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TRUTH and TRADITION



Humility can provide a reservoir of calm for those moments when the tensions of parenthood can push some couples toward conflict.

How Humility Can Help New Parents Get Along

Recent research suggests that relationships marked by greater humility can ease stress between moms and dads

MARYAM ABDULLAH

What qualities do we look for in a prospective co-parent? Partner preferences usually involve some winning combination of physical attractiveness, status, and resources, at least according to some theories. But there’s another quality we might be overlooking in the search for a mate: humility.

Humble people accurately acknowledge both their strengths and weaknesses. They’re modest and considerate. Humility seems to be especially important in maintaining and repairing relationships. For couples, the transition to parenthood can be bumpy. They have to figure out how to take care of a new baby together—an experience that can lead to differences in opinion. Can having a partner—and being a partner—who is humble make the journey into parenthood easier?

In a recent study, Daryl Van Tongeren and his colleagues studied nearly 70 married, heterosexual, mostly white, and 30-something couples shortly before and after the birth of their first child. During the last trimester of pregnancy, couples completed questionnaires that measured their partners’ (not their own) humility with items like, “He has humble character” and “She knows her strengths.” The researchers also asked couples to complete questionnaires to measure their own stress, anxiety, and depression during the first study visit, and then again when their newborn baby was 3 months old.

The study found that people who had partners with greater humility before they became parents tended to feel less anxious after they became parents. What’s more, people who rated their partners as arrogant before their babies were born tended to have greater stress and depression three months after.

Unfortunately, humility needs to be a two-way street for the benefits to be felt. “Being the only humble partner in a [relationship] appears to be taxing,” explained Van Tongeren and his colleagues. “The benefits of humility across a life transition appear to be reserved for those marked by humble relationships—both members of the couple are humble.”

Another team of researchers re-examined the same nearly 70 couples in a 2018 study, this time looking at answers to questions about forgiveness, such as, “I can usually forgive and forget an insult.” The couples also reported on the quality of their marriage with questions such as, “How often do you and your partner quarrel?” at four points in the study: during the last trimester of pregnancy, and when their newborns were three, nine, and 21 months old.

The findings? Marital quality declined during the transition to parenthood in couples with both low and high levels of humility. However, people with more humble partners before their babies were born tended to have better marital quality at

all time points, compared to people with arrogant partners. This was true no matter how forgiving they tended to be.

This doesn’t mean that the ability to forgive doesn’t matter in a relationship—only that the link between humility and marital satisfaction is not just a reflection of how forgiving partners are of one another, at least in this study. “A couple beginning their transition to parenthood may experience difficulty, but our results suggest that they will fare better as a couple if they begin their journey with full reservoirs of humility,” explained lead author Chelsea Reid and her colleagues.

So, what do these study findings suggest for expecting and new parents? Apart from attending childbirth classes and reading up on newborn care to gain parenting skills, couples can commit to strengthening their relationships, support one another’s involvement as parents, and approach parenting like they’re both on the same team—with humility. Reid and her colleagues suggest couples in the transition to parenthood learn “how to communicate humbly over disagreements, negotiate intimacy concerns with humility, and humbly disagree from power struggles.”

Researcher Caroline Lavelock and her colleagues developed exercises that focus on the key elements of humility and found that it can be strengthened with practice.

- Take time to acknowledge, understand, and use your strengths to cope with feeling self-doubt.
- Write about acts of humility in a gratitude journal to help you notice and value that quality in others.
- Try to experience awe in the natural world, to reflect on the world outside yourself rather than being self-focused.
- Have conversations with your partner that increase feelings of closeness, to encourage thoughtfulness between you.

Parenting is rife with opportunities for beating up on ourselves over “wrong” decisions and for partners to condescendingly call out each other’s faults. But humility can cradle us in authentic self-awareness and commitment to uplift one another. When it’s 3 a.m. and we’ve been struggling for two hours to help our baby go back to sleep, our partner’s looks, job title, and investment portfolio might all pale in comparison to whether they’re humble enough to put their ego aside and be in the trenches with us trying to figure out how to help.

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TRUTH and TRADITION

MINDSET MATTERS

The Making of a CORPORATE ATHLETE

When it comes to professional greatness, research shows self-care is key

NANCY COLIER

What skills are necessary for professional greatness? What makes someone able to perform successfully under high stress and constant change and to keep doing it over time without breaking down? As it turns out, we have lots of answers to this question, and most focus on the rewards necessary for greatness, the kind of culture that breeds success, and the particular skill sets necessary for peak performance.

But recently, Harvard Business School conducted a different kind of study, one that examined the strategies and habits of winning athletes and whether they could be transferred to apply to business—in essence, whether we could train high-level executives as corporate athletes. It appears that the answer is “yes.” We can indeed apply the wisdom of sport to help ourselves succeed in anything and everything that’s challenging.

As someone who competed as a top-level equestrian for over two decades, it has long been clear to me that the skills and mindset I learned as a competitive athlete are what allow me to succeed in every other pursuit in my life, both professionally and personally. It appears that now there’s proof.

Research in the field of sport demonstrates that top athletes succeed in large part because of their ability to perform under stress, and more importantly, to recover after stress has occurred. Recovery is the critical process in which the body and mind not only rest, but also rebuild new strengths and develop resilience, as a muscle does between workouts.

When comparing the careers of athletes and executives however, vast differences exist in the natural opportunities for recovery. Most of an athlete’s time is spent in practice with just a small percentage in actual competition. An executive, however, is in competition every day, all day. An athlete’s high-stress season is usually fairly short with lots of time to recover in the off-season, while a corporate athlete gets a few weeks off per year if she’s lucky (during which time she usually works). And finally, the average top-level athlete’s career lasts less than a decade while an executive’s career spans a lifetime. All that said, an executive, if he is to reap the benefits of the recovery process must find alternative ways to rest and rebuild.

To consistently perform well in high-stress environments, executives must focus not just on the skills needed for their specific field, but more broadly, on creating a mindful and nourishing life, one that feeds them physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. To create excellence at work, a corporate athlete must ultimately create excellence in life.

The “Fit Corporate Athlete”

Although executives are primarily mentally-focused, the corporate athlete must, nonetheless, pay close attention to the wellbeing of his or her body, not just how it looks but how it is being taken care of. A corporate athlete cannot function at a high level for very long as just a head running around without a body attached. Corporate athletes are inclined to forget about their bodies, and yet, over time this dismissive attitude is a sure-fire recipe for burnout. Attention to diet, exercise, sleep, and a program of physical well-being cannot be excluded when excellence is the goal.

On an emotional level, the corporate athlete must pay close attention to her feeling state. He cannot wait for a strong emotion like anger or frustration to overwhelm him and thus land him on the bench. Just as an athlete might ask herself how she is feeling on a physical level, a corporate athlete must be aware of how she is on an emotional level and also be able to manage strong emotions when they arise. Mindfulness of emotion is thus a critical practice in the creation of excellence.

