Banana secret. First, create a memorable brand. Second, make it sing in the mind of the public. Third, make sure your market knows where to buy or get your product or service. That is it, in the order of priority.

You can always tell a gigger's website, because her logo is her picture. Chiquita did all this with a paper label on a banana that most people trusted so much they never even bought a banana if it didn't have the label.

GIGGER NATION

In this economy you may need to be a gigger if:

- You make less money simply because times are bad
- You are older and no one hires you because you are an insurance risk
- You were a home maker with bad timing reentering the work force
- You dropped out to be a caregiver and want to get back to earning money
- You retired and are bored
- You retired and need more income because interest rates are down
- You lost a big part of your retirement nest egg
- Your company cut your pension or health benefits
- You are undereducated for the work force
- You had a death in the family and lost their support
- You had a nasty divorce and he/she got everything
- You just arrived from another country and can't find work
- You are an artist or writer and want to earn money while continuing your craft
- You are a lawyer, doctor or CPA with a great practice and lousy business skills
- You went into bankruptcy, have bad credit and can't get hired
- You get jobs, but you keep getting fired
- You lost your job because the company shut down or downsized

DO YOU ASPIRE TO BE A GIGGER?

Whether by choice or chance there is a critical path to being a successful gigger.

Start with cost-free research on your target market and your competition. Visit www.GoogleAlert.com and register for their free daily alert service on what stores, websites, Tweets, authors, etc. impact your product, service or client/customer.

Reach your market through e-mails that invite readers to seminars, teleseminars, or offer articles at your website. Tell them what you know, can do and how to contract with you. A great parallel is speaker sites. Check out www.speakernetnews.com, to meet a world of giggers.

Use an auto-responder system to manage your data base of e-mail addresses, send out messages that you prepare at designated intervals, thank your potential clients for responding to your offer, and automatically send them any articles, reports, papers, or seminar/teleseminar confirmations.

Now about that website... Eventually you will create the website of your dreams and pay for it. www.GenerationBold.com is my third site. I got started with a \$150 dollar template. If you are no techie, my favorite tip for the gigger in need of a website is to buy one on E-bay, ready-made. See also www.elance.com where you can have tech-savvy freelancers bid on your job. They are all giggers, too.

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2. Get free lists. Search for “share” and “safe lists” on the Internet and you will be invited into the world of free list marketing. 

ADRIANE BERG, CEO GENERATION BOLD, IS CREATOR OF “CRITICAL PATH SUCCESS™” A STEP-BY-STEP TUTORIAL AND NETWORK SITE FOR ALL BUSINESS AND “GIGGER” KNOW-HOW. FREE TUTORIALS ARE FOUND AT WWW.CRITICALPATHSUCCESS.COM. SHE CAN BE REACHED AT WWW.GENERATIONBOLD.COM.

the laws of success

ACHIEVE PERSONAL GREATNESS

By Dr. Timothy S. Wakefield



most people who achieve success in life have five things in common. All five commonalities influence each other and are necessary to achieve the goals and dreams that lead to success. By following these 5 simple laws you can achieve personal greatness.

MENTAL LAW OF SUCCESS

You are how you think. If you think positively, you will have a positive life. If you think negative thoughts, you will have a negative life. If you are critical of yourself and other people, you will attract more of what you are critical of. If you say something negative about someone else, it will come back to haunt you. That which we can conceive of, believe in, and confidently expect of ourselves must become our experience. The inside of your head determines the outside of your life.

Garbage in—garbage out. Greatness in—greatness out. You are right now where your mind has been in the past. By managing your mind, you can change its effect. If you think something won't work, it won't. You cannot do something you think you cannot. Your thoughts and beliefs control your life

and what you think and believe in is what you will get out of life. Whether you think you can or you can't—you are correct.

This is commonly called "mental toughness." Mental toughness allows you to keep focused and not be distracted by outside influences that may take you off course. You have control over the way you think. Think great thoughts and believe in yourself.

PHYSICAL LAW OF SUCCESS

The more physical energy you put into something, the more you will get out of it. You are as good right now as you've really wanted to be in the past. Nothing can prevent you from having what you sincerely desire as long as you are willing to put out the physical effort to attain it.

The best compliment you can get is if a person calls you "lucky." You create your own luck. The people that call you "lucky" were not there and do not see the dedication, sacrifice, disappointment and heartache that you went through to create your "luck." Luck is when preparation meets opportunity and no good effort is ever wasted. Thus, the harder you work, the luckier you will get. What are you willing to give up to become luckier than you currently are? Continue to work hard and prepare for your future and always remember you earn your luck.

LAW OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR

Sooner or later you'll get exactly what you expected. Behavior is how you conduct yourself through certain circumstances. The way we behave demonstrates what we truly want—not what we say we want—out of life.

You must set goals for yourself to achieve in any area of your life. Your expectations of yourself will mold your life. When looking into the future, you must ask yourself what you want and how you expect to behave to

actually get it. What you do and how you expect yourself to behave will greatly influence your chance at success.

SPIRITUAL LAW OF SUCCESS

Everything you do comes back to you. If you put out good, you'll receive good. If you put out bad, you will receive bad. You always get payback for what you do, one way or another. If you do something good (unconditionally, meaning you do it only because it is the right thing to do) for another person or entity, I believe you can get paid back up to ten times with "goodness." This is an important concept to understand. The more you give the more you receive.

LAW OF SELF-TALK

Thoughts are habits—how you talk to yourself is how you will think, act, and behave. Self-talk is the daily mental conversation we have with ourselves. Your self-talk can single-handedly shape your destiny. If someone spoke to you the way that you talk to yourself, would you hate or love them? Are you your own worst enemy or your biggest fan? Self-talk changes lives. Make sure to think "why not?" instead of "cannot."

Think abundantly instead of inadequately. An average person is the best of the worst and the worst of the best. Are you going to be an average person? No! You are a high achiever. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Talk to yourself about your great opportunities and you'll see how great you are!

Develop the habit of positive self-talk. Get excited about yourself! Get excited about your life! You've got great things ahead of you! Your future starts with how you think of yourself. 

DR. WAKEFIELD HAS PUBLISHED BOOKS, ARTICLES AND TAUGHT MULTIPLE DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS. HE CAN BE REACHED AT WWW.DEVELOPINGMENTALTOUGHNESS.COM.



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Keep It Simple Sweetie!

By Mare Petras

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR... RELEARNING TO BREATHE, SIMPLY

Momma used to take long, deep breaths, followed by the words, "just breathing is a gift." She did this so often, one Mother's Day, I gave her a big empty box, wrapped as a gift. After opening it, she looked up to a grinning me, who simply replied, "Your favorite, Momma...air." She smiled and deeply sighed, "Well, I guess I can never have too much air."

We can survive weeks without food.

We can survive days without water.

We can survive seven minutes without oxygen.

Most of us breathe to survive, but not to thrive. Many of us don't breathe correctly, taking rapid shallow breaths instead of deep restorative ones. Learning to take a good deep breath has its benefits.

BREATH AS A PERSONAL TRAINER

Deep breaths build aerobic capacity and promote weight loss. Although not a substitute for walking on the treadmill, deep breathing delivers more oxygen to the lungs and heart, which means more oxygen to the muscles, allowing you to work harder and burn more calories faster. Athletes recognize better breathing leads to better performance. Focused breathing helps muscles to relax and relaxed muscles use less effort, produce better movement and suffer fewer injuries.

There is good news for couch potatoes, too! Proper breathing increases metabolism naturally and effortlessly, meaning that just sitting on the sofa and breathing deeply can be beneficial. Restorative breathing relieves stress, and studies have shown that stress can make you fat. When the body is continually stressed, cortisol levels go up and the body burns sugar for energy instead of fat. Deep breathing and relaxation techniques lower stress levels, providing the environment the body needs to burn fat.

BREATH AS A TEACHER

Many believe breathing is a conduit to their spiritual life. Meditation uses breathing to achieve a higher level of consciousness. Taking breath-work deeper, some philosophers have even suggested that how we breathe is a metaphor for how we live our lives. Normal breathing patterns may signal needed changes for mind, body and spirit health. Pay attention to your breathing: Are your breaths shallow, labored, uneven, rapid, and mindless or are they full and deep?

Change your breathing—change your life. By adjusting where you spend your time when breathing, you may be able to balance your life. Where do you spend your time during any particular breath? Is it upon the inhale, in between (holding) or upon the exhale. Extreme

caretakers should try taking deep inhalations (focus on receiving air); multi-tasking busy bees should try to pause (savor the space in between breaths); and over-achieving type A's should try longer exhales (and let go before taking more air in).

BREATH AS A THERAPIST

Deep breathing calms, soothes and restores energy; mind and spirit. It also heightens senses and deeper awareness. Not only can breathing be good for your physical and spiritual health, it can also be good for your emotional health. Deep breathing can address deeper, underlying emotional issues that may need to be healed; issues that left unaddressed could lead to addictions, ill health and emotional disease.

THE SIMPLEST THINGS MAKE THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCES

While there are many helpful breathing techniques, most breathing experts agree that focusing too much on the "right way" to breathe can stress you out, increase tension and disturb your natural rhythmic patterns. Rather than focus on structured breathing methods, try to instead zero-in on your stress place-holders; for many this includes the neck, back, stomach or face (around the jaw area).

RELEARNING TO BREATHE

1. Make room for the new. Start with an exhale to fully release air.
2. Ready, set, breathe. Inhale slowly and deeply through the nose. A healthy inhalation takes about five seconds.
3. Finish long. Exhale slowly through the mouth emptying your lungs completely. Good breathers focus more on a thorough exhalation than on inhalation.
4. Belly breathing. Engage your diaphragm, the sheet of muscle along the top of your abdomen that pulls your lungs down to draw in air and then pushes your lungs up to expel carbon dioxide. With a good inhalation, your lungs puff up as your diaphragm drops. With a good exhale, your diaphragm rises. If you don't feel this muscle moving, deepen your breaths even more.
5. Slow it down. Work toward breathing just six or eight deep breaths per minute. Most of us breathe more than 20 times a minute.

