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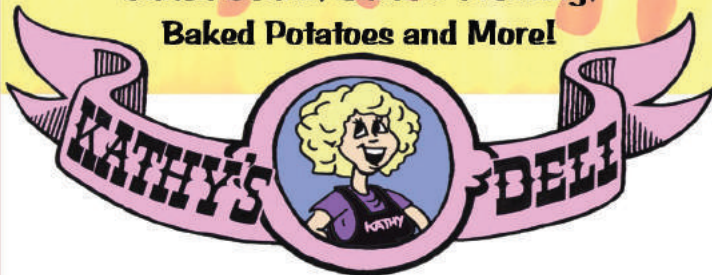
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**ReNew
By Julie Winter**

Breaking Free from Negative Thinking, Anxiety and Depression. So many people miss out on experiencing joy in their lives because their toxic thinking opens doors to anxiety and depression.

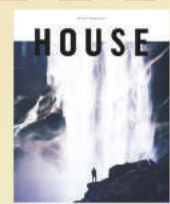
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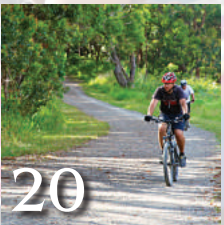
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Joyful Living Magazine is committed to embracing a lifestyle of joy and abundance. We are platform for beauty, goodness and grace. We value inspired thinking and embrace changing seasons. We honor your legacy and where you are from. Our desire is to serve and respect our community.

Our intention is to bring valuable resources as our diverse natural surroundings. We devote this magazine to you and bless your journey today, tomorrow and always. Grateful is our foundation. Love is where we live. We are Joy. We are Full. We are Living.

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THE Stress Factor



BY BENI JOHNSON

Beni Johnson:
Author of *Healthy and Free*, *The Happy Intercessor*, *40 Days to Wholeness*

Grandmaswithmuscles.com

We live in an extremely demanding culture. Whether you work outside of the home or within the home with your children, there is a constant demand for our time and energy. This reality is not made any easier by our culture's glamorization of business.

Not all stress is bad, though. Sometimes stress can be motivating, pushing us to achieve important goals. But it is vital to manage the stress in our lives, rather than allowing the stress to manage us. Part of managing stress is being able to differentiate between the two main types: acute stress and chronic stress. Acute stress is day-to-day, short term stress, like the stress of being caught in traffic, cooking dinner under time pressure, hurrying to get to work on time, and so forth. Acute stress tends to come and go and, in most cases, it is

fairly simple to manage.

Chronic stress is the type we want to avoid. The American Institute describes this as the "stress of unrelenting demands and pressures for seemingly interminable periods of time." This type of stress can be extremely draining and, potentially, even fatal. When your body is under continuous stress, it begins to think that it's being threatened. In response to this threat, your body begins to shut down your major organs, including your nervous and immune systems, your endocrine system, and your gastrointestinal system in order to preserve energy to fight off the perceived

attack. Existing in this heightened state leads to sickness, memory loss, depression, insomnia, and a long list of other conditions.

Many years ago, due to ongoing stress from a traveling lifestyle, I found myself exhausted and getting sick often. I would go on an international trip, come home tired, inevitably get sick, and just barely manage to get myself well again before taking off on the next trip. This became my cycle. Eventually, even doing the smallest tasks like answering email became overwhelming. It got to the point where I knew something was wrong. So, I went to see an NP (Naturopathic Doctor). He tested my saliva and explained why I was feeling so run down. He said that if I imagined myself as a cell phone, I would need to be charged up for a month before I could run again. I had stressed my body to its limit and my body was responding. I had to make a change.

The doctor walked me through what I would need to do in order to get back to health. He explained that my adrenal glands were overworked. Adrenal glands are small endocrine glands that sit right on top of the kidneys. They are responsible for helping our bodies respond to stress by releasing cortisol, a hormone that helps balance our response. A healthy adrenal gland will produce just the right amount of cortisol, while an unhealthy adrenal will either produce too much cortisol or not enough. Because I had been living in a state of chronic stress, my adrenal glands were fatigued.

Systems of Adrenal Issues Are:

- Daily Cycles of Energy Bursts and Fatigue
- Cravings For Foods High In Sugar or Fat
- An Increase In PMS and Symptoms of Menopause
- Mild Depression
- Lack of Energy
- Decreased Ability To Handle Stress
- Muscular Weakness
- Inflamed Allergies
- Lightheadedness, Especially When Moving From A Sitting To A Standing Position
- Decreased Sex Drive

- Frequent Sighing
- Inability To Handle Foods That Are High In Potassium

My doctor explained to me that it would take approximately six months to a year to fully heal my overworked adrenal glands. In order to do this, I had to make some lifestyle changes. I started saying “no” to travel invitations; I had to start clearing my calendar. I learned that laughing was healing medicine, so I found funny movies to watch. (I’m pretty sure I’ve watched every episode of “The Andy Griffith Show.”) Rest is crucial for healing, so I began

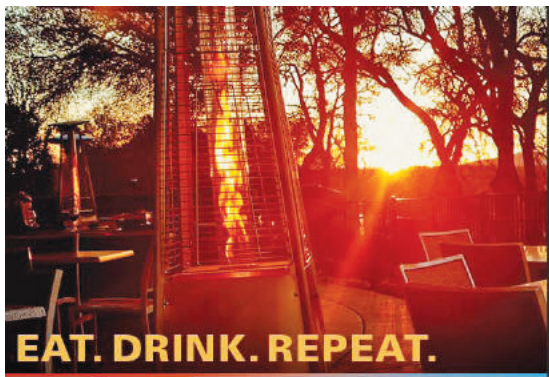
to pay attention to how much sleep I was getting. And, I also found that eating good meat protein helped me restore my strength.

I began to learn more and more tips about healing from adrenal issues and chronic stress. Get gentle exercise—activities such as walking and stretching that don’t tax your body. Eliminate the access that negative people have to your life during times of healing, as negativity causes stress. Eat good food, and don’t skip meals. Try to have some kind of fun every day. Take 2,000-5,000 milligrams of vitamin C, along with a good vitamin stress B-complex daily; it will help replenish your ad-

renal glands. I also believe in the power of worship so, when I was in this process, I’d put on a wonderful worship CD and let myself relax and rest. I really believe that this last tip is what brought me into my healing.