From a mental perspective, the ability to control our attention is the key ingredient in the ability to perform under and recover from stress. We must be able to focus our attention when it counts, and turn our attention away from negative and distracting thoughts. Meditation is the practice of observing and separating from our thoughts, which protects us from getting caught up and sidelined by the thoughts that destroy performance. As such, meditation is the practice of most importance, mentally, for creating peak performance.

And finally, on a spiritual level, a corporate athlete must discover meaning in his life—why he’s doing what he’s doing, what really matters to him, what values he’s serving. As unrelated as it may seem to the executive mindset, a top-level performer in any field, in order to sustain herself, must consciously contemplate what her life is about. A sense of mean-



While athletes get regular breaks to recover, corporate workers are under game-day stress virtually all year long.

ing is, above all else, the antidote to burnout.

Top level executives are athletes—corporate athletes. Excellence is created not just by the obvious skills one’s profession demands, but by nurturing a whole and well human being. To create and maintain high-level performance in stressful environments, we must pay attention to and nourish all areas of our life. As it turns out, self-care is, in fact, the recipe for greatness.

This article is based on the work of Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz, the primary researchers, and coiners of the term “corporate athlete.”

Nancy Collier is a psychotherapist, interfaith minister, public speaker, workshop leader and author of *The Power of Off: The Mindful Way to Stay Sane in a Virtual World*. For more information, visit NancyCollier.com

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Feeling Fatigued? Natural Ways to Beat Aging, Overcome Fatigue

MOHAN GARIKPARITHI

If you’ve been feeling fatigued lately—and maybe not just lately, but for years—it can be easy to think it’s a normal part of aging. Yes, you might not be the same person you were earlier in life, but the lack of energy doesn’t have to control you.

It’s easy to believe that you feel the way you do because of some uncontrollable circumstance—lower testosterone, some back pain, a little weight gain—or that it’s just a part of getting older. But you might have more control than you think.

Your body undergoes natural changes with age. In men, testosterone levels drop a little bit each year, which can influence energy. For women, iron deficiencies or thyroid problems can be an underlying cause for fatigue. But for most people, the foundations of fatigue are the same and it’s very likely that most of them are related to lifestyle, not physiology.

If staying energized with age is a priority for you, here are some ways you can fight back against fatigue.



The lack of energy doesn’t have to control you.

Even a brisk walk can manufacture energy that lasts.

Stress management: Stress can be the ultimate energy killer and also one of the hardest to avoid. But it can be reduced through various measures, including talking with friends and relatives, support groups, or professionals. Hobbies can help, as can meditation, tai-chi, and yoga.

Exercise: Exercise is another great way to encourage more overall energy. It allows your body to release the stress hormones epinephrine and norepinephrine, which can provide energy. Even a brisk walk can manufacture energy that lasts. Exercise can also contribute to better quality sleep at night, which can increase energy and reduce stress.

Increased blood circulation can also add a boost.

After your eating: How and what you eat can also have a big impact on your energy. For example, instead of sitting down for three big meals every day, it might be better to eat smaller meals and snacks with greater frequency, like every few hours. Your brain needs a steady supply of nutrients and feeding it can counter the feeling of fatigue. Eating nutrient-dense foods that are high in fiber, complex carbohydrates, and healthy fats can also help sustain energy and reduce the chances of a crash that come from refined sugars and grains.

Drink Water: If you’re short on fluids, one of the first signs is fatigue. Drink water throughout the day and aim for about eight 8-oz. glasses per day. This is an easy way to boost energy and improve focus.

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Tuning in to Microwave Sickness

How wireless technology can trigger a devastating illness

CONAN MILNER

In 2016, U.S. officials stationed overseas started showing signs of a mysterious illness. The list of symptoms included headaches, sensitivity to light, sleep and cognitive problems, and nosebleeds. Many heard strange sounds that seemed to come from inside their heads.

Over the next two years, dozens of diplomats staying in U.S. embassies in Cuba and China all developed the same list of symptoms. Doctors summed it up as a type of brain trauma, but there's no official answer of the cause. The lead theory is that the diplomats were the target of an unusual weapon—one that emits a directed pulse of microwave radiation.

In an interview with CBS's "60 Minutes," Mark Lenzi, a State Department security officer who worked in the U.S. Consulate in Guangzhou, China, said that he and his wife began to suffer after hearing strange sounds in their apartment. Lenzi seemed certain that they were the victims of an energy weapon.

"This was a directed standoff attack against my apartment," Lenzi told "60 minutes." "I believe it's RF, radio frequency energy, in the microwave range. The first scientist to suggest that microwaves were the cause of the illness was Dr. Beatrice Golomb, a professor of medicine at the University of California—San Diego, and a researcher who examines how drugs and environmental toxins harm health. When she heard about the diplomats' symptoms, her first thought was microwave exposure.

"The profile of symptoms does not match anything else I'm familiar with," Golomb said. "These are highly distinctive symptoms known to occur only in that setting. The likelihood that it could be anything else is very remote."

Golomb wrote a paper outlining her case. Before it was even submitted for publication, it caught the attention of State Department officials eager for a meaningful explanation. She wrote that one major reason why the diplomats' illness suggests a microwave cause is the auditory symptoms they experienced: hearing loss, tinnitus, and the presence of a chirping, ringing, hissing, or buzzing sound.

"The difference in the sound counts, in part, due to head dimensions," Golomb said. "There were also reports that the sounds were tightly localized in space. When people moved, the sound's source seemed to follow them. That's not the case for stationary sound forces, but it is the case for the micro-auditory effect, because the sound is actually produced in the head."

This microwave-induced phenomenon is known as the "Frey effect" or "radio frequency hearing," and was proven by Dr. Alan Frey in 1965, when he was working for the U.S. Navy. A 1976 U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency report described how to stimulate it: "Sounds and possibly even words which appear to be originating intracranially can be induced by signal modulation at very low average-power densities."

The good news is that, whatever the cause, it no longer seems to be an issue. Since returning to the United States, diplomats have either totally or partially recovered from their symptoms.

But Golomb believes their story compels a larger question: If there is reason to believe that microwave radiation can be used to sicken U.S. officials overseas, why aren't we looking closer at the people with microwave sickness in the population back at home?

"I have heard from hundreds of people who have experienced severe health effects from wireless, and it is a frustration that most news



▲ There is a desperate need for wireless free zones where injured individuals can recover.

“Our body is electric, our brain is electric, our heart is electric, and our nervous system is electric.”

Dafna Tachover, attorney and founder, *We are the Evidence*

outlets have steered clear of this topic," Golomb said.