As always, Momma was right. You can never have too much air. Breathing can help you feel better, and increase your ability to relax; mind, body and spirit. If you are ready to improve your game, be it tennis or life, take a moment and experience a deep breath of fresh air. 🍷

MARE PETRAS, A VETERAN OF THE FITNESS INDUSTRY FOR 3 DECADES, IS A MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER, WELLNESS WRITER AND FULL-TIME JOURNALISM STUDENT. SHE IS THE AUTHOR OF 3 FITNESS SIMPLY BOOKS AND HAS BEEN CALLED BY THE NY TIMES THE ANYTIME ANYWHERE FITNESS EXPERT. MARE LIVES, PLAYS AND BREATHE IN SARASOTA, FL AND CAN BE REACHED ONLINE AT WWW.FITNESSSIMPLY.COM.

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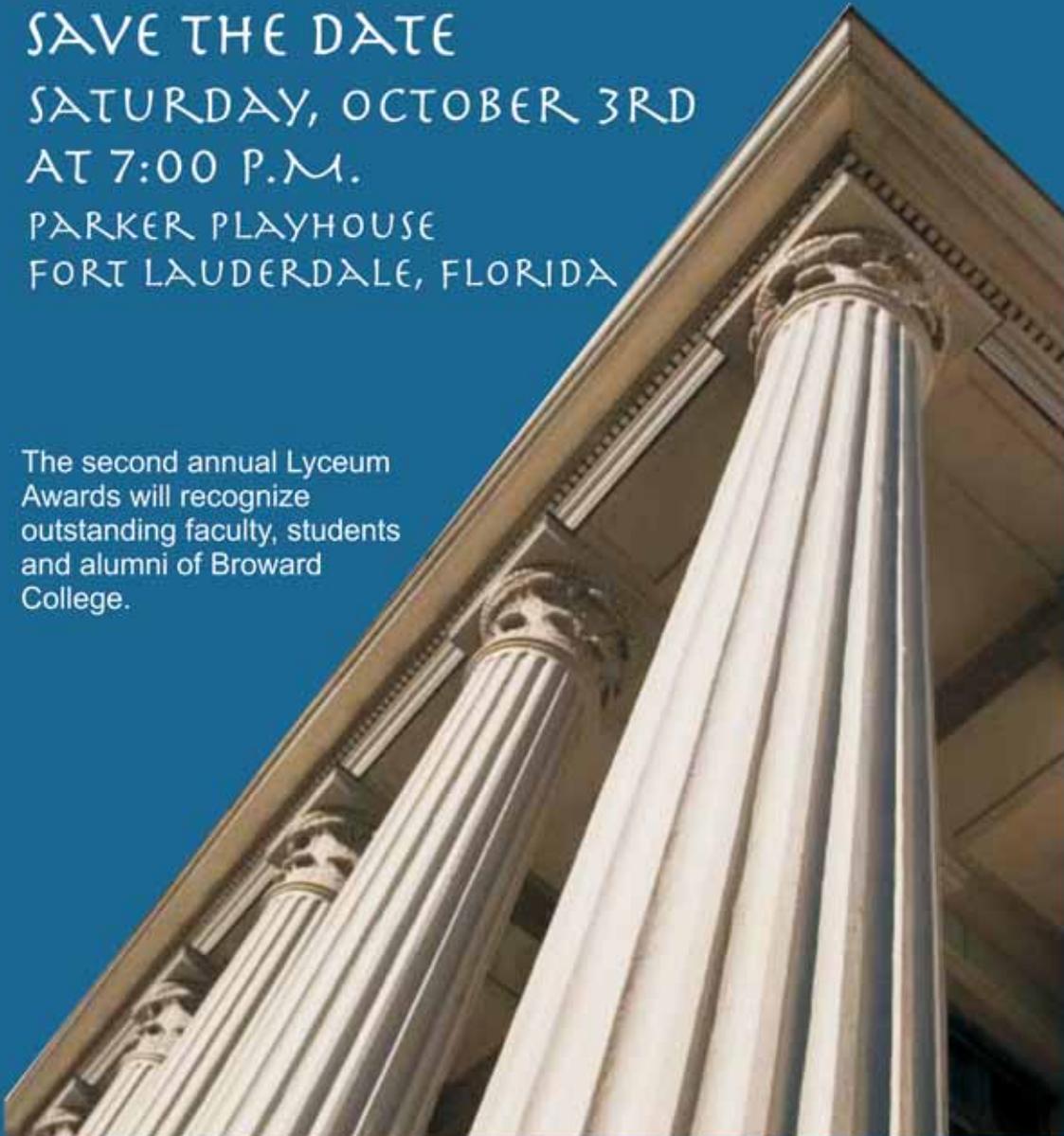
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If you have a difficult decision to make, how many people do you discuss it with?

Two people, because every aspect of your life affects you in two ways. Whether it is professional or personal, your decisions still affect your entire person. I usually ask one person from business whose opinions I value and trust and one from my family. The family member is almost always my mother or my daughter, because they can give me a woman's perspective and they know me best.

Has networking with other women had a positive impact on your personal and professional life?

Definitely! Although women are just as strong and capable as men, women can relate to one another at a common level so we are able to support each other in our different challenges as well as opportunities. Having networking events with women is very powerful.

When you were a child, did you have a hero (she-ro)?

You bet! My father was the wisest person I have ever met in my entire life. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't mention the lessons he's taught me. He had wonderful ideas on how to approach life. Back in Cuba, when I was a little girl, before new age thinking was trendy, everything that came out of his mouth is the same things I read about today.

What lesson would you like women to learn from your experiences?

Whatever happens in life and the direction it seems to be taking, to never give up your dreams. Tweak those dreams a little, if necessary, but always go forward with your ambition and dreams. Also, in business or with family, always teach by example. That is our motto in this [Florida Southeast] region of Aflac – lead by example! If you are acting and doing, being the best you can be, people around you will follow your lead.

How do you define success and what qualities define YOU?

Success to me is achieving your goals. Goals may change at each stage of your life, so when goals are attained, new goals need to be set. Similarly, the quality that defines me best is that I don't give up. No matter what the obstacles or how much I might want to give in, something deep down always keeps me moving forward, never giving up!

Do you believe in the concept of "giving back?" If so, how do you give back?

There are many ways to give back. Right now, I am mentoring high school girls. Young women come into the insurance office, for career days, and they also have opportunities to go out into the field with agents to see what this business is really like. If there is an interest, I will then mentor them. I also offer young women internships. I believe they need the support of another woman to help them grow professionally.

Marta M. Sastre, CLU

Regional Sales Coordinator
Aflac, Florida Southeast



Marta's connection with the women in her personal and professional life is a life line most would strive for.

Monica Puig

President and Founder
Latin Business Club of America
Editor, Latin Biz



Monica is a beautiful person. She is kind, fun, candid and real as she truly walks the walk of her beliefs. Helping and empowering others, by giving of herself.

If you have a difficult decision to make, how many people do you discuss it with?

For financial or legal matters, I would definitely get expert advice. On matters of which direction to take in life, I truly believe that all the answers exist within ourselves; we just need to access that information. That's why I meditate every day and also follow my instincts, because by following our instincts, we follow the desire of our souls. And, let's not forget that we are all surrounded by angels to give us guidance.

Has networking with other women had a positive impact on your personal and professional life?

Definitely! I love the energy level of networking with women! It is more like being in the sisterhood of magnificent goddesses. When I see another woman succeed, I embrace her success personally. Kind of like when the Marlins win and we say "We won!" even though our participation in the game was limited to kicking back, having a beer and cheering. When networking with women, I feel charged and empowered, forming strong bonds, both personally and in the workforce.

When you were a child, did you have a hero (she-ro)?

Samantha from Bewitched, of course! My personal hero was my grandmother; I have so many wonderful memories of how special she always made me feel. My grandma told me, "People won't always remember what you wore or what you said, but they will always remember how you made them feel."

What lesson would you like women to learn from your experiences?

My recommendations would be to always be yourself. Love yourself and do not measure yourself against others expectations. Set your own expectations. Most important, treat yourself with the same kindness, compassion and consideration that you treat others. We need to love ourselves more, ladies!

How do you define success and what qualities define YOU?

Success is about growing every day and seeing the blessing of every moment. It is thinking for yourself and not allowing yourself to be indoctrinated by other's ideas. It is about loving yourself and what you do. I think all my qualities emanate from my main one which is Love. I genuinely love myself, life and others, especially my son. Love gives birth to other qualities which I believe could describe me, such as compassion, passion, determination and acceptance.

Do you believe in the concept of "giving back?" If so, how do you give back?

Of course, there has to be harmony and balance in life. I believe our cup overflows just so we can spill it over others. I give back through my time and resources. Currently, my contribution is a [free] meditation group I host, which creates a ripple effect of other groups and giving.

When you were a child, did you have a hero or heroine? If so, who?

I never heard my father say a bad thing about an individual. He was well respected. After he died, I went through his letters and his photographs and I am trying to edit it as a book for my family. He was a manager for Illinois Bell in charge of the city Chicago at night.

When you have a difficult decision to make, do you discuss the issue with others?

Certainly. The decision rests on me but I want to know as many details. I would go to the advisors, supervisors, students, even the Asst. Dean. [When it is personal] I consult with my children.

Has networking with other women had a positive impact on your personal and professional life?

When I was growing up we really didn't have the concept of networking or mentorship. When I came to Huizenga School I got involved with Susie Levan and the Strategic Forum as the Student Advisor. Networking is a value. You must try to improve the lives of everyone around you by utilizing the people you know. It has been very rewarding for me to be able to connect people. It enhances the quality of my life.

Do you believe in the concept of giving back? If so, in what ways do you give back?

It is a life philosophy. I try to figure out somehow to accommodate a request. When I was [teaching] I worked constantly in different charities and I was on many boards. Now, I deal with the MBA Internship program. So, I am constantly getting requests from companies or non profits and it takes a lot of work to find interns to assist them. It isn't about working in a traditional setting on one of the boards. Also, my life situation now is different. I spent a lot of time with my daughter and her young children - we have a multi-generational household.

How do you define success and what qualities define you?

Fulfillment. Satisfaction. I am happy with where I am now because I can utilize my creativity and knowledge that I have developed. I am grateful for the "rocky road" that I have had. I have empathy. Success to me is being able to utilize all my positive qualities to help others.

What lessons from your own experience would you like to offer other women?

Trust intuition. Every time I have not [trusted my intuition] I have hit a brick wall. It has proven to be a good guide for me. I try to remind myself of that all the time. I sit back and ask myself "what are my alternatives?" and "what do I really feel?"