I did all of these things, and more, for a year (more details about this journey are available in my book, *Healthy and Free*). One morning, as I got out of bed, I just knew my body was healed. The depression was gone, I felt my energy return, and—since that moment—I haven’t looked back. Although I no longer struggle with adrenal issues, I still watch over my body to make sure that I’m caring for it well. I know when I need to pull back and take it easy, and I now have more tools for reducing my stress. If you are experiencing similar symptoms, please remember to consult with your care provider to help you through this process. They may be able to provide an adrenal test so you can see definitive results. Take the steps necessary to reduce your chronic stress. We only have one body, and it’s up to us to steward it well. To your health **JL**

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/stress-kinds.aspx>

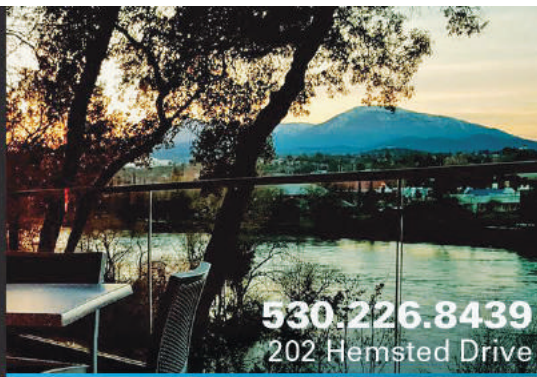


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VIEW


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Tips to be a Successful Parent



BY KRIS VALLOTTON

Kathy and I have raised four children in our 40 years of marriage. We have had our share of tough seasons. We know what it's like to pace the floor at night in dread, crying out to God for a fever to break in our tiny baby.



We understand the grief of disappointment, and the heart-break of teenagers who fail. We have experienced the joy of first dates and the anguish of first rejections.

Raising children is exhilarating and challenging, clarifying and confusing, frustrating and freeing, but I wouldn't trade the experience for anything. Although I don't think there is any magic formula to raising kids, I do believe there are principles that really help a lot. Here are 15 keys that I hope will assist you in parenting:

1. Be consistent. Parenting shouldn't depend on your mood. Make sure your kids can count on the same outcomes no matter how you feel. For instance, if your kid is screaming for candy in the store and one day you are tired so you give it to them, you just taught your child that if they throw a fit, eventually they will get their way.

2. Don't yell. If your voice has to escalate before you finally act, then you are teaching your kids that you don't mean what you say until the volume of your voice reaches a certain pitch. Your delayed response also sends a message that they should listen to you because you are angry, not because you have their best in mind.

3. Teach your kids HOW to think by giving them choices. For example, if they are making noise in the living room and you want them out of your way, say something like, "Do you want to play in your room, or would you rather play in the back yard?"

4. Correct attitudes before they become an action. All behavior begins with a thought, which manifests in an attitude, that finally becomes an action. Therefore, bad actions begin with wrong thoughts. When you correct an attitude, you are teaching your kids how to manage their inner-world so that they don't make a mess of their outer world.

5. Have an understanding for the ways their minds are developing. The frontal cortex of the brain is our "cause and effect-thinking center," but the frontal cortex doesn't fully develop until we are 18-20 years old. Therefore, kids are actually incapable of thinking through the ramifications of their actions. For instance, have you ever asked your son, "Why did you jump off the dresser?" To which he responds, "I don't know." The truth is, he really doesn't know because the cause and effect center of his brain isn't developed yet. Trying to punish him into cause and effect thinking is a waste of time. It will only frustrate the heck out of your kids and result in them feeling like failures.

6. Be the first one to inform your kids about any important subject. The principle of first mention says that the first time we hear something about any subject, we receive it as the truth. Everything else we receive on that same subject (after our first exposure) will be weighed against our first experience, and embraced or rejected accordingly. For example, if you wait until your kids are 15 years old to tell them about sex and therefore their friends tell them first, they will compare what you taught them to what their friends have told them. If what you shared was opposite of their friends' counsel, they are likely to reject your input and embrace theirs. On the other hand, if you tell them first, they are most likely to view their friend's counsel as wrong.

7. Don't be a helicopter mom or dad. Let children learn from their own experiences whenever possible. When you see them doing something wrong and it doesn't have severe consequences, let them experiment. They learn more from their mistakes than they do from their successes.

8. Don't compare your children to one another. If you do, you will teach them to live a competitive life, constantly measuring themselves against each other. The goal is for each of our children to

be fully actualized. In other words, we want each one of them to be who God created them to be. We don't want them to become an imitation of someone else.

9. Speak positively into your children's lives. When you say, "You are so smart, gifted, honest, talented, etc.," it actually releases those qualities into your kids. Don't call your kids names, or curse them with titles! You are the most powerful person in their lives. What you think of them and what you say to them, they will become. Remember, they are not their behavior! Saying things like, "Johnny, you are a bad boy," teaches Johnny that he does bad because he is bad! Never connect your children's bad behavior to their identity.

10. Never stop believing in your children! Let them know that they can become anything they want in life. Be their biggest fan, their cheerleader, and their catalyst to greatness.

11. Teach your kids how to solve conflicts by allowing them to watch you solve yours. Don't shelter them from watching you and your spouse work through your issues (unless of course, you guys don't behave honorably). You have to use wisdom on this one, but your kids need to understand that every healthy relationship has its struggles. They need great tools to solve conflicts, not avoid them.

12. Let your home be full of affection for them and for your spouse. Be affectionate with your spouse in front of them so that they learn what love looks like. Hug and kiss them often, even in their teen years.

13. Teach your children how to honor others, especially authority. Don't talk negatively about teachers, pastors, bosses, police officers, politicians, elders etc. The fact is, your kids will not be able to live successfully in society without a healthy respect for authority. How will they keep their job if they can't do what is asked of them?

When you say, "You are so smart, gifted, honest, talented, etc.," it actually releases those qualities into your kids.

14. Let your children "catch you" loving on Jesus. Walking in on their father or mother kneeling at their bed praying is ten times more powerful than telling your kids to pray. Reading your Bible every day on the couch in the living room sends a powerful visual statement to your kids that you value spiritual things. Remember, people are changed through observation, not by argument.

15. Teach your kids how to handle money. They should learn how to be generous, how to trust God with their money, how to steward finances, and how to create wealth. Giving should be a family secret, not a secret from the family. Teach your children that they have two choices: they can serve God or they can serve money. One of them will be their master. *JL*



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Women In Business

I was raised in a broken home torn by drug addiction. When I was 7 years old my dad kidnapped my sister and I and took us to Seattle Washington to live.



**BY HEATHER
STRACHAN**

Author of
*From Darkness to
Compassion*

McCune Garden
Chapel
Funeral Home

Vacaville, California

I know now that he was trying to save us and keep us from being in the life that we had been in. After about 5 years with our father, he sent my sister back to California. Four months later he sent me. I was 12 and had to ride a greyhound bus for two days by myself. I was terrified. I remember during that trip thinking to myself that I was the only person I could count on. That I couldn't let myself down. That I would be ok.

I lived with my mom and sister for about a year before my mom lost her apartment. Her, my sister and myself all went our separate ways. I was 13 years old. I lived with friends "couch surfing" for the next 2 years until I had the opportunity to move to Pinole to live with an elderly lady who needed part time in home care. I lived in Pinole and the surrounding areas for the next few years until I met a man I thought I loved. I was 18 and desperate for the stability of a family. We became pregnant and I started planning my future. Unfortunately, I chose a man who was also an addict. When I was 5 months pregnant I gave him an ultimatum, quit the drugs or I was leaving him. He chose to stop coming home and to continue using drugs.