Understanding Microwave Sickness

Everyone agrees that microwave radiation exposure at thermal levels (think microwave oven) can cause harm. But industry and regulatory standards assume that sub-thermal levels are safe. Yet, scientists have documented evidence of illness from sub-thermal microwave exposure for decades. The condition used to be known as "microwave sickness" or "radio frequency sickness," but today, it's usually called electromagnetic sensitivity (ES).

Symptoms of microwave sickness resemble those experienced by the U.S. diplomats mentioned above. The difference is that everyday illness not to a mysterious weapon, but to very common microwave-emitting devices, such as Wi-Fi routers, cellphone towers, and smart meters.

"This group is similar to the diplomats in that different people have different subsets of symptoms, but prominent on the list are sleep problems, cognitive problems, and ear associated problems, with tinnitus the most common," Golomb said.

Microwave sickness causes a wide range of symptoms, and some can be very serious. For example, many people who develop the illness report feeling a band-like pressure in their head.

"There is reason to think that this may actually be brain swelling as was occurring in some diplomats," Golomb said. "One person was actually given social security disability for very severe electro-sensitivity. His brain swelling became so severe at one point that it actually pushed his eyeball out of its orbit."

One obstacle to understanding microwave sickness is that it can be triggered by electronics that virtually everyone is exposed to. If Wi-Fi routers and cellphone towers really caused illness, why do only some people get sick and everybody else seems fine?

The answer can be found within the same pattern seen in other diseases. If the stress is high and your defenses are low, you're more likely to develop it. For microwave radiation, exposure means oxidative stress and mitochondrial damage. Luckily, a healthy body can repair itself when hit with a small dose of this stress. However, if the exposure is chronic or becomes too intense, and our defenses are compromised, illness can result.

Golomb mentioned one study, an Italian-Russian collaboration, that showed people who had electromagnetic sensitivity (ES) were significantly more likely to have gene variants in the glutathione system—a major antioxidant system in the body that guards against oxidative stress injury.

"This adversely affects the balance of oxidative stress and antioxidant defense and makes any new oxidative stressor more likely to produce symptoms," she said.

Angela's Story

Sweden is the only country that recognizes ES as a functional impairment—this means it's like a disability, but it has an environmental cause. In the rest of the world, however, the issue is generally unknown, ignored, or sometimes even ridiculed until a notable case goes to court.

Part of the confusion is that some researchers insist it doesn't exist. Studies primarily con-

nected with industry, for example, aim to show that the condition is merely psychosomatic and not a valid medical concern.

Golomb is familiar with such studies, but said they often come from researchers who make a career out of debunking environmental illness, not from scientists genuinely looking for answers.

"That's the angle they're coming in with and, not unexpectedly, the design of these studies does not take into account any of the known science on the variability and time course to onset, resolution, and that different people respond to different frequencies, etc.," she said.

There is, however, strong physiological evidence for the condition. One study by Dr. Dominique Belpomme, a professor of medical oncology at Paris University, examined 700 ES sufferers. All showed decreased levels of an important antioxidant associated with sleep, melatonin. That explains why sleep problems are such a common problem with this condition.

More than a quarter of the ES sufferers in Belpomme's study showed evidence of a broken blood-brain barrier—which is considered another hallmark of microwave exposure.

Microwave radiation can affect any cell in the body, but its impact on the brain is particularly worrisome. It often makes its way in through the ear because there is no skull there to protect against it.

A recently published pilot study revealed differences and abnormalities that signified brain injury within the brains of ES patients that were not present in the brains of those not suffering from ES. Researchers believe these MRI scans defy the widely held governmental and wireless industry claim that wireless devices and infrastructure have no consequences to human health and could affect the prevailing opinion that wireless radiation is safe.

Yet few know about such evidence. It's not taught in medical school, so when symptoms develop, few doctors are prepared to connect the dots.

That's why Angela Tsiang had so much trouble finding answers when her son started showing signs of a neurological disease when he was 9 years old. It began soon after he entered the fourth grade in August 2013. Tsiang said he had been a normal child up until that point, but he suddenly developed new problems: extreme agitation and nervousness, sleep problems, severe headaches, nosebleeds, a red, swollen rash that would make his hands crack and bleed, digestive problems, and a new fear: loud noises.

"He started becoming afraid of fire drills," Tsiang remembers. "I said, 'What are you talking about? You've been going through fire drills since kindergarten.' He said, 'I don't know why, mommy, but loud noises really scare me now.'"

The most concerning problem was that her son had also lost his ability to concentrate. Homework became a big ordeal. Assignments that were supposed to take 30 minutes took hours to complete. Even getting ready in the morning became unusually difficult. Tsiang said her son had become so forgetful that the basic routine he had performed for years was suddenly confusing to him.

Worried about what could be wrong, Tsiang took her son to several specialists, but they offered few answers. Everyone could see he had problems, but nobody could explain where they came from. Her son received the most relief from supplements prescribed by her integrative physician, Dr. Rita Ellithorpe. Ellithorpe wasn't

sure what was wrong, either, but Tsiang said the probiotics, vitamins, and essential fatty acids helped ease his symptoms.

"Everything became manageable and he was able to concentrate better, but he still wasn't quite right," Tsiang said.

Ellithorpe also gave Tsiang some general lifestyle advice: have her son reduce his use of wireless devices. She also recommended shutting off the cordless phone and Wi-Fi at night. She said it might help him sleep and help his body repair.

Tsiang listened but said that back then, the advice sounded inconvenient, and she didn't think it would make a huge difference. The devices Ellithorpe mentioned all emitted non-ionizing radiation, which Tsiang learned was harmless at low, non-thermal levels from her science and engineering classes.

Yet, it planted a seed in her mind that started to sprout in the spring of 2015. One morning, as Tsiang dropped her son off at school, she got her first flash of insight into what might be causing his problems.

"I happened to look up and see a construction worker on this really tall pole in the park next to my son's school. They were taking the cover off the cell tower. I didn't even know it was there," she said. "It was about 300 feet from the school building."

Following this new lead, Tsiang went to city hall and researched the records on the tower. That's when she discovered a second cell tower 600 feet away from the school that had been upgraded to 4G from 3G in June 2013, right before her son started fourth grade and all his problems began.

She learned that the tower 300 feet away (where she had just seen the workmen) was now in the process of being upgraded to 4G. The network upgrade would mean better connectivity and bandwidth for wireless devices, but what did it mean for her son's health?

"I started to panic," Tsiang said. "Could that have been what caused my son to become sick?" As she dove into the scientific literature, Ellithorpe's advice started to make more sense.

Despite what Tsiang had been taught, studies have shown that non-ionizing radiation could cause symptoms very similar to her son's. But Tsiang and her husband are both engineers who wanted their own evidence, so they purchased a meter and measured the radiation levels at their son's school. Some of the readings Tsiang found were high enough to cause illness, according to the studies she had read.