Carla Withrow

Assistant Director, Office of Program Management
H. Wayne Huizenga School of Business & Entrepreneurship
Nova Southeastern University



"Being involved in helping students and guiding them on their road through life, dealing with [all they have to give] and their enthusiasm translates to me. I pick up on their limitless possibilities.

Their enthusiasm encourages me."

Mary Lynn Swartz

Chief Executive Officer
Westside Regional Medical Center



“My dad was a wise man. He travelled the world and met many famous people. But he never forgot who he was, or the values [he] carried or his family.”

When you were a child, did you have a hero or a heroine. And, if so, who?

I was one of five children. My oldest brother was very inspiring to me. He always shared his insight. He was very philosophical. He became a physician. Both my parents were inspirational. We had a family that worked together. They were logical people. Everything was put into perspective: At the end of the day, we had our health and we had our family.

When you have a difficult decision to make, do you discuss the issue with others?

I tell people “I have to ponder that.” I am a thinker. It goes back to how I was raised. I put it in perspective—what is the most important thing that needs to be carried out or taken into consideration and working from that into the answer. I am known also to help other people put things in perspective.

Has networking with other women had a positive impact on your professional and personal life?

Networking is a way to gather information and learn more from someone else’s perspective on things. I think as women we have a greater willingness to share. I call upon other women to see and understand what they would do, how they would respond, what their insight is, what their experiences have been. I think it is important both professionally and personally.

Do you believe in the concept of giving back? If so, in what ways do you give back?

Yes, giving back in terms of philanthropy, our community, giving of our time, our skills, our resources to others who may not have had the opportunities. I try to inspire that within the hospital. As a woman, a mother, a wife, I try to inspire others to take someone along with them. [A] mentoring relationship. That is critically important. I mentor a lot of people. We try to find ways to bring people into the organization and open up “those doors” for them. We allow exposure to an industry that we need to continue to build. Through these mentorships I have developed many great friendships.

How do you define success? And, what qualities define you?

Success for me is to inspire others to make a difference: To find a way to provide balance and support for my family and myself. I am a good listener but I genuinely care and value people. My role here is to make a difference not only for the people we serve but for the people that work for us. I like to pull people in and give them the opportunity to give of their talents.

What lessons from your own experience would you like to offer other women?

I tell people be true to yourself. I try to give people an opportunity to shine based upon who they are. Be true to yourself. If you do, it is natural. ***If you have a difficult decision to make, how many people do you discuss it with?***

Two people, because every aspect of your life affects you in two ways. Whether it is professional or personal, your decisions still affect your entire person. I usually ask one person from business whose opinions I value and trust and one from my family. The family member is almost always my

bounce back from adversity

DAILY TIPS FOR ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS

By Zelda Greenberg



Are you stressed out by all the challenges facing you? At some time or another in our lives, we will face challenges. It is part of the process, and is meant to make you think and react. It is how we handle challenges that allows us to grow as an individual.

Maybe you are one of the millions of people that have recently lost a job. Now is the time to look at this as an opportunity instead of an end-all situation. Maybe you have always wanted to own your own business or travel the world but something stops you from moving forward to achieving that dream? Sure, money can be a factor when the rent is due next week, but let's step back and take a look at how you can turn these types of challenges into victories!

These few simple steps worked for me in bouncing back from adversity that you can practice daily to help you achieve your goals. As you continue to incorporate them into your daily life, they become more natural and part of your everyday living.

TAKE BABY STEPS

Don't try to tackle your entire work load in a day or even a week. Break down the goal into smaller parts. Make a "to do" list and write the things you need to do to accomplish your goal. This makes the goal manageable. What steps do you need to do to accomplish your goal? Work on your plan a little every day and you will see progress.

Don't get discouraged if you have an off day. It's important to remember that you will have setbacks but you must keep moving forward.

STAYING POSITIVE

When you get out of bed each morning, put on your happy face. Tell yourself out loud that it will be a good day. Walking around with a positive attitude is going to attract positive people and situations into your day. Let's face it, the day is much more pleasant when you are surrounded by happy people with a positive attitude. When you are positive, it is infectious and more positive situations will present themselves to you.

There are many people that have become very successful even after having negative things happen. Lucille Ball attended drama classes and one of her teachers said she would never make it as an actress; she was much too quiet and shy. Just imagine there being no *I Love Lucy*! Michael Jordan was kicked off his high school basketball team. Jordan once remarked, "I've failed over and over again in my life and that is why I succeeded." Keep a positive attitude every day and good things will enter your life and this will help you bounce back faster.

DISCOVER YOUR PASSION

Are you confused, worried about job security, or recently lost your job? Are you wondering what your next step might be? Are you someone that has always wanted to start your own business but not quite sure what kind of business to start?

Winnie lost her husband to cancer and was faced with the challenge of raising her two sons alone. She had little job experience and in the 1970's it was difficult for a woman to get any kind of credit without a husband to co-sign. A friend suggested she invest in a real estate career. Winnie did her research, she went to the library and read many books on investing in real estate. She attended several seminars on the subject and all her

research led her to invest in apartments that needed repairs. She went to one bank after another looking for foreclosures and money to borrow. Nobody wanted anything to do with this inexperienced investor but Winnie kept knocking on the doors until finally a banker said, "Yes."

She and her sons had a lot of fun buying, repairing and selling those apartments and today, Winnie and her 2 sons are young retired multi-millionaires.

Do you have any special interest or talent that can be developed? Do you like fixing things around the house, photography, cooking? You might be able to turn a hobby or special interest into a money-making business. Find things that are fun for you, then research the idea thoroughly. Attend tradeshow, conferences, seminars, read books, magazines, visit the competition, check out the industry on the internet. You are doing the research to bounce back.

SEEK ASSISTANCE

Surround yourself with people that can give you advice and guidance. Start by asking yourself, who are the successful people in the industry I am pursuing? What organizations do they actively participate with? Once you have determined where the successful people are that have already reached the goal you desire, you need to participate in those activities so you can have the opportunity to meet those individuals.

Many Chambers of Commerce offer seminars, conferences and mentorship programs. Consider a business coach. A coach can help keep you focused on the right track and help determine the best way for you to succeed. Community colleges offer online courses to help you brush up on skills.

For a business, consider creating a board of advisors. This is a great way to finding solutions to problems. Select members who are a mix of people with various expertise. Some people to consider for your board might be an attorney, CPA, banker, marketing expert and perhaps someone retired from your industry.

You don't have to meet the advisory team all at once, you might meet as a group once a quarter, or meet with the individual members as needed. An advisory board offers you a wealth of knowledge that will help you bounce back faster and a lot smarter.

TECHNOLOGY

Are there new industry software programs or products that can help you? You can learn about the newest technology and products by attending tradeshow and seminars. The internet offers a wealth of training webinars and teleseminars and many are free.

In today's wired world it is all about being connected via the internet. Are you connected to the social media explosion? The social media are internet sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Blogs and Twitter. The objective is to expand your circle of connections so more people are exposed to your business, but keep all of your social media sites professional. You can let your personality show but keep it all G-rated and professional.

The more others know about you and your products, the more exposure you will get, and that will help you reach the level of success you are seeking. Now is not the time to let new technology frighten you. The important thing is to start now, and you will bounce back stronger. 📞

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create intimacy

YOU CAN NEVER BE TOO BUSY!

By Jackie Black, Ph.D.



Intimacy isn't an automatic response. Intimacy isn't a given because you love someone or feel loved by someone. Intimacy doesn't come with a commitment or with a marriage license. The basic, fundamental element of intimacy is cherishing each other!

INTENTIONAL INTIMACY

Creating, nurturing and maintaining intimacy in long-term, committed relationships is the toughest and the most worthwhile undertaking one can accomplish. It requires intention, deliberate choice and deliberate action. Nothing about creating intimacy and truly being intimate with another person is unconscious. Closeness is enhanced through purposeful sensitivity, tenderness and respect for each other.

Intimacy is the result of celebrating each other. Here are some tips for celebrating each other's presence and celebrating being in each other's presence.

- Be appreciative.
- Offer acknowledgment.
- Give your partner the benefit of the doubt.

- Be the most ardent cheerleader.
- Be an enthusiastic supporter.
- Applaud your partner's efforts.
- Extol his or her virtues.
- Be generous of spirit and open hearted.
- Always remember to be encouraging.

WE ALL HAVE DISAGREEMENTS

Sometimes the most loving couples have minor disagreements that can get out of hand very quickly or a simple conversation can suddenly turn into a shouting match. Don't let this normal and natural dynamic in your relationship derail the intimacy you are intentionally building.

Understand that this happens because your fear of being abandoned, or disappointing your partner makes itself the primary consideration in the conversation, especially when you are intentional about creating intimacy.

Hearing his opinion or point of view can trigger your feeling of being invalidated, and for many people, it's a signal that ridicule, criticism or judgment is on the way.

Good communication is telling your truth about YOU and being congruent—within yourself. Being congruent is a process in

which you value yourself; you take ownership of your thoughts and feelings, and your resources and choices; honor and express your deepest knowing about yourself and be sure that what you say and how you say it match what you are feeling.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

There are three good reasons that you and your partner might not always communicate effectively with each other. First, most people don't identify their feelings accurately. Secondly, it is very difficult for most people to find the right words to express how they feel. Lastly, if they do know how they feel and if they have a few words to accurately express how they feel, most lack the courage to let anybody know.

Does this sound like you or your partner? Identifying your feelings, finding the right words to express your feelings and mustering the courage to actually express your feelings to him really isn't so complicated.

Don't avoid saying what is in your heart or on your mind to say. Say it! It will go a long way to deepen your intimacy.

Don't hide your worries because you don't want him to know that you are not in control. Share them! Watch the intimacy between you soar.

Don't dismiss your hopes and dreams because you are afraid he won't share your excitement. Honor them! Allow him in, and experience how the intimacy between you intensifies.

When you stay emotionally available and present, the intimacy you are building will deepen, and get richer and better. Create a safe and supportive place to tell each other the truth mindfully, responsibly and respectfully and always remember that the foundation of your relationship is built on good will and good intention.

BE INTENTIONAL

Be certain that your deliberate choice and deliberate action send the unmistakable message that you are happy to be with your partner and that your life is better and richer with her or him than it could ever be alone. Take the time to truly develop, take care of and preserve the intimacy of your relationship, learn to roll with the ups and downs and you will enjoy the warmth and tenderness of the relationship you want and deserve. 