By the time I was ready to leave my sons father, I was 6 months pregnant and my mom had an apartment in Fairfield and was doing great. She had been clean and sober for a few years. I moved in with her, went back to school and started working full time. Life was good. I spent most of my free time reading. One book in particular sparked something in me. It was called *The Body Farm*. It's a fictional novel about a real place in Tennessee where donated bodies are placed in different stages of decomposition so that the forensics teams can study them. I was fascinated. I started researching forensic technician jobs and somehow or another that turned into me researching jobs in funeral homes. I was 25. I remember sitting my

mom down one evening in May and telling her, "Mom, I'm going to go to mortuary college." She laughed and said yeah right and blew it off. I was serious, I found a school I could afford and enrolled. I studied hard and started looking at local funeral homes where I could apply. I finished school in 2 years and managed to get hired with a funeral home in Fairfield. I felt complete. I had been working in Fairfield for 2 years as a night attendant and prearrangement counselor when an opportunity to become a director in Vacaville presented itself. I interviewed and was hired.

I have been at McCune Garden Chapel for over 10 years now. I love the feeling of service that I get working with families during their most difficult time. My daily duties can range from going to bring a deceased person into our care, to meeting with a family, working a funeral service, styling someone's hair or applying someone's make up for their final viewing. There's always something to be done in the death care industry.

It is from being in this industry that I realized that my life of having to care for myself led me to want to care for others that needed it most. I like the fulfilled feeling it gives me to be able to assist a family from beginning to end through their grief. To give them continuity and comfort and to see that every detail is handled so that they don't have to worry about anything except grieving. Being in such a service industry also led me to be invited to join our local Rotary Club. Rotary's motto is "service above self" I find this to be very fitting. I have been an active member of Rotary for 8 years now. It is an excellent worldwide organization committed to bettering the lives of those around us.

Working in this industry has made me look at death for what it is, a natural part of life. Everyone dies. I am honored to be able to help some through it. *JL*

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Shasta County will have its first Spanish/English Dual Immersion Charter School opening this Fall in Anderson, CA.

Tree of Life International Charter School will offer excellence in education to both Spanish and English speaking learners. Deborah Wallace, the principal and founder of the school brings with her 25 years of experience as a Bilingual teacher and the Principal of Napa Valley Language Academy, an award winning Dual Immersion (DI) Charter School in Napa. "I'm so excited to be planting the first Spanish/English DI School in Shasta County. Multicultural Education is my passion, and I love the dynamic learning community that is created when students and families from different languages and backgrounds come together," said Deb, who began her teaching career over 30 years ago at a bilingual school in Santiago, Chile.

With so many charter schools in our area, what makes this one unique?

First of all, the DI program allows young children to acquire two languages while learning the same content as any other school such as Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies. Learning a language and "acquiring" a language is very different. Most

of us took a Foreign Language in High School and remember very little. However, for young children, the process of language learning is very different. They "acquire" a second language naturally when "immersed" in it. Our skilled teachers use techniques that engage students through lots of visuals, hands-on activities and structured support. If they start in Kindergarten, students are usually bilingual and bi-literate in both languages by 4th grade.

In addition, studies show that both native English and native Spanish speaking DI students score higher and have greater academic achievement in English, Math and Science than their non-immersion peers—and they all speak two languages!

And if acquiring a second language in the same time other students are just learning one wasn't enough, the quality of the curriculum and instruction at Tree of Life International Charter School will also be non-traditional. Students will have lots of hands-on, creative learning opportunities through World Music, Makerspace, technology and outdoor adventures.



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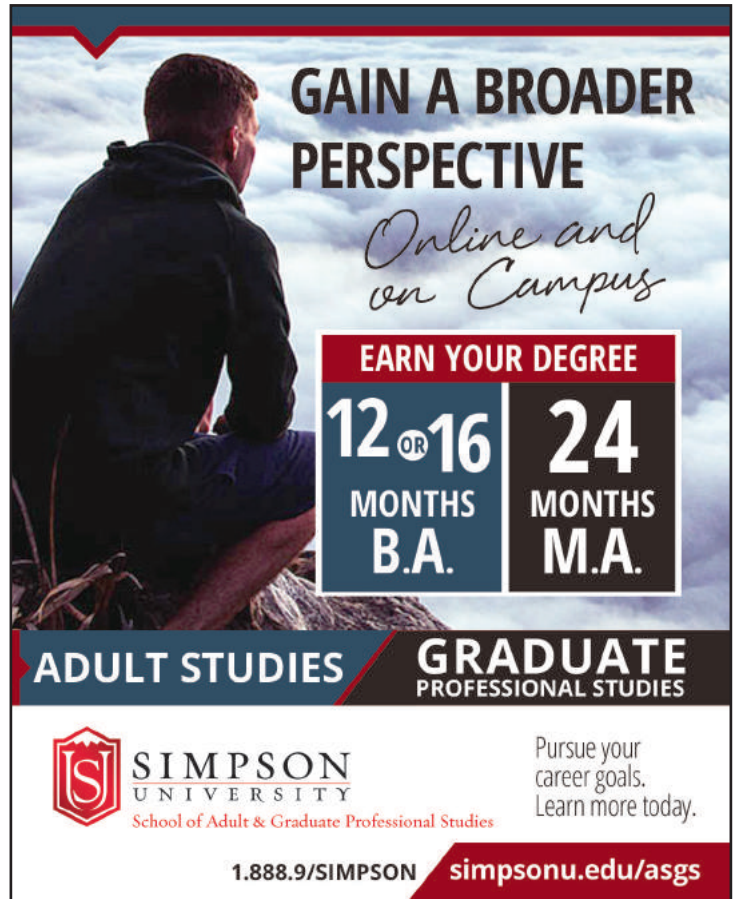
Enroll Now

The school, located at the former Verde Vale Elementary School in Anderson, will eventually be PreK-8th grade, but for the first year we will enroll PreK-4th adding a grade each year.

- Enrollment beginning May 1, 8:30-3:00pm daily.
- Enroll on campus at 19415 Jacqueline St, Anderson, CA.
- Parent info meetings May 10 or May 24 --6:00pm Spanish and 7:00pm English.
- We will continue enrolling until all spots are filled. If you value your child becoming bilingual as well as getting an amazing education, check us out at: www.treeoflife.school

Grand Opening Ceremony: Honoring the Past, Welcoming the Future

On Sat. August 19, Tree of Life International Charter School will host a special Grand Opening Event to welcome back all of the former Principals, Teachers, Students and Parents from Verde Vale to revisit their fond memories and cheer on the TLC staff and families who will be bringing new life to the beautiful campus! Come Join us at 11:00am-12:00pm on Sat. Aug. 19! (530) 378-7040 • 19415 Jacqueline St, Anderson, CA. **JL**




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BY JENNA
INGEBRETSEN

It's summer, and the garden is calling my name! This is the perfect time of year to get out with my kids, harvest tomatoes, and pick blackberries straight from the bush. If you don't have a garden, the farmers market is overflowing! This dish is fresh, rich, juicy, and a summer must. Enjoy!