"Even though they were below FCC limits, the radiation levels at school were 1,000 times higher than what they were in our home and most areas that do not have a cell tower close by," Tsiang said. "That's why those meters are so great: because it objectively shows you how much radiation you're being exposed to."

Tsiang learned all these details during spring break and worried about what would happen once her son went back to school with a second upgraded cell tower at even closer proximity. All she could do was wait and watch.

"We didn't say anything to my son, but when he went back to school, all the symptoms he had in 2013 came back, after they had been manageable for over a year," Tsiang said. "It was terrifying. He had another month of school to go, and I didn't know what we were going to do."

As Tsiang and her husband watched the same pattern of their son's symptoms returning each school year and fading over the summer break, they became convinced that microwave radiation was the cause.

Tsiang shared her findings with Ellithorpe, who diagnosed her son with ES, and he wrote a letter requesting that he be transferred to a different school (one with considerable distance from a cellphone tower), and disability accommodations so that her son wouldn't be near any Wi-Fi routers or other microwave-emitting devices that might exacerbate his condition.

Doctor Awareness

Doctor support always adds validity to a disease. But Golomb said that, unlike Tsiang's experience with Ellithorpe, most doctors are not so supportive when patients believe

ES sufferers in Belpomme's study showed evidence of a broken blood-brain barrier.

The school believed Wi-Fi was making her son sick, but school authorities didn't want it documented for liability concerns.



▲ The infrastructure supporting our smartphone addiction has led to a staggering increase in the amount of electromagnetic radiation we are exposed to today compared to a decade ago.

they have microwave sickness.

"In a survey that we did in electro-sensitive people a few years ago, we asked what their doctor's attitude was, and we asked if this was a traditional doctor or an alternative doctor," Golomb said.

For alternative doctors, Golomb found that the vast majority of providers were supportive or accepting of the relationship between electro-magnetics and symptoms. For traditional doctors, many were dismissive or hostile about the possibility.

"This is a serious problem with each of the conditions we study, whether it's adverse drug effects or adverse effects from pesticides," she said. "I would say that traditional medical training is extremely poor on the adverse effects of anything."

But Dafna Tachover sees a growing awareness among doctors in regard to microwave sickness. Tachover is an attorney and founder of We are the Evidence—an advocacy group dedicated to defending those who have been injured by wireless radiation. She said that, with so much microwave radiation exposure in our world today, doctors can't help but see more cases of it.

"Unfortunately, most doctors in the U.S. are unfamiliar with the condition, but we definitely see a change," Tachover said. "Doctors are being educated by their patients and once provided with the evidence realize that likely many of their other patients are sick and suffering from the condition as well."

In some cases, doctors take the lead. Tachover mentioned several quality surveys conducted by European physicians that have helped educate the medical community. Over the past 20 years, more than 20 position papers and resolutions regarding the health effects of electromagnetic field radiation have been adopted by researchers and physicians worldwide.

Unfortunately, some doctors also learn about the condition the hard way. Tachover has met several physicians who have either developed the condition themselves or have children who have.

"But you don't have to develop the illness to be convinced. Tachover said the proof of health problems related to wireless is vast. The medical establishment just needs to learn to see it."

"There are actually very elaborate guidelines for doctors on how to diagnose the condition," Tachover said.

In 2016, physicians from the European Academy for Environmental Medicine (EUROPAEM) put out their latest guidelines for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of EMF-related health problems and illnesses. The academy stated that studies, empirical observations, and patient reports clearly indicate interactions between EMF exposure and health problems, "raising new challenges for medicine and society."

Although few doctors know about them, there are also official diagnostic codes for exposure to non-ionizing radiation. The American Disabilities Act also recognizes ES.

Tachover believes one big roadblock in the understanding of microwave sickness is the name people use most often to describe it: electromagnetic sensitivity or hypersensitivity. Not only does the term blame the victim rather than the cause, but it also creates a disconnect from all the evidence that had been known about the condition several decades before smartphones came along.

"This is not a sensitivity. It's a serious injury caused by microwave-based technologies," she said. "Microwave sickness was acknowledged by NASA and the Navy. Before we commercialized cellphones and wireless technology, there were occupational doctors who were dealing with soldiers, and radio and antenna workers, because they were the only ones who were exposed to the high levels of non-ionizing radiation. Now, the entire population is being exposed to it."

Seeking a Safe Distance

There are a number of remedies that reportedly help with ES symptoms. According to Golomb, some patients benefit from melatonin, and ginkgo biloba, an herb known for improving blood flow to the brain. Other doctors familiar with microwave sickness recommend glutathione, magnesium, and acupuncture—a treatment that helps balance the body's own electromagnetic field.

But treatments and supplements can only help so much, and Golomb stressed that these remedies come primarily from word of mouth, not published research. According to her, and the EUROPAEM guide, the primary treatment method should mainly focus on reducing exposure as much as possible.

"The only people who have really been successful in ameliorating their severe problems are those who have found a way to reduce exposure," Golomb said.

It's unclear how many people are affected by microwave sickness. The most comprehensive attempt to find a number comes from an Austrian survey which found that it affects about 10 percent of the population. But consider that this figure was documented in 2006, before the emergence of the smartphone and the massive wireless infrastructure that followed. By one estimate, we are subjected to 1 quintillion times (1,000,000,000,000,000,000) more electromagnetic radiation today compared to just a decade ago.

Golomb believes finding a good estimate of affected individuals today would be extremely difficult, given that people who develop the illness can be hard to reach.

"You're not going to find the people who end up living in their car. You are no longer going to find the people who no longer have the technology by which you can contact them. By definition, the most severely affected people are not going to be participating, and certainly not in an online survey," she said.

Tachover developed microwave sickness when she was a telecommunications officer in 2009. Tachover was an early adapter of wireless, but her symptoms became so debilitating, she was forced to give up her devices and eventually retreat to the Catskill Mountains—the closest place the radiation was low enough for her body to recover.

"It is like a wound—it cannot heal if you keep

scratching it," she said.

Tachover believes, given that the background radiation in our lives is constantly on the rise, more people are bound to develop this illness. She regularly encounters individuals who show the first signs of the condition: hands tingle when holding a wireless device, pain in the head and ears while using it, memory problems, heart palpitations, and flu-like symptoms that won't go away.

"Our body is electric, our brain is electric, our heart is electric, and our nervous system is electric. So radiation that is a quintillion times higher than what our body can tolerate will affect it," she said.

But in a world where wireless technology is so thoroughly embedded into the fabric of life, finding distance is becoming increasingly difficult to do.

In 2016, soon after Tsiang was able to make disability accommodations for her son at his school in California, her husband's employer wanted him to transfer to Minnesota. Tsiang managed to find a superintendent in a district who sympathized after hearing her son's story. He personally expressed concerns over cellphone use in children because he had seen a study showing that cellphone radiation penetrated children's skulls more deeply than adult skulls. He had even limited his own children's cellphone use as a result.