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life after lay-off

TAKE CONTROL OF THE TAILSPIN AND SET A NEW COURSE

By Sherrie Bourg Carter

Women make up close to fifty percent of today's job market, and we've accomplished this milestone through hard work, dedication, and a strong work ethic. Unfortunately, however, in today's economy, it sometimes doesn't matter if you're a superstar, work longer, harder, and faster than the next person, or cut your baby teeth with the company. If the company can't afford to keep you, there's little you can do about it.



As you're sitting there with the proverbial pink slip in your hand, reeling from a whirlwind of mixed emotions. Your life has been thrown into a tail spin—and usually it's through no fault of your own! But as upset as you understandably may be, you have to gain control of the tail spin, right the plane, and set a new course.

Here are a few ways to get back on course.

MOURN THE LOSS

First, if you feel like you need a little time to mourn the loss and regroup, it's important that you take it. Starting a job search feeling overwhelmed, sad, and bitter is not likely to be productive, which in turn will only make you feel worse. However, it's equally important not to wallow in pity or engage in other self-destructive behaviors, such as drowning yourself in alcohol to ease the pain. Give yourself some time to grieve (depending on the person, this may take an hour, a day, or a week), then pick yourself up and jump back into the pilot's seat.

In order to do that effectively you first must accept that there are things over which you have no control. For example, you can't control what happened. "What ifs" right now are definitely not your friend, and if your focus remains on the past, how will you be able to focus on what you're going to accomplish in the future?

You also can't control the job market or the economy. If governments throwing billions of dollars into world markets cannot stabilize jobs or the economy, rest assured you cannot. It is what it is (at least for now). Your focus needs to be on what you can control.

CONTROL YOUR ENERGY

One of the most important things you can control is your energy level. Turn whatever negative emotions you may be feeling into positive energy. Turn anger into action. Turn fear into motivation. Turn disappointment into excitement over new possibilities.

Another way to boost your energy level is to exercise. Even fifteen minutes of walking a few days a week can increase your energy (not to mention your overall health). But you must funnel your newfound energy into positive forward movement. Tackle the job search as if it's a new job—because in many respects it is. You need to be organized, efficient, positive, strategic, and set goals for yourself just as you would in a new job.

YOUR CONFIDENCE LEVEL

You also have to control your confidence level. You are the same person you were before you were laid off. You may have more worries and feel more stress now that you've lost your job, but you have the same strengths and the same positive qualities you had before. Therefore, when you call about possible job opportunities, and espe-

cially when you go into job interviews, let your confidence show. If you have the time and the money, you also may want to consider taking a class or two to further boost your confidence, strengthen your resume, and show prospective employers your initiative.

Other important things to control are your direction and focus. Use networking as much as possible for job leads. The large majority of jobs are found through social networks, not through passive on-line or newspaper job searches. And the good news is that if you don't have a ready-made network, it's easier than ever to create one by using the Internet to reach thousands of people who may have leads that could land you the job you want.

CONTROL YOUR FOCUS

Once you find possible opportunities, you need to control your focus if you want to maximize your chances of success when applying for jobs. No one likes rejection. So don't apply for jobs in which there is a high probability of being rejected. That's not to say that you can't or shouldn't try new directions if you weren't happy with your past line of work. However, the likelihood of being hired in a field where you have no experience or training at a time when the job market is so saturated with prospective applicants is not very high. Focus on a realistic target, then send out targeted resumes to targeted companies that will give you the best chances of securing a job interview.

You also should do everything within your power to stand out to prospective employers, particularly in today's extremely competitive job market. Triple check your resume for mistakes and have another set of fresh eyes check it as well. Your resume is your professional calling card, your door opener to an interview. If there are errors in it, what does that say about your attention to detail? You also should do your homework, especially if your error-free resume lands you an interview. Find out everything you can about the company and the interviewer before you go in. The more you know, the more impressive you'll be.

CONTROL YOUR ATTITUDE

Finally, control your attitude. Simply stated, a positive attitude increases your chances for success whereas a negative attitude increases your chances for failure. That is universal to every aspect of life—school, relationships, sports, and yes, job hunting. Then, once you get your foot in the door, your attitude becomes even more critical. Be positive and confident, but realistic and honest. If you aren't familiar with a particular software program or aren't skilled in a particular area, don't claim you are. Instead, point out a similar skill that you do possess or show an eagerness to learn the new skill. And most importantly, no matter how angry you are about the lay-off, don't go into interviews bad-mouthing your former boss or expressing feelings of anger or bitterness over what happened. It will only reflect negatively upon you and reduce your chances of being hired.

Have you had a bad turn? Yes. But you can do this. Just keep your head up and your hands on the controls. Expect the first part of the ride to be a little bumpy and scary. All tail spins are. But once you right the plane, you have an opportunity—a chance to set a new course to a new destination on a new life's journey. Here's wishing you a safe landing! 🍀

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A woman is relaxing in a swimming pool, her head and shoulders above water. Behind her is a white cabana with red and white striped curtains and a matching roof. The cabana contains two lounge chairs with red cushions and a small table. The pool is surrounded by palm trees and other tropical vegetation under a clear blue sky.

summer spas to soothe your soul

Ah, summer. It's the season for slowing down, enjoying the outdoors and perhaps a spa getaway. Spa is all encompassing and reflects the time you give yourself to relax, unwind and rejuvenate all of your senses. If you're considering a getaway closer to home this summer, consider these stunning resorts and feel your stress melt away.



Hyatt Regency Bonaventure & Red Door Lifestyle Spa

WESTON, FL

Spa is a lifestyle full of activity, healthy eating and services to help reduce stress, soothe your senses and relax your body. The Red Door Lifestyle Spa is a one-of-a-kind option in a resort setting and this is the first and only Red Door Lifestyle Spa in the country.

The 48,000-square-foot spa offers a full spa and salon, however what makes it even more unique for a resort is the inclusion of the Zen Garden, hot yoga room, Pilates studio, fitness center and the saunas, hot tubs and steam rooms. Another attribute of the Lifestyle Spa is that they have lifestyle coaches offering personal training and nutrition counseling. The group fitness classes also include Feldenkrais and Callanetics (a unique exercise designed to tighten and reshape your body while increasing strength, flexibility and body alignment).

Another unique opportunity at Red Door Lifestyle Spa is their post-breast-surgery massage therapy. And, two other popular spa services, Abhyanga and Thai Yoga Body Work, can also be scheduled.

The Hyatt is also offering Spa Retreats and one is called *Balance*, which includes deluxe accommodations as well as a full breakfast and a \$50 spa credit. With so much going on in our lives today, going to the spa has become more of a necessity to reduce stress and increase our well-being. Take the time to nurture your soul, relax your body and calm your mind.

One of my picks for a spa service includes the Tropical Essence Infused Body Massage. It is a Lifestyle Signature Massage offering a hydrating massage of warmed tropical body and massage oils with a hint of tangerine, lime and sweet orange. Warm towels (with an infusion of tropical oil) are then applied and topped off with natural, relaxing, and purifying acupressure and massage to vital points of the hands and feet to release blocked energy and encourage deep relaxation.

ESPA at Acqualina Resort & Spa

SUNNY ISLES BEACH, FL

Reminiscent of a Mediterranean villa, this is one of the most enchanting resorts on the Florida coast. Acqualina is set on 4.5 beachfront acres with 188 residences and 97 spectacular guest rooms. It is the epitome of luxury and relaxation. The views are stunning and the setting offers the perfect summer escape from the ordinary. Upon entering this stylish resort you can feel your body begin to relax and your mind begin to wander to a more peaceful state. There are three oceanfront pools, cabanas, a marine biology-based AcquaMarine children's program, two oceanfront restaurants and their unique 20,000-square-foot two-story oceanfront spa, called ESPA.

Based on Ayurvedic principles, ESPA offers an amazing holistic spa experience with 16 treatment rooms, a private spa pool and heated jet pool featuring a Roman waterfall, Finnish Saunas, Crystal Steam Rooms, Ice Fountains, Experience Shower with cool arctic and warm Caribbean mists and Relaxation Rooms. A sanctuary like no other, an ESPA full-day spa journey is optimum such as the Detox and Renew or the Ayurvedic Experience. One of the Holistic Body Massages to consider is the Balinese Massage, which can also be personalized. With this service, warm aromatherapy oils are poured onto the center of the body and massaged into the skin using long, stretching, sweeping movements for deep relaxation.

There is also a lot to explore in the area including a stroll at Bal Harbour Shops, South Beach, Museum of Contemporary Art, Broward Center for the Performing Arts and Coconut Grove's Cocowalk.

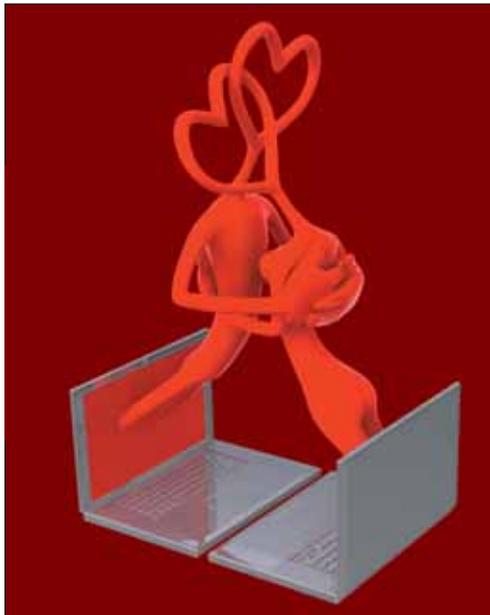
To complete the Mediterranean experience, consider dining at Il Mulino New York, which features authentic cuisine from the Abruzzi region of Italy. And to add a little romance, guests can enjoy an Il Mulino New York designed menu beachfront surrounded by candles. *Bellissimo!*



For more information, please visit:

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finding love online

A MATCHMAKER'S TIPS

By Ann Robbins

As a matchmaker, I'm keenly aware of the many frustrations people face when looking for love online. The number one complaint I hear is that (unfortunately) people misrepresent themselves. Whether it's their age or the fact that their photo was actually taken ten years ago, many people simply do not tell the truth when posting an online profile.