Blackberry Balsamic Marinated Tri-Tip

- 1 cup Fresh blackberries
- 1/3 cup Balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 cup Olive oil
- 3 Garlic cloves minced
- 1 Lemon, orange, or grapefruit, zested and juiced
- 1 tsp Salt
- 1/2 tsp Pepper
- 2-3 lb Tri-Tip roast, fat trimmed

Blend the berries and vinegar until liquefied – if you have a Nutri-bullet, it works great for this task. Pour the blended mixture into a gallon size Ziploc bag, and then add

the other ingredients. Seal the tri-tip roast in with the marinade, removing as much air as possible. Massage gently and make sure the whole roast is covered. Let it sit in the fridge overnight, and flip it over in the morning.

Over direct heat, grill the roast on medium-high heat for 15min. Flip the meat, and move to a place on the grill that is not directly over the fire. Reduce heat to medium and continue grilling on the barbeque for another 20-40min, depending on preferred doneness. Remove to a large plate or cutting board, and allow the meat to rest for 10-15 minutes. Carve the tri-tip into 1/4 inch thick slices – be sure to go against the grain, to have the perfect cut.

Tomato-Onion Jam

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3 cups Fresh tomatoes, diced or cherry size | Sugar (depending on preferred sweetness) |
| 1 White sweet onion, diced | 1/2 tsp Salt |
| 1 tbsp Balsamic vinegar | 1 tsp Olive Oil |
| 1-4 tbsp Granulated | 1 tsp Butter |

Melt the butter into the olive oil in medium sauce pan over medium heat. Toss in your diced onion and sauté 10min, stirring occasionally. Pinch in some salt and sugar to help the onion caramelize, continue cooking 15min. Splash the balsamic vinegar in the pan to deglaze and get all the yummy brown parts from the bottom of the pan. Stir in the tomatoes and remaining salt and sugar, to your desired sweetness. Simmer together 15 minutes, or until juices are syrup-like in texture. Allow to cool, then serve over your sliced tri-tip. Refrigerate any leftovers in sealed container or jam jar, and keep for your next BBQ dish.

This dish goes great with garlic bread, or on grilled pesto crostini. Garnish with your favorite herb, like the basil ribbons as pictured.



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BY LAURA BURWICK

LAURA BURWICK, is a certified Drug and Alcohol Counselor at Redding Transformation Center and educational instructor for CARE-EDU, providing professional education for drug and alcohol counselors.

Parenting Those Amazing Adolescents

Part 1 of a 3 Part Series

We often as adults say “You couldn’t pay me to be a teenager again.”

My question is, ‘What about that time was so difficult?’ If we truly feel that way about our own adolescent then where is our compassion for our own children?. In this three part series we will look at how as parents, we can help our young adults navigate through what was obviously a drudgery in our own lives.

When I typed in statistics for adolescent in Google, the headings that followed were: crisis in literacy, and depression, and drug use. Did you know what some of the statistics say:

- More than one third of all juvenile offenders (median age 15.5 years old) read below the fourth-grade level (CJJ, 2001).
- The Coalition for Juvenile Justice (2001) reports that 82 percent of prison inmates are high school drop outs, and a very high proportion of them cannot read.
- According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse there has been a decline in substance abuse among high school students. Except for the use of Marijuana. One of the possible causes listed for the literacy crisis was a low level of belief in their abilities to succeed. I had to type in the word positive to find anything good



about teenagers. In an article in the New York Times, Positive Trends Recorded in U.S. Data on Teenagers, (THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, Published: July 13, 2007) it stated that:

- Fewer high school students were have sex and more were using condoms in 2005, according to the latest government report on the well-being of the nation's children.
- The teenage birthrate hit a record low.
- More young people are finishing high school.

I think teenagers have seen the consequences of sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancy. Education and parents offering guidance has made a difference. In the age of technology the importance of education is being realized.

It can be such a confusing time with hormones changing. I have often said it is much like when they were toddlers. They have to learn how to walk, how to talk, and how they relate to their

I think teenagers have seen the consequences of sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancy. Education and parents offering guidance has made a difference. In the age of technology the importance of education is being realized.

peers all over again. It is the time when they ask themselves; Who am I? What do I want to do with my life? What do I believe? It's in their actions that the answers become apparent.


I think we are on the verge of experiencing a generation who says, "I will learn from your mistakes." In the face of a seemingly hopeless world they are standing up and saying, "Ask me!" I heard a speaker on the radio once ask; Why are we in such a hurry to convince teenagers that they aren't invincible?" It is such a short time that they really believe it. What if instead we empowered them and sought them out for ideas and solutions? For example Boyan Slat at age 14 was awarded The Best Idea of South Holland and a Guinness World Record for his ideas on how to clean up the plastic dumps in our oceans. He has a web site where you can see his idea on how the ocean can keep itself clean. We have a wealth of innovative ideas to tap into with our youth. They have access to more information now than ever. They are also more aware of the world's problems and are taking their own initiative to provide answers.

What does this have to do with my teenager who is in trouble? It is difficult to find answers if we don't first establish the challenges and possibilities adolescents face. Look at their strengths and weaknesses as a whole. They have an education system that is challenged in teaching them to read, and the odds are against them without an education. Yet, in the midst of all the chaos they are starting to make better personal choices.

Are we as a society honoring our adolescents or have they just become another problem without an answer? Do we listen to the fear based media and statistics or is it time to take a stand for our young adults. How as parents do we wade through the swamp of social media, video games, and the values being presented in movies and on the television?



In part 2 of this series we will look at ways we can identify if your adolescent is headed for trouble? What we can do to help them? How to stay sane while were in the process raising them? JL


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BY LONNIE JULIUS

What Ready Looks Like for You

You get the phone call, mom fell again. They are taking her to the hospital and after a qualifying stay, she will be discharged to rehab.

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You get the phone call, mom fell again. They are taking her to the hospital and after a qualifying stay, she will be discharged to rehab. After her progress in rehab plateaus the social worker informs you it is not safe for mom to live on her own anymore. Their professional opinion is that she goes home with 24hr care or is discharged to Assisted Living. Fear, guilt, and anxiety are just a few of the emotions you experience. You have tried hiring caregivers at home, but mom has fired them all and not because she was unhappy with them, but rather because she was unhappy with her situation. (Though mom would never admit that.)

You start making calls to local assisted living communities only to discover most facilities have a 6-8 week waiting list. This won't work! Mom is getting discharged on Thursday. Panic mode sets in. You want to find the right place before you break the news to mom that she can't go home. Paperwork, people, pressure, family dynamics, are just a few of the stressors now on your plate.

This story is all too familiar for many of the people placing



their loved one in assisted living, but this does not have to be your story. I have sat with countless families who are beginning to dip their toe into uncharted waters as their loved one's experience change and need more care. It can be a daunting and sometimes overwhelming "next step". It can also be an encouraging and comforting decision making process.

So where do we start? Here are a few helpful tips.