With the promise of help, the Tsiangs purchased a home. But once the family moved, the school board changed its tune.

"They had written a very insulting 504 report. It basically said that ES is not a valid medical condition, there are no legal precedents, and we're not going to accommodate for it, even though we had accommodations at our school in California. It said that it was my belief in this condition that was responsible for his symptoms," Tsiang said. "But verbally they said the Wi-Fi router would be turned off in [my] son's classroom because they had determined they didn't need it."

The message Tsiang received from the meeting was that the school believed Wi-Fi was making her son sick, but they didn't want it documented for liability concerns.

The problem was that since the school refused to document the accommodations, accidents occurred frequently. As a result, his symptoms would return, consistently validating that his environment was the cause.

"I contacted a disability advocate, explained this situation and the accidents that were happening," Tsiang said. "At that point, the school hired an attorney for the second round of hearings. He downplayed all his symptoms. He said, 'What's the big deal about having a rash. Just put some lotion on it. It's no different than having chapped lips.'"

Tsiang said that despite her knowledge of the issue—she is the science resource specialist at Environmental Health Trust—the school now aims to discredit her and obfuscate the scientific evidence in hopes that she will give up. It's a strategy that also serves to intimidate other parents who might consider stepping forward.

But in some schools, the evidence can become impossible to dismiss. One recent example is at an elementary school in Ripon, California, where four students and three teachers were diagnosed with cancer after a cellphone tower had been installed on school grounds three years ago.

Several parents were wary of a cell tower so close to their kids' school before it was ever built. But after the fourth child was diagnosed in March 2019, parents' patience had disappeared, and many kids were pulled out of school. Although the school had another 15 years left on its lease agreement to keep the tower on its grounds, the owner (Sprint) agreed to remove the structure due to public pressure.

Sometimes, public pressure is the only way to create change because the law won't allow it. One study found that some California firefighters were experiencing profound neurological symptoms following activation of cell towers near their stations. SPECT scans revealed brain abnormalities in all the firefighters suffering symptoms. They sued the wireless company that told them the towers were harmless, but since the Telecommunications Act of 1996 doesn't allow health to be taken into consideration when siting a tower, the judge dismissed the lawsuit.

As a result, the International Organization of Firefighters passed a resolution that prevents building cell towers on fire stations in California.

Today, Tsiang said she has no choice but to homeschool both her kids, but she would also like them to have some social interaction. So she filed a lawsuit with the school in 2017, not for damages, but to get the accommodations her son needs. The case is still waiting to go to trial. The school is trying to get the case dismissed, or at least dismiss the experts Tsiang wants to testify.

Tsiang is frustrated with the situation, but she said she has no choice but to educate people until they understand.

"No one is born with this," Tsiang said. "We were using Wi-Fi and everything was fine for a while. We used to use a lot of these things. We were like everybody else. For some people, their tolerance level is at a lower threshold and when they hit it, the body can't deal with it anymore and it starts to react."

Golomb said that, at a minimum, there should at least be some safe places available where people can live without electromagnetic radiation pulsing 24/7 in the background. Some need this distance simply to survive, but everyone could all benefit from such places.

"You may not be sensitive now, but that doesn't mean you won't be sensitive five or 10 years from now," Golomb said.

Tachover agrees that there is a desperate need for wireless-free zones where injured individuals can recover, but doesn't believe it's a practical strategy. How do you create a space for so many people completely separate from the wireless world the rest of us inhabit?

"This is not a long-term solution. We cannot move 10 percent of the population and their children," Tachover said.

Children are particularly vulnerable to microwave sickness because of the industrial Wi-Fi networks used in schools and their smaller bodies. Symptoms include headaches, sensitivity to light, sleep and cognitive problems, and nosebleeds. Some may hear strange sounds that seem to come from inside their heads.



RANDY FATH/UNSPLASH

When everyone is committed to the same cause, the potential arises for something big to grow.

ing a movement inside your school or inside the political system, creating a movement is something that leaders should always strive for.

Now I'll be straight with you, I have attempted a lot of movements in my life. Creating a movement of people who are often diverse, distrustful, disengaged, disconnected, and emotional, is fraught with difficulty. It's difficult to get people to take action in a collective way. I have failed many more times than I have succeeded, but, the movements I have created have been prolific.

A movement is a group of people taking action, of their own free will, at a grassroots level, with several key leaders, in search of, and in pursuit of, a common unifying vision. And at some point, they achieve momentum and they overwhelm the system to create radical change. They disrupt the status quo in a beautiful groundswell.

As a leader, you are the catalyst who brokers, bridges, and creates connections so that your movement can start to build from the bottom up. There has to be a unifying vision that cuts through everyone's differences and brings them together behind a common mission. This isn't new. You, in fact, accomplish this through storytelling and other old-school interpersonal, human connection skills.

Beyond the unifying vision, there has to be a sense of deep connection. The people in a movement have to feel safe, and they have to feel connected to each other. Now what that means to you as a leader is that you have to reach beyond trust gaps. You have to be a leader who doesn't get sucked into petty tensions, petty rivalries, or who is easily swayed into an emotional state.

You must be a leader who, above all else, bridges relationships and connections where others cannot. You have to be willing to stitch together different personalities, different backgrounds, different ethnicities, different wants and objectives under the catalyst of a common cause. It requires everything you've got.

And guess what? You're not going to get any of the credit. If you're truly a catalyst leader, you won't get the credit for whatever movement you build. Rooftop leaders are often the catalysts behind the scenes building connections and bridging trust to create momentum, and that's a powerful thing.

To build those connections within your movement, you have to tell the story of what you're building and enlist the service of others by culminating that story with, "Help me build this movement. Here's what it looks like for you as a hero in this story if you help me build it."

Stories are about giving people hope and rallying them together to push toward a tipping point of change. This isn't easy work and movements often fail. But let's talk about what happens if we don't.

Look at your kids who have no leadership right now, except you and me, and ask yourself, "Is it worth the price to stay in the bleachers and not lead the movements that need to be led?"

Take a look at your life and see which movement you want to create and then join us on the rooftop.

Scott Mann is a former Green Beret who specialized in unconventional, high-impact missions and relationship building. He is the founder of Rooftop Leadership and appears frequently on TV and many syndicated radio programs. For more information, visit RooftopLeadership.com

CONNECT TO LEAD

The Bridge Builders Behind A Movement

Bringing people together, and getting them moving together, is all about building connection

SCOTT MANN

Have you ever done something in your life so profound that it stayed with you? I've had a few of those experiences in my life, in the realm of Special Forces.