Here are a few tips that will greatly enhance your odds. Bear in mind, searching for your soul mate via the Internet is just one way you should look. If it is the only way you look, realize you could be disappointed.

SAFETY FIRST

Never forget, if you decide to communicate with, or meet in person, someone that you've found online, remember that you are meeting a total stranger.

To help avoid disaster, begin with using plain common sense. Spend a lot of email time prior to talking on the phone. Beware of anyone that talks about sex or anything that seems too forward or too quick. If anyone claims to have fallen in love with you prior to meeting, run, don't walk, them to your computer desktop trash can. If you are uncomfortable for any reason, do not agree to give out your phone number or meet in person.

When you do decide to give out your phone number, it is best to use a cell phone. Home phone numbers can be "googled" and they are tied to your home address. Cell phone numbers are not traceable to your address.

Assuming you get past the initial phone conversations and decide to meet in person, pick a public place and let other people know where you are going, what time, and for how long. Never, ever, give out your home address, never agree to allow someone to pick you up, and always have your own transportation home.

PROFILE BASICS

Your online profile is your opportunity to make that great first impression. You will want to put your best foot forward and resist the temptation to embellish. Always tell the truth. Be honest—with yourself—as well as your readers.

It is important your profile is a snapshot of who you are and what you're looking for. You should write your profile based on your Life Vision, your Relationship Requirements, and your Relationship Goals. Most online dating websites allow you to write an essay or two. Be sure to add things that address your passions, your qualities, your interests, your goals: "I love to ...", "My friends say I am ...", "My strongest values are ..." and "I'm looking for ..." A strong and unique headline will get attention. A photo is a must.

KNOW YOUR REQUIREMENTS

The only way you can describe yourself and your vision for an ideal mate and relationship is to know your requirements. Requirements are the black-and-white, non-negotiables. These are the things, that if missing, would cause you to walk away. Requirements are typically values-based and are the things that are absolutely necessary for you to be in and remain in a relationship. Make a list—know yourself.

NEEDS AND WANTS

These are negotiable. This is where the give and take comes into play. Think of what is important to you, what you like, qualities and attributes you're looking for, and include this in your profile. Be sure to emphasize the qualities and attributes you bring to someone, as well.

BE THE CHOOSER

Being the Chooser means creating your life experiences based on YOUR criteria for living a full life. Having a clear vision of the relation-

ship and life you want enables you to say “no” to the things you don’t want. You should not be willing to compromise or settle for less than you want and deserve. As the Chooser, you will attract someone into your life who loves you as you are, not in spite of it.

FEELING REJECTED

Rejection is a feeling most people have experienced – and fear of rejection can keep us from taking a chance! Most good things don’t come to us without some risk, and some hard work. Not everyone will be a compatible match for you. That’s OK! If you maintain a keen awareness of who you are and what you want, you will not attach yourself to the outcome of dates. Maintain a “Chooser” mentality, and your feelings of rejection will be diminished, if not completely absent!

SORT, SCREEN, TEST

Thanks to the Internet, there is a wealth of information you can learn about someone prior to ever meeting them. Learn to assess initial compatibility through email communication. Once you talk on the phone, you should be able to quickly assess if someone is compatible with you. Effective sorting enables you to disengage and avoid wasting your time on someone who is not right for you.

Screening takes place usually over several weeks, even months, to determine if someone meets your requirements. You should have a good idea within several dates if someone is a good fit for you.

Testing your potential mate comes after you’ve done the initial sorting and screening. If they’ve made it this far, you now want the test of time to be sure they are consistent in their behavior and that your requirements are indeed met.

RED FLAGS

LISTEN to what is being said—either in their profile, email, or on the phone. Have you spotted any contradictions? Are they available only at odd hours? Are they talking about sex or anything you find inappropriate or offensive? Do they seem too good to be true? Are you sure they’re single? Are they overly negative about past relationships or an ex? Do they get angry or upset easily? Are they available to talk by phone freely? If any of these questions don’t have an answer you’re comfortable with, be the Chooser.

THE GRACEFUL EXIT

The biggest disappointment when meeting someone you’ve found online is the lack of chemistry. Although email and phone are a great way to begin to get to know someone, all too often, the initial meeting is a huge disappointment. If there is no chemistry, or something tells you things are not right, trust your instincts. Never ignore your inner voice and never ignore red flags when it comes to love relationships! If they are evasive, seem “iffy” or anything else occurs to give you pause, consider it a red flag and make your exit.

Practice how you will do this. Usually, the less said, the better. You can say something like, “I really enjoyed meeting you and getting to know you but I just don’t think we’re a match. I wish you all the best in finding someone.” It may seem hurtful at first to break it off with someone but it’s more hurtful, to both of you, to continue developing a relationship that simply won’t work. 🚩

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WHY “NO” IS A MUST

By Tania Paredes, LCSW, DCSW

don't be a pushover



It's easier to say yes than no. We'd rather play the good guy than risk being known as the bad friend, neighbor, co-worker or lover. And it's no surprise who tops the list of being the biggest pushovers. Women are more often than men taught to be nurturing and caring. Men have an easier time brushing others off. But, don't be discouraged, ladies. Your men can also be pushovers in an effort to not confront others or exert their needs.

The difficulty in saying no can be the same regardless of scenario. It can be just as tough to say no to a telemarketer as it is to your boss or your kids. Much of our “yes compulsion” stems from our need for approval, to be liked and accepted. But that's not to say being a “yes woman” never comes from a truly good place—often we do genuinely want to help. But more than that, we don't want to hurt anyone's feelings, and so it becomes a habit, part of our daily discourse. This is when we start to notice we say yes to everyone, whether they matter to us or not. We also want to avoid the wrath we think will ensue if we deny a favor or request, taking the path of least resistance. People get so hung up on the consequences, but guess what? The fallout is never as great as we think it will be. Besides, there is a time to say yes and a time to say no.

WHY “NO” IS A MUST

Learning to say no is more important than you realize. Being a pushover puts the health of your relationships, even your physical health, in jeopardy. While you may think you're earning brownie points by always conceding, you'll eventually be disappointed in yourself, not to mention burned out and frazzled because your own needs are constantly put on hold. You become a pawn and people take advantage of you. You give control to everyone else. You may also become bitter at those who constantly demand so much of your time. Resentment creates stress and anxiety, and that's linked to depression.

It's impossible to be there at someone's every beck and call. Eventually, when you start taking control you'll realize that you have a life, too, and it is OK to fight for it and your needs.

THE BASICS

Saying no is a learned art, so let's get down to business. Before responding to a request made of you, ask yourself the following questions to cut down on spontaneous or guilt-ridden yesses:

- Do I have time?
- Will I feel pressure to get it done?
- Will I be upset with myself if I say yes?
- Will I be resentful of the other person?
- Will I feel tricked if I say yes?
- What do I have to give up to do this?

Once you get used to asking yourself these questions, you'll start making better choices. Saying no with some thought gives you time to say yes to the people you really care about.

DON'T BE A SUCKER

You can spot a sucker from a mile away... so how do you get tricked yourself? Getting you to say yes often requires specific manipulation tactics, whether the asker knows they're using them or not. Some favorites: flattery ("I know I can count on you to..."), helplessness ("I can't do it without your help..."), or the apology ("I'm so sorry to have to ask, but will you..."). Learn to tell the difference in a genuine asking of a favor or someone taking advantage of you.

Understanding what's really being asked of you will make it easier to say no and mean it. And keep this in mind: it's usually you who feels guiltiest—not the asker, no matter how presumptuous the request.

SHORT AND SIMPLE

When we do manage to say no, many of us go overboard in justifying our answer. But you don't have to give a long-winded explanation of why you can't or won't do something. The longer—and often, more rambling—your reason is, the more it starts sounding like an excuse. As soon as you start layering your “no” with excuses, the more wiggle room you give the person asking to come back with a “but.” In instances where you don't have to explain, don't. Why should you explain if it is what is right for you?

Keep it short and sweet; you don't owe much more.

WHAT NO REALLY MEANS

Contrary to what you may think, saying yes all the time doesn't make you a better person. And saying no when a request just doesn't work for you doesn't mean you're cold or selfish. It means you're able to assert yourself and set boundaries for your personal life. Much of the time the favors asked of you are offers you can refuse. A well-thought-out no doesn't cut off a relationship. Just think about all the people who say no to you—they're still your friends! If it does cut off a friendship then ask yourself if that person was truly genuine.

Search within yourself why you feel like you are a pushover, then start making healthy changes within yourself to be a more balanced individual. 📌

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the organizers' secret

GETTING FROM TO-DO TO DONE

By Diane Hatcher



The singular most important bit of organizing advice I give as a professional is the importance of making a daily to-do list. I know, the words alone make some quake in their boots. However, the following information should convince you that a to-do list is indispensable as a major time management tool.

What is actually meant by time management? It is the ability to control and use the 24 hours in your day efficiently and effectively. It applies to all types of communications—email, phone calls, text messages, snail mail, appointments and calendar. You may feel that these things seem out of control, or uncontrollable.

PERSONAL SUPPORT SYSTEM

While time does not always go as intended, for the most part, you can determine how you want your day to progress. With the support of your to-do list, your day is more apt to work out as planned, than not. Surprised?

Say you are taking a trip. You bring a map (or a GPS) along. While driving you suddenly realize you don't know where you are. You pull over, read the map and locate your position in relation to where you need to be. Thus you are able to get right back on course. This is a great analogy for a to-do

list. Your day gets off track, then you look at your list and decide what still needs to be done that day. Since your list consists of things you need to do, have to do and want to do, it provides the opportunity to decide which item to do next.

ADVANTAGES AND BENEFITS OF YOUR LIST

- Provides a starting place for your day
- Keeps you focused, averting distractions
- Gets you back on track
- Increases productivity
- Assists with prioritizing
- Motivates you
- Relieves stress
- Improves memory
- Minimizes mind clutter
- Simplifies life
- Allows you to feel sense of progress

BASIC LIST-MAKING GUIDELINES

- Use colorful 5x7 paper
- Title it by the day of the week or date it
- Abbreviate using short phrases
- Start the list the day before (not at night)

- Include items you need, have and want to do (5-8 on average)
- Cross out completed items (and feel good about that)
- Add to the list throughout the day if needed (it's your life)
- Place a tiny "o" indicating "out" in front of the errand items
- Be OK with leaving some items incomplete
- Decide whether carrying over incomplete items to next day or future date
- Start a fresh page daily (focus on what you've completed, not what you haven't)

CUSTOMIZE YOUR LIST

An alternate format to a straight line list is to create four separate columns for things to do: In the House, At Your Desk, Phone Calls and Errands (out of the house). This helps maintain focus on related types of activities which statistics show save time.