1. Do your homework early. It is important to be proactive rather than reactive. Gather information and tour communities to get a feel for what options are out there and what fits the needs of your family best.
2. Take a tour and visit a community more than once. See if the environment is consistently inviting, clean and welcoming.
3. Decide what ready means to you. Many of our loved ones will say they are "not ready" so it is important to determine what "ready" will look like. Is ready an emotional, mental or physically based decision? Does ready mean your doctor tells you it's time? Is ready after a fall or accident? Or is ready when you decide to make the decision before your circumstances do.

It is important to open up the conversation even if we feel it is not in the realm of possibility just yet. For aging adults, educate yourself on your options. For families and adult children, validate emotions your loved ones are experiencing, unpack the baggage, partner in making a decision and throw away any guilt by recognizing you are doing this FOR your loved and not TO your loved one.

I am always available to come alongside and help answer questions. To make an appointment call Lonnie

Julius Martin at The Vistas Assisted Living and Memory Care. (530)222-8969

Assisted Living may not be home but it is the next best thing. With big events, car shows, excursions, balance fitness classes, chair yoga, massage, bible studies, educational opportunities and community volunteer work, assisted living addresses health and wholeness so people can continue to learn, grow, maintain and gain independence and live a life of true dignity. Come meet the residents and find out for yourself! **JL**

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BY SUZANNE LUIS

I have found some people do not know how to connect to a loved one in a healthy way.

Suzanne is a counselor at Redding's Transformation Center, she has a Lay Christian Counseling Certificate from Regent University, I also am licensed with the State of California as a Drug and Alcohol Counselor and I teach and do dream interpretation.

When people do not know how to build connection, when a conversation goes well they are not sure how it happened; conversely, if what caused the connection to break is not recognized it results in frustration but without understanding.

Since we have been talking about emotional intimacy and how to be "known" I thought it would be helpful if we continued along those lines and talked about how to create emotional intimacy. I have learned most fights are protests against emotional disconnection. But first, what is an emotional connection? In this context, emotional connection is that place where your loved one experiences you as listening, interested and wanting to know what they are feeling. Defensiveness will always break a connection.

A sense of safety is crucial to the foundation of relationships; it increases our ability to problem solve and cope with power struggles when they happen as well as cope during the times we disappoint each other. When couples feel their partners are there for them, they are more resilient, and less likely to think in catastrophic terms and say things they wish they could take back. Let's think about this for a moment; I am more apt to believe the relationship will not last, is not going to make it, this conversation is beyond repair therefore so is the relationship; whereas connection causes both people to feel heard and safe! One of the ways you create safety is by understanding your attachment needs and by asking yourself the following questions: "Am I afraid?" "If I am afraid what of?"

and "What do I need most from my partner?"

Are you scared of feeling overwhelmed, out of control, alone, misunderstood, unloved, or needy? Be specific. If you have experienced abandonment as a child fear of abandonment will result in the kind of fear that works against you when you are trying to work through a problem. The sense of panic generated by the fear of being left causes the loss of ability to think clearly and be open to what the other person is saying.

Then, speak openly about your needs in a way that invites your partner into a new dialogue. For example: "I would love it if you could accept me without wanting to change me. If I am emotional when we are talking, this does not mean anger/yelling can you continue to listen?" "I want you to touch me when we I am upset." Most men are afraid to hug their wives when they are upset because they fear rejection, most women read this as "he does not care about my feelings." This process must be reciprocal; your partner must feel like you are open to what they need. Unresolved traumas do not heal on their own they must be recognized for what they are and confronted by understanding your "triggers" and explaining them to the person you want connection with in a way that does not involve blame.

Perspective without blame allows the individual to say how they feel without the criticism that comes when we believe our point of view is absolute truth and we make no room for the other person's perspective. Here are some steps you can take.

1. The person who is hurt gives their perspective



Since we have been talking about emotional intimacy and how to be “known” I thought it would be helpful if we continued along those lines and talked about how to create emotional intimacy.

and explains their pain.

2. The other person stays emotionally present and acknowledges the other person’s pain without necessarily having to admit they have done something wrong. We are looking for understanding in this part of the process.
3. After listening the other person gets to give their perspective,

without blame.

5. The two of you find a place of agreement and understanding by listening to each other’s perspective.

I will continue this article next time and hopefully, bring more understanding and insight as to what creates/breaks a connection. **JL**

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A person wearing a red helmet and a dark shirt is riding a mountain bike on a paved trail that winds through a lush green forest. Another person is visible further ahead on the trail. The scene is bright and sunny, with sunlight filtering through the trees.

VISIT REDDING

TRAILS in Redding

BY KALLIE MARKEL

Visit Redding Summer

Already known for sunny summers, world-class fishing, and the spectacular Sundial Bridge, Redding is quickly making a name for itself as the trails capital of California. Hundreds of miles of hiking, biking, equestrian, and off-road vehicle trails can be found in a 15 mile radius of downtown Redding; many cross and follow the picturesque Sacramento River, while others explore the surrounding foothills and deliver adventures year-round.

The Sacramento River National Recreation Trail is a two-trail arrangement that crosses the internationally-acclaimed Sundial Bridge and travels north to Shasta Dam alongside an historic abandoned railway. Sundial Bridge stands in the heart of town and is considered the hub of Redding's impressive trail system. The bridge's beautiful opaque glass deck stretches across the Sacramento River without affecting the salmon habitats, while the gnomon of the sundial extends 217 feet up to the sky and casts its time-telling shadow on the dial of the north plaza. Pedestrian trails fan out from either end of the bridge and wind their way uphill, through botanical gardens, along the water, and across town.

The areas surrounding Shasta Lake and Whiskeytown National Recreation Area offer abundant unpaved trails that are popular with single track bicyclists, and the mountains neighboring this growing river city – and home of the American Trails organization – present endless opportunities for great trail experiences. Many trails in Castle Crags State Park grant unmatched views of Mt. Shasta, and Lassen Volcanic National Park has scenic

trails that take visitors to bubbling mud pots, boiling lakes, and majestic vistas. With all these trails and 300+ sunny days per year, it's no wonder why the San Francisco Chronicle named Redding "the gem of the Already known for sunny weather and excellent fishing, Redding is also the trails capital of California. Hundreds of miles of trails lie within a 15 mile radius of Redding, following the Sacramento River and exploring the surrounding foothills.

The Sacramento River National Recreation Trail crosses the acclaimed Sundial Bridge and travels north to Shasta Dam. Sundial Bridge is the hub of Redding's trail system: the bridge's glass deck stretches across the river, and pedestrian trails fan out from either end before winding through town.

Areas surrounding Shasta Lake and Whiskeytown National Recreation Area offer unpaved trails for single track bicyclists, trails in Castle Crags State Park grant views of Mt. Shasta, and Lassen Volcanic National Park's trails visit bubbling mud pots, boiling lakes, and majestic vistas. For all these trails, the San Francisco Chronicle named Redding "the gem of the U.S. trail system." If you seek happier trails, visit Redding U.S. trail system." If you seek happier trails, visit Redding!