In 2009, we put together a program called Village Stability Operations. It was a special time because I had the opportunity to serve with men and women at both the highest level and most junior level, who were all committed to the same thing, which was stabilizing Afghanistan from the bottom up.

It was one of the few times in my military career where I saw true unity of effort. For a fleeting period of time, we really had momentum going our way. It involved one Afghan villager at a time, climbing up the ladder onto their house and defending their home, usually after a special forces detachment living in that village had been doing it night after night after night. Eventually, those individual rooftops would transform into a community movement to

As a leader, you are the catalyst who brokers, bridges, and creates connections.

stand on their own and fight back.

These individual movements, up onto the Rooftop, resulted in the growth of 6 communities standing on their own to 113 communities standing on their own. From 75 farmers defending their homes across six villages to 30,000. It became a movement that was funded for \$500 million by Congress, sanctioned by President Karzai, endorsed by President Obama, and integrated by General Petraeus as one of the pillars of the Afghan campaign. To this day, it's still a strategic, historic program.

It was the action of those villagers climbing the rooftop that I found so striking and is the basis of what we can learn here, as leaders in our businesses and communities. We can learn to build movements where people take action, in a collective way, that they otherwise wouldn't take in the face of high stakes, high risk, ambiguity, and complexity. We can lead people to take stand, shoulder to shoulder, tipping the balance in a way that is representative of historical change.

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“It is important to expose young people to a wide variety of activities.”

Kendall Cotton Bronk, researcher

Adolescents with greater purpose experience greater well-being and hope.

Childhood Experiences That Lead to a Purposeful Life

Research suggests that our paths to finding purpose can be shaped by early childhood experiences

MARYAM ABDULLAH

According to a new Gallup survey of over 2,000 college graduates, 80 percent believe it's very or extremely important to have a sense of purpose in their work. Yet fewer than half of them actually succeed in having this experience.

It's not surprising that young people are seeking purpose—adolescents with greater purpose experience greater well-being and hope. Purpose is an abiding aim that directs your behavior, provides a sense of meaning in life, and (under some researchers' definitions) matters to the world beyond the self.

Generally, we think of purpose as something young adults discover in life by exploring their own interests, values, and the different ways they can contribute to the world. But research suggests that some of the foundations of purpose may be built in early childhood. The positive or negative experiences children have may play an important role in whether they grow up to have a sense of purpose at all.

Adversity

Some research suggests that negative experiences early in life can hinder our development of purpose, even decades later.

Continued on Page 8

East Acupuncture Dr. Ping H Liou



Chinese Medicine Acupuncturist, Pharmacist

Born in a family of traditional Chinese medicine, Liou studied at Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine under famous doctors Benshu Diao and Yuqin Lai, has been practicing Chinese medicine for 13 years. Liou is expert in comprehensive treatment combining acupuncture and medicine.

- ◆ Gynecological diseases: Infertility, Ovarian Cysts, Menopause, Irregular menstruation, Underlying disease, Breast disease, and Postpartum disease.
- ◆ Pediatrics: Respiratory diseases, Digestive diseases, Urinary diseases, Pseudomyopia.
- ◆ Rehabilitation treatment for stroke sequelae: Facial paralysis, Hemiplegia.
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Young children may not immediately recognize that a certain activity is very important to them.

Childhood Experiences That Lead to a Purposeful Life



Continued from Page 7

Psychologist Patrick Hill and his colleagues studied over 3,800 primarily white adults ages 20 to 75. They reported on any early childhood adversity they had experienced—including emotional abuse, physical abuse, poverty, divorced or deceased parents, and poor early physical or emotional health—as well as their sense of purpose as adults.

Hill and his colleagues found that people who recalled greater adversity in childhood—in particular, greater health issues—had a decreased sense of purpose.

“Individuals who experience early adversity are not ‘doomed’ to a lower sense of purpose later in life,” the researchers write. “Instead, early adversity may be better viewed as a potential risk factor.”

For some people, though, hard times in childhood end up inspiring them to pursue a particular calling,

More purposeful men tended to remember living in more positive childhood environments.



HEIDI YANULIS/UNSPASH

like caring for kids or eliminating poverty. “Some individuals may gain greater clarity on their life direction upon reflection on these adverse events,” Hill and his colleagues explain.

Conflict

Even conflict in relationships between parents and children could affect their sense of purpose as they grow older.

Another recent study by Hill and his colleagues involved over 1,000 children between the ages of 6 and 13, and their mothers and fathers. The researchers followed the families until the children reached their twenties. They were primarily white, working-class families who lived in the Pacific Northwest of the United States.

When they were in elementary school, the children—as well as their mothers and fathers—completed questionnaires about how much conflict, anger, and fun they had in their parent-child relationship. As early adults, the children also completed questionnaires to measure their purpose, life satisfaction, and stress.

The results? Children who had more early conflict with their mothers—based on their own opinions, not their parents’—had a decreased sense of purpose in early adulthood regardless of how stressed and satisfied with life they were.

“Frequent conflict saps the child’s energy and enthusiasm,” explain Hill and his colleagues. The result is a lower likelihood those children will live the kind of active, engaged lifestyle that can help them discover what makes their lives purposeful.

Attachment and Separation-Individuation

An earlier study by Hill and his colleagues explored how a different aspect of the parent-child relationship could be important to purpose.

They measured two qualities: parental attachment and separation-individuation. Parental attachment

refers to the bond between a child and their primary caregivers that depends on their warmth and responsiveness, and it was measured with statements like “I usually discuss my problems and concerns with [my mother or father].” Separation-individuation is an identity development process in which an independent, mature sense of self emerges during adolescence and young adulthood. Problems with the separation-individuation process were measured with statements like “I need other people around me to not feel empty.”

Over 500 primarily white undergraduate students at a Canadian university, ages 17-30, filled out online surveys about their relationship with their parents, as well as their sense of purpose.

Overall, the study found that students who had a higher sense of purpose tended to have more secure attachments to their parents and fewer problems with the separation-individuation process. In turn, they also had a greater sense of mastery and control—they thought they were the authors of their own future.

These findings are consistent with another study, where more purposeful men tended to remember living in more positive childhood environments—ones that included caring relationships and helped them develop trust, autonomy, and initiative.

According to Hill and his colleagues, “Having a sense of purpose could assist emerging adults with the process of defining themselves while maintaining adaptive relationships with their parental figures.”

Nature

Other positive experiences in childhood may set up children for purpose later in life—including early memories of nature’s beauty.

Researchers Riechiro Ishida and Masahiko Okada recruited nearly 70 college students in Japan who were between 18 and 35 years old. Participants completed questionnaires about their purpose and their early life and youth experiences, including nature-related questions like “Do you remember having feelings that were associated with the beauty of nature?”

The researchers found that more purposeful students tended to have stronger memories of the beauty of nature during early childhood and early adolescence.