Using pencil, number the items you intend to do in the morning, in the order you'd like to do them. Re-evaluate in the afternoon if they are not completed and renumber remaining items.

PROJECTS VS. TASKS

It is important to know that projects are made up of tasks. You will sabotage your list if you only list the project. When planning a project, break it down on a separate piece of paper by listing all the tasks involved. (They don't have to be listed in order). Then transfer the next step or two to your daily to-do list.

BE PERSISTENT

Statistics prove that it takes 21-30 days to establish a new habit. So be sure to write a daily list on consecutive days, including weekends, until the habit becomes second-nature.

Following these simple guidelines will help you achieve the aforementioned benefits. You will feel better, and who knows, your friends, boss, and family may even notice!

Ask anyone you know who follows this advice and I am certain they will validate the need for this indispensable tool.

HAPPY ORGANIZING! 📅

DIANE HATCHER, CPO®, TIME-SAVERS PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZING, INC., THE ONLY CERTIFIED ORGANIZER IN S. FLORIDA AND HAS BEEN ORGANIZING BUSINESSES AND HOMES SINCE 1998. SHE IS THE AUTHOR OF DON'T AGONIZE, ORGANIZE YOUR OFFICE NOW! CONTACT HER AT 954-252-7511 OR WWW.TIMESAVERSUSA.COM.

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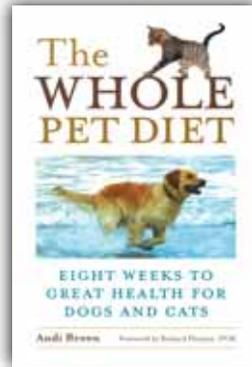
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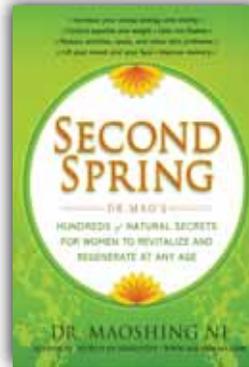
READERS' CHOICE

By S J Strock

America's obesity epidemic is big news, but did you know that pet obesity has also exploded to epidemic proportions? Just like their overweight owners, one in four pets is a Fat Cat or Flabby Fido! This eight-week program to optimum health for dogs and cats combines exercise, natural supplements and high-quality, chemical-free food. With each chapter, you'll read true stories of seriously ill animals that have been transformed by Andi's simple plan.



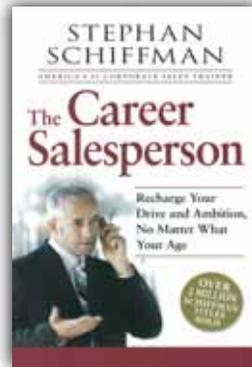
Author Andi Brown
(Celestial Arts)



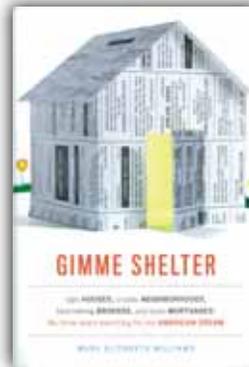
Author Dr. Maoshing Ni
(Free Press)

In Chinese culture, the term for a woman's midlife transition is "Second Spring." This is because the Chinese see midlife as a time to embark on a new path of self-realization. Dr. Mao invites women to experience midlife as a time when she truly comes into her own and offers hundreds of natural ways to adjust successfully to the inevitable physical, hormonal and emotional changes of menopause.

Sales guru, Schiffman, offers sage salespeople the perfect resource to revamp their careers and to regain their competitive edge in a changing marketplace. Older salespeople who were at the top of their game prior to the advent of Google, Blackberry and IM, can sometimes find themselves losing their sales abilities using what was tried-and-true strategies. With this book by their side, older salespeople will regain the advantage and watch their commissions soar!



Author Stephan Schiffman
(Adams Business)



Author Mary Elizabeth Williams
(Simon & Schuster)

Part cautionary tale, part American dream, this insightful and compelling story goes well beyond Williams' personal journey. It is a vivid examination of a time and place that continues to feel the repercussions of unchecked greed and deregulated markets. Research of the real estate markets in Atlanta, Miami, Dallas, Los Angeles and many other cities across the nation reflects the reality behind the myth of the "ownership society."

In today's fast-paced world of instant gratification, many find themselves lacking direction, purpose and satisfaction. The depressed economy hasn't made things easier, and how to find meaning and fulfillment in life when there is little time to complete day-to-day tasks is an ever looming question. Fortgang offers up the solution as she candidly discusses lessons from her own life, while detailing the comical, significant and sometimes tragic stories that led her to important revelations.



Author Laura Berman Fortgang
(Tarcher/Penguin)



Author Bonnie St. John
(Faith Words)

This masterful book includes stories from Bonnie's life and from others who have taught her how to live with joy. Through powerful anecdotes, readers are given the formula for bringing joy into life on a daily basis. She guides readers through a process of steadily increasing their joy, by learning and practicing new habits and behaviors – by living life with more faith, more prayer and more love.



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take out the stress to achieve success

HANDLE
THE CHALLENGES
THAT CAN CAUSE
DISTRESS

By Larry Duboff, D.C.

Life is challenging. Day after day you must manage your time to meet the demands of your profession, family and personal life. Your relationships keep creating new challenges that can be stressful, and dealing with unexpected, unpleasant circumstances may cause you distress as well. Stress in many forms is common in society, and it's a problem because it can rob you of your health, happiness and potential for greater success.

The good news is, if you are one of the many people who are caught up in life's sticky web of stress, you can get untangled and stay untangled. Remember these seven tips for less stress and greater happiness the next time you are under pressure.

STAY CLEAR OF THE DRAMA

You don't have to get caught up in chaos just because everyone else is up to their neck in it. As Rudyard Kipling writes in his poem, If, "If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you..." you'll be able to keep your cool under pressure and tackle your challenges much more effectively.

DEFINE YOUR HIGHER PURPOSE

More than a goal or set of goals, purpose is a driving force that gives your life meaning and direction, preventing you from drifting aimlessly. And it gives you a reason to pick yourself up when life knocks you down. What drives you forward each day? Dedicated service to others? Making a difference in the world?

LIGHTEN UP

When was the last time you worried about something that didn't happen? Many of the things you worry about won't occur, and worrying cannot help the problems that do take place. Similarly, being upset with circumstances in the past cannot improve your life either.

DEVELOP PRESENT-TIME CONSCIOUSNESS

Focus your attention on the activity you are currently involved in. Don't allow your mind to dwell on any previous problems or possible challenges. Present-time consciousness allows you to be more efficient and productive, and it helps you eliminate unnecessary stress.

OVERRIDE YOUR PRIDE

Think of a time in your life when you insisted that you were right and another person was wrong. Did this really bring you more happiness, or did it just create more stress for both of you? The next time you find yourself in a similar situation, choose to override your pride.

DO THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT YOU ARE FEELING WHEN AGGRAVATED

When someone or something pushes your hot buttons, you may feel justified to react with anger, but this negative reaction only brings more stress to the situation. A better approach is to stop yourself from overreacting and instead say or do something positive that can defuse the situation.

APPRECIATE LIFE'S LITTLE DETOURS

Like it or not, you will be knocked off course occasionally. Most often this is a blessing in disguise. Each time you have to pick yourself up to get back on track, you learn important lessons and develop new skills. 📦

LARRY DUBOFF, D.C. IS A PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER AND AUTHOR. HE CAN BE REACHED AT WWW.EZSTRESSREDUCTION.COM.



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first date disconnects

TELL ME WHY

By Jacqui Brandwynne



*h*e's *Just Not That Into You* is the book that started the national first-date debate. Yet the pivotal question remains unanswered: Why was there no second date? What turned him or her off? Our inquiry among women and men reveals the key reasons why daters' first encounter didn't lead to a second meeting.

"Right from the get-go, he expected me to make the first moves and pursue him. If the guy isn't interested enough to pursue me, he's not my guy. I am liberated; I've always earned my own money. Still, I want a man to be a man. I expect him to call me first, to pick me up and treat me like I'm important to him. That's what I expect, and he'll get my serious attention. Otherwise – good bye."

"We sat next to each other at a concert and struck up a conversation. We exchanged phone numbers. She called the next day saying that she was going out of town and wanted to connect before leaving. I thought this was ok, she showed me that she was interested. We had our first date. During dinner she was all over me, promoting upcoming events to attend together. Her pushy ways made me uncomfortable. I like to be the pursuer. If a woman is too available, it turns me off. I never responded to her messages."

No matter how emancipated we have become, both men and women still have strong feelings about enacting their traditional roles. Women complained over and over again about the lack of initiative on the part of men; they're indecisive, giving mixed signals. Many males suggested that women have become too aggressive, too independent and lost some of their femininity. "I like

a woman to be girly and cuddly at times." Both sexes agreed that their worst dating experiences were based on internet encounters when they discovered during that first date that the people had completely misrepresented themselves.

AVOIDING DISCONNECTS

- When on your date, show that you're genuinely interested in your partner. Guys, please don't stare at other women. Keep your chauvinism in check.
- Ladies, don't interrupt his conversation. Leave your "I'm your equal" attitude at home.
- While open communication is essential, listening is equally important. Even if you disagree with what he or she says, don't argue. Present your point of view in a nice and non-confrontational way.
- Remember, you're there to learn about each other. The emphasis is on each other.
- Guys, while you think it's not cool to call too quickly for a second date, don't wait till Thursday if you plan to see her on the weekend. It's not respectful.
- Ladies, you're NOT available when he finally gets around to calling you. No matter what, decline his last moment effort so he understands that you have an enjoyable life without him.
- For both: Don't just call for a date because you have nothing better to do. Call because you are genuinely interested to get to know the other.
- Good personal hygiene and a nice appearance are important. Says she: "His teeth were all stained. I knew right away I could never kiss him. And his car was a mess. He clearly didn't have much respect for himself or me." Says he: "She is a pretty woman but she wore something very low cut and tons of make-up. I felt embarrassed walking into the restaurant with her where I was known."
- Finally, if the chemistry works, always treat your date like you want to be treated. That's the secret to landing a second date. 📧

JACQUI BRANDWYNNE IS AN AUTHORITY ON RELATIONSHIPS ASSOCIATED WITH WOMEN'S AND MEN'S HEALTH AND INTIMACY. YOU CAN MAIL YOUR QUESTIONS TO PO BOX 491341, LOS ANGELES, CA 90049. WE NEVER REVEAL OR GIVE OUT NAMES OR ADDRESSES. SHE CAN BE REACHED AT WWW.VERYPRIVATE.COM.