Known for great weather and fishing, Redding also boasts 225+ miles of trails. Most famously: the Sacramento River National Recreation Trail, which stretches from Sundial Bridge to Shasta Dam. Surrounding foothills offer unpaved trails for single track bicyclists, trails in Castle Crags State Park grant unforgettable views of Mt. Shasta, and Lassen Volcanic National Park's trails lead to geological wonders. If you seek happier trails, visit Redding: "the gem of the U.S. trail system".

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Picking the right tool for the job: Mosquito Control 2.0

"I've lived in this town for over 30 years and I've never seen mosquitoes this bad!"



BY PETER BONKRUDE

Peter Bonkrude is the District Manager for the Shasta Mosquito and Vector Control District serving Redding, Anderson, the City of Shasta Lake and surrounding areas. He received a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Biology from the University of Colorado-Boulder and a Master's degree in Entomology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He has been working in mosquito and vector control for over 18 years.

A phrase we commonly hear from every caller concerned with mosquitoes in and around their home and likely the same phrase that started mosquito control in California over a hundred years ago! The Shasta Mosquito and Vector Control District (SMVCD) was created in 1919 to prevent malaria in Shasta County and our mission to protect the public's health has remained unchanged throughout the years. Although our mission is still the same, the way we control mosquitoes has evolved pretty dramatically.

Today the District utilizes Integrated Vector Management (IVM) techniques to prevent mosquito transmitted diseases. IVM is defined as a "science based decision-making process that seeks to improve efficacy, cost-effectiveness, and ecological soundness."

Put another way, you wouldn't want your auto mechanic to start tearing out your transmission based on your report of general car troubles. You would want them to collect data, identify the most likely culprit for the trouble and choose the best, quickest, and cheapest way to go about fixing your car. So although it may seem obvious to the person being bitten, mosquito equals bite, the complexity behind the mosquito control for each of the 20+ mosquito species we deal with on a regular basis can vary widely. This "diagnostic" or in mosquito control terms "surveillance" is essential to every adult mosquito complaint we hear.

So what control options does the District have beyond the classic chemical control? Well, although chemical control has not lost its important place in our tool bag, we now put a larger focus on adult mosquito prevention. If we can reduce the mosquito populations before they become adults we can greatly reduce the time spent controlling adult mosquitoes. Eliminating standing water where immature mosquitoes live, using biological organisms and selecting control products that are designed to work on immature mosquitoes, ensure fewer adult mosquitoes flying and ready to bite!

Mosquito Control is a community effort and if we can all do a little, a lot can be accomplished! So how can the average person help us and themselves get fewer, or hopefully, no mosquito bites? The most important steps to mosquito bite prevention always start with the 4 D's:

1. **Drain** or dump any standing water around your house, this includes gutters, flower pots, and anything that can hold water.
2. **Dusk** and dawn are the times when mosquitoes will be at their most active, so limiting your time at those peak hours will help reduce your exposure.
3. **Dress** in long sleeves and pants if you know you are going to be out where mosquitoes will be biting.
4. **Defend** yourself and your family against bites by using an EPA approved repellent

For more information please contact the Shasta MVCD at (530) 365-3768 or visit www.shastamosquito.org JL


A phrase we commonly hear from every caller concerned with mosquitoes in and around their home and likely the same phrase that started mosquito control in California over a hundred years ago!



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ADDICTION

FINDING THE ANSWERS



BY KELLY KENYON

Kelly Kenyon is a former university science professor who has taught in several disciplines and designed, written, published and presented research worldwide in the areas of nutrition and biochemistry. She and her husband have homes in Shasta and San Diego Counties.

Cada cabeza es un mundo;" beautiful, multiple meanings, all combined in this short phrase of respected Mexican wisdom.

Who wouldn't fall in love with the magic realism and scientific theory contained in these few words. Especially as they apply to addiction. Literally this means, every head a different world. What it really means is, each person lives in their own reality and each mind perceives the world differently.

Is it true? Are the seven billion humans occupying planet earth thinking with var-

ying perceptions of reality? Some seeking out drugs or behaviors, legal or illegal, to maintain a modicum of normalcy, or to heal pains too great to endure while sober?

Genetically our differences are nonexistent. In terms of DNA sequencing we are 99.5% identical to one another. There are genes some scientists insist are instructions for addiction, but whether those genes go further into phenotypical expression of physical traits is still guesswork.

Research points to addiction as a dual problem of nature (genetic) and nurture (environment). This flies in the face of reality too because many children raised in homes by addicts, whether it be the most addictive substance in nature-nicotine, or the only one that affects every organ-alcohol, or the one responsible for the current epidemic-opiates, many still never touch the stuff.

Regardless, humans excel at being addicts and can make anything an addiction. Here's a few: sex, porn, exercise, sports, television, religion, relationships, movies, gambling, gaming, collecting, spending, shopping, hoarding, controlling and making money.

Here's a partial list of the substance category: first, refined sugar in all its forms. Many scientists believe this is the consummate "gateway drug," and this writer agrees. Next caffeine, cigarettes, chewing tobacco, alcohol, pills-opiates, benzodiazepines i.e. Xanax, klonopin, marijuana (which has medical merit), methamphetamine, heroin (the mother of all opiates), inhalants, MDMA (ecstasy or molly), and many others, all found in our small county in the most addicted country in the world.

Perhaps the best defense is a good offense. So how do you know if you're addicted? If so, what are steps you can take to help yourself, remembering addiction hurts those you love more than it hurts you.

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HOW TO KNOW IF YOU ARE ADDICTED:

DOES SEARCHING FOR THE SUBSTANCE PRECLUDE EVERYTHING ELSE IN YOUR LIFE?

Have you lost relationships or employment because of it? Have you lost motivation for things you formerly loved? A scientist once said that addiction can be determined not just by the amount you are doing or taking, but by how much it has ended other important activities in your life. No one can answer any of these questions for you. You're the expert here.

HAVE PEOPLE YOU TRUST REMARKED ABOUT YOUR USE IN A NEGATIVE WAY?

Remember addiction usually begins innocently and slips quietly into the realm of being harmful, selfish, negative and yes, addicting. Jesus' first miracle was wine, expensive wine, but he never intended alcohol or any other behavior to control and ruin us. The only things we take from this life are relationships. Listen to the people you love and trust, remember, it takes an enormous amount of courage for them to confront you.

Research points to addiction as a dual problem of nature (genetic) and nurture (environment). This flies in the face of reality too because many children raised in homes by addicts, whether it be the most addictive substance in nature-nicotine, or the only one that affects every organ-alcohol, or the one responsible for the current epidemic-opiates, many still never touch the stuff.

HAVE YOU STARTED ISOLATING YOURSELF?

Are you avoiding friends or family because of this activity/substance? We are masters of shame, and will isolate when feeling unfit to be around others. Guilt is a thermometer, a quick indicator of behaviors gone astray, but shame is never good and not our birth right. Shame doesn't come from the one who dreamed of our existence before the creation of world.