Research is still needed to further explain this relationship. Because purpose goes hand in hand with humility, which we may feel when in nature, it may be that this diminished sense of self makes room for children to “engage with some aspect of the world beyond the self”—a foundational part of purpose.

Exposure to Diverse Activities

Finally, not only do early childhood experiences seem to affect whether children develop purpose at all as they get older, but those experiences may also influence what kind of purpose they gravitate toward.

Nine 12 to 23-year-olds who had an exceptional sense of purpose participated in a study by Kendall Cotton Bronk. Her team interviewed them for three hours on three occasions over five years.

“According to the exemplars, they would not have discovered noble purposes in the areas they did had they not been involved in those areas early on, often as children,” explained Bronk. “As parents, teachers, and other adults interested in fostering



YUGANOV KONSTANTIN/SHUTTERSTOCK

Even conflict in relationships between parents and children could affect their sense of purpose as they grow older.

noble purpose among youth, then, it is important to expose young people to a wide variety of activities.”

For example, one 18-year-old in the study shared that she first became interested in cancer research at the age of five after an experience with the American Cancer Society, when she volunteered for a fund-raising event selling daffodils at the mall. Another 18-year-old in the study whose purpose was related to a commitment to create and promote jazz music shared, “I got into music when I was nine because my next-door neighbor... had a piano and he taught me how to play Pink Panther and Greensleeves and stuff like that.”

These results complement another study by Ishida and Okada that found that adults with stronger memories of succeeding and receiving praise from parents, teachers, friends, and neighbors during early childhood tend to have a stronger sense of purpose.

Young children may not immediately recognize that a certain activity is very important to them. Instead, their commitment may grow gradually over the course of participating in the activity, as they discover their strengths and the ways they can contribute to the world.

Taken together, all these findings suggest that there are a multitude of early childhood experiences that may shape how adolescents and adults develop a sense of purpose. Early personal resources like good health, strong social connections, and positive engagement in activities and the natural world tend to support children to develop meaningful life goals. Parents can help their children start exploring pathways to purpose early on to help avoid the post-college void of purpose that many young people are experiencing today.

Maryam Abdullah, Ph.D., is the Parenting Program Director of the Greater Good Science Center. She is a developmental psychologist with expertise in parent-child relationships and children’s development of prosocial behaviors. This article was first published on Greater Good Magazine.

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ELEVATE AND INSPIRE

Coping With the Grief of Losing a Child While Expecting

Expectant mothers and fathers may share the loss, but each will grieve in their own way and often separately

ANDREW THOMAS

Losing a child is likely the most traumatic, excruciating experience parents can go through. One couple suffered this tragic loss and found themselves coping with grief while expecting another child.

Alexis and Aaron Chute are 35 and 37 years old respectively. Alexis works as a visual artist and Aaron is a school principal. The two were fortunate enough to have a healthy first baby named Hannah. However, their second newborn would tragically live for just a few moments before passing away in 2010.

Everything was going fine until 26 weeks into the pregnancy when they discovered there was a tumor around their unborn child’s heart.

Their son Zachary was born at 30 weeks, and lived for only a few moments before passing away in his mother’s arms. He would have been 9 years old this October.

“For me, I say that that marks the point in my life where I ceased to be one person and I became somebody else. The grief and healing journey was unlike anything I would have expected.” Alexis told The Epoch Times from her home in Alberta, Canada.

Ignoring Grief

At first, the couple was in shock. They would discover that they would cope

with Zachary’s passing separately from each other.

Aaron returned to work almost immediately to distract himself from the tragic loss of their son.

“I needed control in my life, and I needed something I could control,” Aaron said.

Alexis went into what she calls her “year of distraction” where she did everything except grieve. She would fill up every hour of the day with work or with spending time with their 1-year-old Hannah.

Alexis felt like she lost her identity as a woman, as a mother, and as an artist. She didn’t work for almost a year after losing Zachary.

“For me, art felt dangerous,” Alexis said. In fall 2011 she became pregnant again, and the healing journey would begin for Alexis and Aaron.

When Alexis became pregnant again, she found herself excited but fearful at the same time. It wasn’t until this next pregnancy that she realized she needed to go through the grieving process for Zachary.

“I realized if I didn’t address my grief and face it head on and choose to be brave in those moments that I would probably carry that grief with me in an unhealthy way for the rest of my life. I didn’t want that for myself and I didn’t want that for my family,” Alexis said.

Alexis returned to her artwork, and



COURTESY OF AARON CHUTE

The Chute family with newborn baby Luca.

found it was a safe and healthy place where she could explore her feelings.

However, it would take almost four years for the couple to do what was good for their relationship, not just for themselves.

Coping While Expecting

After the couple became pregnant again, their friends stopped asking about their loss and began asking about their new pregnancy.

“It was almost like the pregnancy, in everyone else’s mind, blanketed over the fact that we had lost a child, and everyone kind of was relieved,” Alexis recalled.

All of the support for the loss of their child quickly disappeared. That’s when Alexis began to heal more intensely. She began going on walks and experimenting with meditation in an effort to cope with the grief.

Aaron found himself initially disconnected from the pregnancy but focused on Alexis’s well-being. It would take him a while to connect with how special and important this pregnancy was for both of them.

“I think I lived in this state of fear. I was detached from this pregnancy, but as Alexis’ belly grew and she got closer and closer

Throughout the entire journey, Alexis and Aaron learned how to support each other. At first, they had coped individually before they had learned how to cope together.

“When you’re dealing with your partner, I think it’s really understanding that they will not understand your grief, and you will not understand theirs,” Aaron explained.

Communication is also crucial. One has to be able to both speak and listen to their partner. Patience and compassion are key to healing.

How to Help

Alexis and Aaron suffered an unimaginable tragedy, but they also learned how friends and family can help those who have lost a child.

The couple had friends who organized meal deliveries for a couple of weeks following Zachary’s passing, which was immensely helpful for the couple because their grief had made it difficult to do simple activities such as cook.

“It was one of those survival times. [We] did not have any energy to make food, and just probably would have died in our pajamas if it hadn’t been for that really compassionate and practical gesture,” Alexis said.

Family and friends should not shy away from the uncomfortable conversations that follow the loss of a child. It’s important to ask how the couple is doing, and to use the baby’s name.

It is also important to not compare the loss of a child to something else like losing a pet. One may mean well, but it doesn’t help to try to empathize in an off-handed way. It’s crucial to empathize in a simpler way such as saying “sorry that happened to you.”

Furthermore, it’s helpful if friends can check in regularly, even years later, as the loss is something that will be with parents forever.

“It’s not something we move on from. It’s something that becomes a part of us. It doesn’t have to be this pain that destroys us forever. I now can think about Zachary, and I do often, with joy, and reflection, and wondering what his life would have been like,” Alexis said.