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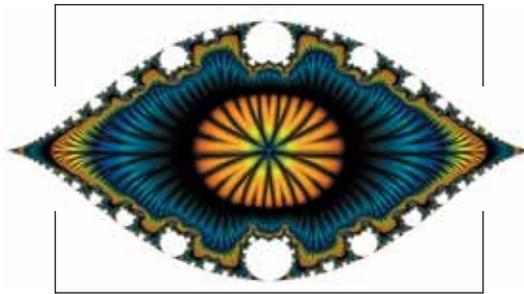
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me, myself & eye

By Vaishali



I was born with a very large cataract in the left eye and a syndrome that only occurs in female children. My family never made fun of me. They never commented on the birth defect affecting my left eye. So when I started kindergarten, my first introduction into the “outside world,” I was surprised and woefully unprepared.

This syndrome caused the left eye to turn inward and to the right. The left eye would pull toward the nose in such an exaggerated manner that the pupil and iris could not be seen, leaving me with a quite decidedly one-eyed look.

YEARS OF CORRECTIVE SURGERY

I was completely taken aback when the other children would look at me, scream and run away. I had no idea my schoolmates would respond so violently to a condition I only thought about when I had to go for an eye examination. My parents had taken me in for cosmetic surgery several times since I was an infant in an attempt to correct the problem. The doctors had done the best they could, but the correction would not be complete until my body stopped developing and muscle growth had stabilized. The bottom line was that I was stuck with this defect until my early twenties. My social life was swirling down the drain, and I didn't even know it.

At the tender age of five, I had no concept that my face looked dramatically different from others even with the one eye turned grossly inward. I did not know how to respond to the other children's reactions of calling me a "monster" and "Cyclops." As I progressed through school, to say that things didn't get any better would be an understatement.

CHILDREN CAN BE CRUEL

In the small town where I grew up, as with all small towns, once you are given a label, it is yours to cherish for a lifetime, or at least for what seemed that long. My nickname all through middle school and high school was "Cyclops." Although the situation was gradually correcting itself as I got older, it was still highly visible.

It was not until I went off to college that I was finally free of the town "freak" stigma. Even today, if you know what to look for, you can still see remnants of the irregular left eye movement. It had taken me nearly twenty years, but now it was no longer an issue that poisoned every relationship I attempted to cultivate. At last I was gaining some distance from the emphasis on being "defective" and I was starting to appreciate the level and quality of self-development and self-acceptance this one-eyed look imposed upon my life.

I KNEW WHO I WAS

I was a very private child. I spent a great deal of time playing by myself and developed a very healthy and strong sense of independence. I learned to value, respect and honor my relationship with myself. I focused on hobbies that cultivated and fostered my creativity. I was comfortable within my own

skin and with my own companionship. I knew who I was, even if every last person on the planet wanted to stone me for being a freak. I knew I was a good, loving and very intelligent person. I was okay with myself, even if no one around me could validate or embrace that level of open, honest acceptance.

My appreciation for this unusual character-building birth defect hit an inadvertent epiphany one evening. The actor William Windom was performing a one-man play of James Thurber writings. I paid an additional sum of money to attend an event after the performance where people could meet the actor and ask him questions. I recall there being a long line. I patiently waited my turn to speak with Mr. Windom, when a tall very attractive blonde woman stepped right in front of me as if I was not there, and asked if Windom had any opinion as to why James Thurber was such a brilliant writer. What William Windom uttered next both shocked and healed me. "Thurber was such a creative writer, because he was born blind in one eye. He was a freak, and his childhood was so painful he developed himself and his imagination in a way most people are never forced to," Windom explained.

CONFIRMATION AT LAST!

Yes, this has provided me with an inner strengthening and self-knowing...I knew it! "Are all people who are born blind in one eye 'freaks'?" I asked Windom, elbowing my way around the rude, buxom blonde. "Do you know any who are not?" He answered. "No," I thought to myself, "I don't." "I was born blind in one eye," I stammered aloud. Windom turned beet red and was clearly embarrassed to have said something he felt I might have taken as offensive. Of course this poor man had no way of knowing he was talking to the only "born blind in one eye" person within a ten-thousand-mile radius. And strangely enough, I felt deeply comforted. Validated at last, albeit a bit circuitously, the feeling inside me was sweet and had a deliciously victorious quality about it.

Being a writer myself, I am thrilled to no end to share the same creative, self-integrative path with the likes of James Thurber. We both learned to find our own voice, to channel our inner wisdom in an outward expression that we could share whole-heartedly and creatively with others. There is a security within ourselves, about who we are, that was hard won and relentlessly tempered by life.

Those early years were very challenging; not experiences I would wish to repeat. Yet at the same time, I would not change them even if I could. I have learned how to see the real me. I have learned to grow beyond, where others cannot see me at all. I have reached within myself and found a woman of depth, character, sensitivity and wisdom. I have had a lifetime of practice accepting myself, flaws and all. I have learned to embrace and love my inner "freak." This Cyclops has become a person of self-knowledge and entrenched self-confidence, immune to the poison of the slings and arrows (and rocks) of outrageous fortune and the erosion of toxic judgments.

REACHING WITHIN MYSELF

Today I teach workshops at the most prestigious retreat centers in the world, and I am a syndicated radio show host with a call-in program where listeners ask for guidance and clarity in their personal lives. I love having a life of service, helping others to overcome obstacles that are limiting their growth and personal happiness. This birth defect, along with other life challenges, has provided me with the best "on the job" training available, giving me the innate ability to extend compassion, support and sage advice to others. I have the talent and wisdom to empower my audiences to change their perspective and reframe their lives, allowing them to deal, in a healthy manner, with whatever surprises life throws their way.

Whenever I'm out and about and encounter other women in the flow of my everyday life, whether I'm traveling, standing in the line at the bank or cruising the isles of the grocery store, I pass out "Beyond Karma Queen" stickers. When ladies ask me what that means, I always answer, "Instead of trying to decide if the amount of cellulite you have is good or bad, wouldn't you rather just be beyond it?" I no longer try to figure out if the pain of being different is good or bad. Instead, I simply choose to just grow beyond the suffering imbedded within it.

At this point in my life, nearly fifty years later, I see these earlier traumatizing events as the catalytic influences that have allowed me to claim my "Beyond Karma Queen" status. The Cyclops, at long last, has gained authentic, life enhancing second sight. 

VAISHALI IS THE AUTHOR OF WISDOM RISING (PURPLE HAZE PRESS 2008) AND YOU ARE WHAT YOU LOVE (PURPLE HAZE PRESS 2006). VISIT WWW.PURPLEV.COM OR EMAIL PRESS@PURPLEV.COM.



practical steps toward a balanced life

FIVE SIMPLE STOPS TO RECLAIM CONTROL

By Diane Randall

“I don’t have any balance in my life; and I’m too busy to find it anyway.” This is the number one complaint I hear from people who have concerns about their quality of life.

When considering such a vital question: “What is a balanced life?” the first element to establish is your position in your life. A well-balanced life means that you are in command of all the aspects of your life—your career, your relationships, your health, and your finances—your entire personal world. Is this the position you presently occupy in your life?

Many of us feel that everyone else around us controls our lives. Trapped by the demands of others and running non-stop, people live as if they are stuck on a treadmill locked on “marathon.” This pressurized “doing” leads to a lack of life balance that adversely affects you at work and at home.

You can create more balance in your life by working through five simple steps that will break the uncontrolled cycle and free you to live a balanced, satisfying life. These practical steps allow you to clearly identify your

priorities, set boundaries and delegate, let go of unnecessary activities, pursue good health, and lastly, free yourself with a “technology intervention.” You can learn to spend your time and energy wisely on what really matters: bringing more balance to your life.

WHAT ARE YOUR PRIORITIES?

First things first: you must decide what is important to you and clearly set your priorities. Figure out what really matters in your life. Honestly assess what you want your priorities to be—and not what you, or everyone else, think they should be. Is your job interfering with your personal time? If so, you may want to reassess your priorities at work. The key to a well-balanced life is to understand that true balance comes from home and work.

RE-GAINING CONTROL — YOU DO EVERYTHING?

Remove yourself from the do-all position. Set boundaries for what you will do and delegate tasks. Ask for help and use it, when tackling a large task. By clearly communicating how you will allow others to interact

with you, you re-establish control in your life. Setting boundaries and delegating often leads to greater satisfaction, productivity, and creativity in your work and personal life.

CLINGING TO UNNECESSARY ACTIVITIES?

Once you have a concrete list of what really matters to you in your life, cut out any activities or tasks that do not support your priorities. Then, adjust your schedule to include only the activities that make your priorities a reality.

TOO TIRED? TOO OFTEN?

Constant exposure to stress can lead to exhaustion and burn out. To minimize the effects of stress on your health, pursue the following: 30 minutes of sustained daily exercise, eat healthy foods high in antioxidants, drink plenty of water, and make sure that you get 6-9 hours of sleep each night. Focused relaxation, such as meditation or daydreaming, is a great stress reliever and energy booster. Find time for it every day. If you suffer from poor health, it is a clear sign that your life is out of balance.

CHAINED TO YOUR CELL PHONE?

Do a technology intervention! Laptops, cell phones, PDAs and other electronic gadgets have created an “on-call” work mentality that can take over your personal time. These hyper-accessible devices keep people tied to work 24/7. If your high-tech tools have turned into a leash that keeps you bound to work, consider these tips to “detoxify” your life:

- Email through only one electronic device.
- No phone calls while driving your car.
- Leave your work-based laptop at work.
- Never take work of any sort—PDA, laptop, or paperwork—to bed with you.
- Make your time off work as much of a priority as work time.
- Create a “work-is-over” ritual that stops work time and allows you to transition to personal time. This can be as simple as shutting down your work laptop or changing into comfortable clothes once you get home.