Do you feel moody, sick, and physically uncomfortable when not using? Is the time or amount you use, increasing with illogical explanations to justify your behavior?

Asking for help is the best thing you can do. Surrendering to God is the greatest indicator of strength and future freedom. Freedom, being what we were created for in the first place. JL



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Heal the Generations



BY CHERYL STASINOWSKY

Did you know that we can bring healing to generations after us.

If we do not deal with our own issues the consequences do not just remain with us, but they get passed down to the third and fourth generations. We do not have to believe this to be true.

Let me give you an example...my two children did not get along very well. I was constantly trying to get them to get along, to stop fighting and forgive, and everything else I could think of, but still, the constant fighting and bickering. I finally went to the Lord and asked Him why they continually struggle to get along. He showed me how my brothers and I did not get along, how my dad and his sister did not get along, how my mom and her brother had challenges with getting along. He recalled

stories I had heard about my grandmother and grandfather not getting along with their siblings. It did not stop there. He, then, showed me the challenges my husband had with his siblings, his parents with their siblings, and his grandparents with their siblings.

This had been going on for many years and kept getting passed down to the next generation. I saw it, and now to address it and get it to stop! I repented for not getting along with my brothers and asked the Lord to forgive me. I forgave my brothers and asked the Lord to forgive them. I forgave myself. I, then, did this with my parents, forgiving them for the challenges they had with their siblings, and asked the Lord to forgive them and me, and I forgave myself. I did the same for my grandparents. I, then, asked the Lord to break the generational curse that kept getting passed down from generation to generation, and I asked Him to bless the generations with love, agreement, laughter, hope, blessing, and peace. My husband did the same on his side of the family. (Even though some of these generations have passed away, the generational consequences still continue until repentance and forgiveness takes place.)

Then, I waited to see how it was going to change. I had no conversation with my children about this. I am not kidding you, they get along great now. To me, it is a miracle, to them, it is natural. The generations, in regards to siblings, have been healed and the curse stopped. My heart and attitude toward my brothers, also, was healed.

Generations are changed by forgiveness...do you notice anything repeating generation after generation? Maybe you need to spend a little time and work on it like I did. It is as if the thread that was holding everyone to the same choice of contention was cut, and we laugh, and enjoy each other. In the future, my grandchildren will have the advantage of getting along together...

Cheryl's website www.wordscribeministries.com JL

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Romanced by God

My body tingles with my favorite part of the movie just seconds away. The hero reveals his love to the woman who won his heart. A sigh escapes my lips. I yearn for something like this to happen in my life.



**BY WENDY TARYN
DE LUCA**

Wendy Taryn Deluca: a U.S. Navy Veteran and Clinical Therapist, provides faith-based counseling. She studied at Liberty University and Australia's Hillsong International Leadership College. Wendy is writing a book to help women find joy and contentment in singleness. For more information visit wendydeluca.com.

I am not alone in this longing. Most women want romance. As a single woman, this need is often filled through sappy romantic comedies with happy endings. Watching them is safer than offering my heart to yet another man who will not cherish me. After my last breakup, I vowed this won't happen again.

Like many other women, I made a list of character qualities I want in a mate. I still haven't met this man and sometimes wonder if he exists. Instead of yearning for someone I don't have, I express gratitude for my many blessings: activities and friendships that fulfill me, and love God has for me as His daughter. For the most part, I am content.

But the Lord revealed Himself in a new way at a retreat I attended in 2016. I realized God is all the things I want in a mate and more. He longs to have a relationship with me. The Lord is jealous and wants me all to Himself. He pursues me and won't stop. Instead of being courted by one earthly man, I am wooed by the perfect One from Heaven.

God is constantly romancing me in spiritual and tangible ways. He speaks to me personally, intimately, with words He knows I need to hear. I imagine the Lord as my Beloved and I am His princess. He calls me His treasure, darling, and perfect one. I am God's delight, the apple of His eye.

Every day the Lord greets me with the dawn and tells me goodnight with the sunset. He sends "love

gifts" that he knows I like. None are coincidences, but events God orchestrated for me.

The Lord romances me until I collapse into His loving arms. I don't only know in my head that God loves me, but feel His love in ways never experienced before. When I know this love, I feel beautiful and radiate with inner confidence only He can give.

When I open my heart to Jesus, I experience a personal love affair with my Savior. I invite Him to spiritual intimacy with me—intimacy that is pure and holy. The Lord defines my inner beauty. I no longer look to a man for validation of things only God can give. I accomplish what He calls me to do without need for approval or fear of rejection. Defenses come down when I trust Jesus will never leave or forsake me.

My daydreams are about Jesus now that I know what true romance is. I picture His handsome face and imagine Him walking with me. He takes my hand and leads me as if we are dancing. What an honor to dance with the Savior of the world.

Jesus is my prince and hero who rescued and redeemed me. He is the one true love I long for. I consider myself His eternal bride, a princess ready to shine. A heart-shaped ring adorns my left hand where married couples wear their wedding band. I tell people this is my "Jesus loves me" ring. He is my spiritual husband until the day He either sends one on earth or I go to be with Him in Heaven. **JL**

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Developing Life Long Healthy Relationships



BY CYNDI BARBER

Cyndi Barber is a Pastoral Counselor at Bethel Church Transformation Center where she specializes in relationships and inner healing. She also writes monthly for iMom.com, a parenting website. Her own blog is upandovercomers.com

We've all experienced friendships that began with the joy of sharing and camaraderie just to see them later crash and burn leaving us struggling to trust again.

It can feel like it isn't safe to risk giving anyone else access to your heart. But your heart longs for deep connections. We weren't created for isolation and shallow relationships.

Having life-long friendships is an invaluable prize. It's a deep connection built over time and deepened through the ups and downs of life. But you ask yourself, "How are these kinds of relationships developed? How can I risk my heart to let people in and minimize the potential damage of unhealthy connections?" Here are a few tips to developing friendships that stand the test of time.

intimacy the new relationship isn't able to bear. As you get to know each other over a span of time you can share more and more deeply.

Be equally yoked.

Years ago farmers plowed fields with oxen that were connected side by side by a yoke around their necks. The success of the task was dependent on the equality of strength of the oxen. Otherwise, the plow would turn in a circle instead of in a straight line. The same principle applies with friendships. Your deepest friendships need to be with people of equal emotional and spiritual strength. This ensures you

both challenge and encourage each other proportionally without depleting the other.

Don't expect them to fill a vacuum in your own heart.

When our heart has been abandoned or abused we may look for someone to fill the void to ease the pain. Deep wounds from our past need to be healed through inner healing, counseling, and connection with God. Treating a gunshot wound with the contents of a first aid kit only stops the bleeding. But the patient requires the removal of the bullet in surgery in order to truly heal. Likewise, plugging a person into the void doesn't heal the wound. True and lasting healing happens through the surgery of the heart. Healthy relationships with people are like the rehab that follows. They push you to recover with full mobility.

Don't lose yourself in the relationship.

Make sure you aren't sacrificing all of your own needs for the sake of the relationship.

It's important that you are equally giving and receiving time and energy. Don't vol-

unteer to problem solve for each other before the relationship has more fully developed. It's tempting, as a giving person, to push your way in to the other person's life before you really have a chance to develop the friendship. Continue to get to know each other and to understand how the other person deals with issues in their own life. As the relationship grows you can become more and more involved in each other's lives. **JL**



Don't go in too fast too soon.

Until you really know someone you don't really know someone. Just like it isn't healthy to be wary and resistant to letting people close it equally isn't healthy to pull someone in too close too soon. Until you know a person for awhile you really don't know their capacity for relationship. You can share the evolution of your life story without discussing the pain, fear, and depth of its effect on you. Discussing those details draws someone in to a place of emotional

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a blue sleeveless dress, is running barefoot through tall, golden grass. She has her arms outstretched, and a golden retriever is running alongside her. The background is a soft-focus landscape of rolling hills and trees under a bright sky.

Perfect Imperfect

BY DIXIE LEE GREEN

It oppresses me when I hear that ill-fated question, “What will they think of me?”

For it is not so much what WE think of ourselves that determines the way we carry our emotions, but it is what we believe OTHERS think of us.

If I just lose ten pounds my significant other would find me more attractive, or if I joined that club my friends would think I was trendy, or if I furthered my education my friends would respect me more.

But on a more sorrowful level this same question often leads one down a destructive path, a path that inevitably ends with guilt and shame.

The world is but a shadow of condescending messages which stream through our phones, televisions, and computers, informing our fragile thoughts that we are not good enough that somehow we need to be more than we are. We need to be wiser, prettier, thinner, bolder, and then perhaps, more accepted? Why does society hinge on causing others to feel inferior?

For me, a defining moment came when I was a student in high school. I was studying fields in health care and for a semester my class worked in a nursing home. On one particular day my teacher was demonstrating how to make a hospital bed. I struggled to comprehend what she was saying. Tears had run freely down my face.

Green/Perfect

“It’s not rocket science,” she had bellowed. “What’s the matter with you? You can’t be that stupid!” she had ferociously continued.

In that fraction of time she had defined my identity. I was stupid, worthless, and a waste of her time. I believed myself to be those qualities. I strived for acceptance through destructive behaviors, focused on outcomes of what others wanted me to be.

My heart sympathizes with the overweight adolescent who slides into anorexia, or the depressed mother, who reaches for pills to manage her day, or the father who bears a sense of inadequacy and kills himself.

We hunger to ‘fit in,’ so we conform to what the world shouts at us. We live by messages of condemnation commanding us to be something we are not. Can acceptance even be found in this world? For it takes more courage to be true to ourselves than it does to try and be something we are not.

For years I wrestled with coping mechanisms searching for acceptance but I have realized through God’s word and true friends that I am the “perfect imperfect,” I was planned to be.

We are each an important piece of God’s glorious painting, accepted and loved just the way we are. **JL**

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The Joy Thief:

Reclaiming Happiness in the Midst of Anxiety

Anyone who has ever suffered from anxiety, no matter what the level, can undeniably relate to the fact that it takes away from the ability to experience the happiness and joyful moments of daily living.

While the majority of people have felt at least mild anxiety or nervousness on occasion, perhaps noticing sweaty palms, racing thoughts, or rapid heartbeat before a job interview or test, others suffer to a much greater degree. The anxiety that accompanies Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) might be felt at a much greater intensity, with symptoms persisting over longer periods. This type of anxiety, which might often appear spontaneously and unexpectedly, can start to take on a life of its own. Life seems unsettling, overwhelming, and sometimes frightening. Whether in the form of a short burst or a protracted battle, anxiety has a unique way of sabotaging pleasure, happiness, and peace. A real joy thief.

How dare this entity, which is merely a signal that something is out of sync, become the unrelenting monster that it is, chipping away at the sufferer's attempt to live and enjoy life? When it grips us in a stronghold, the overriding focus tends to be that of survival. Mental, emotional, and physical energies are consumed by working hard at eradicating, or at least controlling, uncomfortable thoughts, painful memories, or frightening what-ifs. Averting and staving off panic attacks can start to become a normal part of the routine. It's as if there's a gargantuan-size neon sign flashing "danger ahead!" as refuge is sought from what amounts to a perpetual mind storm.

Doing battle with anxiety is exhausting and depleting. It's difficult to imagine contentment, let alone joy, when trying to handle such adversity. For some, the mere relief accompanying symptom-free moments, or the resolution of an acute surge can give rise to happiness and hope. The active process of reclaiming some of life's joys include treatments that are taught, prescribed, or conducted within the mental health provider's office and assimilated into the person's everyday life. In my previous work providing psychotherapy for anxious and depressed adults, I made it a point to ask about times when they could recall being free, or almost free, of anxiety, and felt more peaceful and joyful. The purpose of this task was to have them acknowledge realistically that they had the potential to feel happier and healthier. In doing so, hope started to resurface from gloom and darkness. I also discovered that some of the therapy techniques implemented to alleviate anxiety were, in themselves, adept at both quelling symptoms, and generating happiness during the healing process. How refreshing it is to know that the restoration of joy doesn't have to be the proverbial prize at some arbitrary moment in the future when treatment is concluded and the anxiety has been "cured."

A psychotherapy technique that appears to have the capacity to facilitate pleasure, calm, peace, and feelings of well-being is known as mindfulness, or being present in the moment. Most anxiety sufferers would be quick to acknowledge the extent to

which they struggle with being “in their heads,” finding it challenging to be in the present. Whether they be intrusive or racing thoughts, distressing memories, or fears of the future, these thoughts sap our energy and joy. Mental health providers are recognizing the benefits of mindfulness in getting people out of the cognitive-only zone and connected to the moment.

Connection to the present moment, which is the cornerstone of mindfulness, embodies a variety of uncomplicated, easily implemented, activities that can bust stress, produce calm and relaxation, and facilitate the restoration of happiness. While conducting my own research on simple stress- and anxiety-relief backed up by science, I identified at least fifty ideas that appear to meet these criteria. A few moments of prayer or meditation, smiling and laughing, physical movement, looking at or smelling flowers and herbs, singing, and listening to music have been shown by research (in addition to anecdotal, or self-reports) to alleviate stress and promote relaxation. In essence, they have the potential to assemble a foundation from which happiness can evolve. Similar activities include watching fish swim around, getting out into the sun, and connecting with someone, all of which would most likely be labeled as a few of life’s simple pleasures.

The anxiety associated with PTSD is not always predictable and can arise at unexpected times. It keeps us in our heads with worry thoughts, interferes with our productivity, and steals our joy. Being prepared and open to manage it with the help of trained professionals and our own playbook of what works for us is a formula for recouping health and well-being. Anxiety is a signal that something is out of harmony and sync. Understanding this, and knowing that we can feel good again and experience peace during the healing process, and not just at the end, can provide welcomed reinforcement in reclaiming whatever this joy thief has taken. JL



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