Give yourself the opportunity to achieve life balance. Begin with the first step and discover a simple, practical pathway to a balanced, happy life. 

DIANE RANDALL IS A CERTIFIED WELLNESS COACH & SELF CARE EXPERT, AND AUTHOR. SHE CAN BE REACHED AT WWW.7BALANCE.COM.



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QUICK “JOY BOOST” SECRETS
THAT WORK ANYWHERE

By Bonnie St. John



Giving joy actual space on your calendar is so important. We make time for problems—and problems force us to make time for them. Joy doesn't demand our attention.

SECRET #1: SUPERCHARGE YOUR "TO DO" LIST

One day while I was drafting my usual "To Do" list—I am big on lists—I suddenly realized that my feelings never make the list. Am I a human "doing" or a human "being"? Why not add "TO FEEL" items to my "to do" list?

Items like:

- Feel sunshine on my face (go outside briefly)
- Feel loved by friends or family (just stop and feel)
- Feel wonder (look at the stars, the ocean or a new baby—even if I just Google the images!)
- Feel snug (put on my slippers)

Just putting these things on the list already begins to lift my spirits. Sometimes there are easy ways to mix them into my other, more conventional "to do" items. For example, keeping comfy slippers under my desk at work; you'll be surprised how much these "little" things make a difference.

SECRET #2: GET REAL!

A big joy killer is buying into other people's dreams instead of your own. What do you really love to do or be? What makes you truly happy?

This year, if you can't afford the vacation you usually take, ask yourself what is it about that vacation that makes me really happy? Can you plan a stay-at-home vacation? Have someone come and clean your house every day if you like hotel maid service. Go out to eat if that's what you would do on vacation. Read books and lounge around or go dancing...whatever it is that you love to do. Connect to that. Forget the airfare and the big hotel bill, but keep the feelings and activities you truly enjoy. Need a change of scenery? Maybe you can swap houses with a friend in a nearby city.

SECRET #3: MAKE A JOY FIRST AID KIT

Knowing that you will have times when it feels like everything is against you, prepare for that. Choose a time when you are feeling good to make an emergency kit. Mine contains bubble bath, a scented candle, a note that says "take care of yourself" from my Mom who

passed away two years ago, a gift certificate for a pedicure, an old picture of my daughter when she was two, a bag of microwave popcorn and Reese's Peanut Butter cups...plus a list of emergency things to do:

- Go to the gym and sweat out the anxiety
- Call one of three friends who really listen
- Go to Starbucks® with a pad of paper and envision a better future (I love this one)
- Curl up with a good book in the tub
- Watch *Law and Order* with popcorn
- Get more sleep (things always look better)
- Ask myself whether it's just that time of the month

Of course, what pulls you back up from the bottom is different from what works for me. What's going in your JOY First Aid Kit?

SECRET #4: HAVE A JOY JOLT – IN ONLY A MINUTE!

Try this simple exercise. Sit still. Close your eyes and think about something that makes you smile or feel good. It could be a memory of dancing, being proud of someone, or feeling unconditionally loved by your kids, parents, friends or spouse. Reflect on enjoying your home, your last vacation, or being recognized for your accomplishments.

Notice how your whole body changes? Your energy increases. All you have to do is stop and take the time to feel the joy wherever you are. You don't have to take a fancy vacation, buy something, or otherwise escape to feel joy. All it takes is a moment of your time and the willingness to feel that joy that's already all around you.

SECRET #5: BE HELPABLE

All day long just say "Yes" to anyone who offers to help you. You'll be surprised how often you usually say, "No, I'm fine," or "I can do it myself," to your kids, coworkers, and everyone else! Letting yourself be helped not only lightens your load, it creates a joyful connection with another human being. You get joy from helping others, now let others share the joy of helping you.

SECRET #6: BEAT THE JOY STEALERS

The next time someone is full of negative talk and complaints, don't try to cheer them up. Just ask them to tell you about one good thing that has happened to them recently. It may not permanently change their attitude, but it can make them more bearable for a little while.

SECRET #7: FLEX YOUR CONFIDENCE MUSCLE

People who have confidence can bring joy to situations no matter what the world is doing around them. Strengthen your confidence

muscle by doing something that scares you a little: go to a movie or restaurant by yourself, agree to give a speech, or even take a trapeze lesson.

SECRET #8: DARE TO DREAM

Right now your life may be tough. Really tough. But your future could be better. Take some time to dream about a better future and think of some things you could do to make it happen for you: go back to school, look for a better job, move to a new city, or start dating after your divorce. Focusing on five years from now instead of next week can help put your problems in perspective. That's how I survived a childhood of abuse and lengthy hospital stays—by dreaming of a better future...and making it happen.

SECRET #9: RENEW YOUR FAITH

Research says that people who believe in something larger than themselves live longer, stay healthier and deal better with the ups and downs of life. Can you reconnect with the faith of your childhood or deepen the spiritual practices you have now? Or seek out new ways to express your faith: volunteer for a social or political cause you believe in.

SECRET #10: TRY SOCIAL NETWORKING ONLINE

If your friends aren't already on Facebook, MySpace or another social network, the younger relatives in your family probably are. I "friended" the niece of an old friend and got to see pictures of the whole family at a wedding. You will end up connecting with many people you may have lost touch with and enriching your life with unexpected joys. Catch up with your friends, or be the trendsetter and spread joy by sharing your pics of family and friends. A friend on Facebook advised me to spend more time making encouraging comments on other people's activities—and that has made the whole experience a lot more rewarding. Here's a joyous thought: on Facebook, you can be my friend, too! (search: Bonnie Lee St. John) See you there. 

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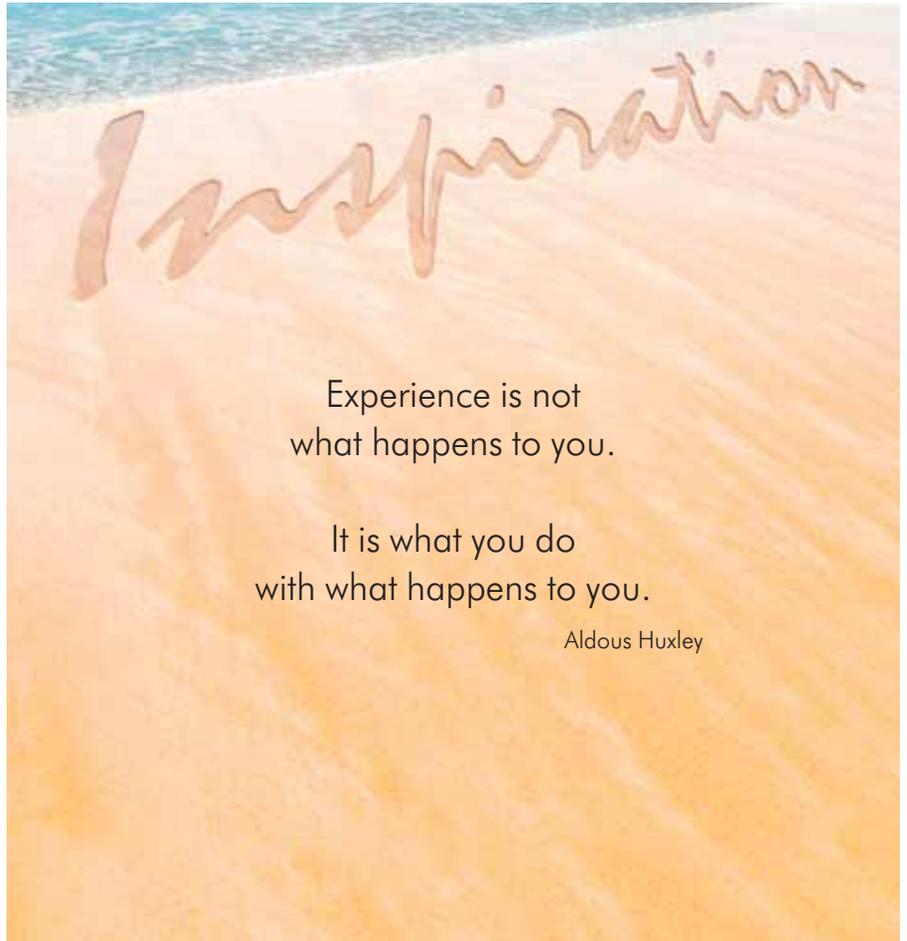
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Source: Real Simple Magazine



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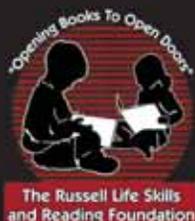
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The event was great for me and my team! We greatly enjoyed the day, the vendors and the speakers! You really run a classy show, I'm sure you must be quite proud of your team and the overall success of the day. Thanks so much for including me.

*Mary Lynn Swartz, CEO
Westside Regional Medical Center*

Thanks for encouraging us to come to the event, 5th Annual Work-Life Balance Educational Conference for Businesswomen. It was very worthwhile even though most of us had to come and go throughout the day, because we hadn't planned far enough in advance. We'll be sure to watch for your dates next year, so that we can plan our time.

*Peggy Nordeen, President
Starmark International*

I had so much fun and learned so much from all the speakers. Also, I got an incredible inspiration from Carolyn Kepcher. Thanks, Nova, for a great opportunity at the Balance Conference.

*Lisbeth Arellano, MBA Candidate 2009
Nova Southeastern University*

It was an exceptional event – I'm not sure what you will have to do next year, since you keep raising the bar on quality of the experience and the speakers. My sponsorship was a great experience, too, this year. I collected contact information on 180 ladies and already have 6 appointments booked and one of the guests at my table at the event has already purchased life insurance policies. I know you realize the value of what you do, but I wanted to tell you the results of your efforts. Thank you for your ongoing support.

*Jan Knight, Financial Advisor
Women's Wealth Strategies*

Once again you organized a fantastic event. Not only did you draw more than 1,000 women, attracted great vendors and lure inspirational speakers, but you did so during difficult economic times. I am more impressed every year by the Conference. It has become THE networking event of the year for businesswomen in South Florida. I am honored to have been part of it and will continue to promote it to all the women I know and meet as a must-attend. Please thank your entire team for their hard work and tell them it definitely was worth it.

*Cindy Goodman, Business Writer/Columnist
The Miami Herald*

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