Love Coffee or Beer? It's Not Your Taste Buds

Certain chemical compounds light up your brain, making those foods more appealing

KIMBERLY HOLLAND

You sip piping hot black coffee, no sugar. Your cubicle neighbor pops open an ice-cold can of soda. You both sigh at the rush of caffeinated euphoria. It's time to start the day.

The drinks you're drawn to may have nothing to do with your taste buds, as much as you think you love the flavor of a hoppy IPA, the smokiness of a dark roast coffee, or the tongue-tickling sweetness of a citrus soda.

No, according to researchers at Northwestern University in Chicago, your drink preferences may be the result of the "reward" you feel when you drink them.

A team of scientists with the Feinberg School of Medicine wanted to better understand taste genes and how they explain beverage preferences.

To do this, they asked more than 335,000 individuals in the U.K. Biobank—a pool of research participants who take part in studies that look at long-term effects of genes and the development of disease—to account for their drink consumption in 24-hour dietary recalls.

Drinks were divided into two categories: bitter beverages, which include grapefruit juice, coffee, tea, beer, liquor, and red wine; and sweet beverages, which include sugar-sweetened beverages, artificially sweetened beverages, and non-grapefruit juices.

The researchers then used those drink classifications to conduct a genome-wide association study with people who gravitate toward bitter beverages and with people who prefer sweet beverages.

To their surprise, the genome study results indicated beverage preferences had nothing to do with taste genes, which is what they originally expected to discover.

Instead, the study revealed that what you prefer to drink—bitter or sweet beverages—is related to the psychoactive properties those drinks deliver when you consume them.

In other words, you're drawn to certain beverages for the way they make you feel, not for the way they taste.

"The genetics underlying our preferences are related to the psychoactive components of these drinks," Marilyn Cornelis, assistant professor of preventive medicine at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, said in a statement. "People like the way coffee and alcohol make them feel. That's why they drink it. It's not the taste."

And if you don't like certain flavors, or if sipping on a stout feels more like punishment than reward, that may be because your brain doesn't interpret it as a treat.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

“People like the way coffee and alcohol make them feel. That's why they drink it. It's not the taste.”

Marilyn Cornelis, assistant professor, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine

"There are reward centers in the brain that light up when certain compounds or chemicals are taken into the body," Liz Weinandy, an outpatient dietitian at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, told Healthline. "Some people are more responsive to these compounds than others. This is the psychoactive property a substance delivers to the body. In other words, substances in foods and other compounds like some drugs produce certain cognitive and mood changes in our bodies."

Weinandy continued, "For example, it makes sense that people like coffee for the edge and increased alertness it gives them. In sports, it can increase physical performance, and for most people, it can increase cognitive performance. Sugar can light up the reward area in the brain as well and

give people a temporary 'feel good' sensation. This is why people start to crave certain substances and especially for sugar, why it is said to be habit forming."

The lead author, Victor Zhong, a postdoctoral fellow in preventive medicine at Northwestern, said this is the first genome-wide association study to look at beverage consumption based on taste perspective.

"It's also the most comprehensive genome-wide association study of beverage consumption to date," he said in a statement.

Can You Use Preference to Change Your Diet?

This study, which was published in Human Molecular Genetics, opens up the possibility for new intervention strategies that may offer the ability to override what our DNA says in order to make healthier choices.

After all, sugary beverages are closely linked to many diseases and health conditions, including obesity and diabetes.

Alcohol intake is responsible for 1 in 20 deaths, or 3 million people, annually worldwide, according to the World Health Organization. It's also tied to a number of diseases and health issues.

"Absolutely we can use this information to better adjust foods and beverages in our diet to improve our health," Weinandy said. "We may want to think about certain foods and beverages as providing us with an edge but also be sure not to overuse them or misuse them."

For example, Weinandy says, caffeine in coffee can be a pick-me-up, a tool you can use to perform better on a particularly sluggish afternoon. But if you drink it too much, it loses its effect on the body, and if you doctor it up too much with flavorings or sweeteners, you may introduce new issues.

"What we need to be careful of is adding a lot of sugar to it, since we know sugar is generally not good for us from an excess calorie and inflammation standpoint," she said. "We also need to be aware that if we are drinking a lot of caffeine frequently, it can cause negative effects, such as interfering with sleep."

The Bottom Line

With this study, researchers have identified that beverage preferences come from a "reward" center in the brain, not the taste receptors. While you can't do anything to change your genes, you can do a great deal to counteract them.

Start by looking for alternative ways to "reward" yourself. When you'd reach for coffee or soda to get a buzz, opt for a physical activity that delivers a rush of adrenaline. Even just a brisk walk may be all that's needed.

And when you'd reach for alcohol to calm your nerves at the end of a long day, call on those same bitter receptors and delight them with a cup of hot decaffeinated tea.

Kimberly Holland is a freelance journalist and editor. This article was originally published on Healthline.

During AM Appointments, Doctors More Likely to Advise Cancer Screening

Patients who see their doctors in the morning are more likely to be referred for screenings for breast and colon cancer than patients with end-of-the-day appointments, a new study suggests.

Researchers poring over records of more than 50,000 patients who were eligible for breast or colon cancer screening saw a big drop in referrals as the day progressed. Patients were also less likely to actually get screened, once they had a referral, if they saw their doctors later in the day.

There are several possible explanations, said study co-author Dr. Mitesh Patel, an assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine and director of the Penn Medicine Nudge Unit.

First, Patel said: "As we go through our day we get tired of making decisions, so we're less likely to do it later in the day. And then, as we go through our day,

we tend to run behind schedule so at the end of the day we have less time."

But there's also a possible patient factor, Patel said, adding, "Patients at the end of the day may have less time because they're in a rush to get home."

As reported in JAMA Network Open, Patel and his colleagues analyzed electronic health records compiled between 2014 and 2016 by 33 primary care practices in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. They found 19,254 patients eligible for breast cancer screening and 33,468 eligible for colon cancer screening.

When examining those patients' records, the researchers found that order rates for breast cancer screenings were at their highest at 8 a.m., at 63.7 percent, and dropped to 47.8 percent at 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. Similarly, order rates for colon cancer screenings at 8 a.m. were highest, at 36.5 per-



TINA STAFFERI

Researchers found doctors and patients changed their medically-related decisions significantly depending on the time of day.

cent, and dropped to 23.4 percent by 5 p.m.

That doesn't mean patients should try to get appointments early in the day, Patel said. But it does suggest that doctors might want to look at ways to automate certain aspects of care. For example, Patel said, a recent study found that more patients were

screened for colon cancer when stool test kits were automatically sent out.

The new study is "intriguing and a little provocative but I think we should be cautious before we start posing solutions," said Dr. Albert Wu, an internist and professor of health policy and management at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg

By Linda Carroll

From Reuters

You Choose Your Life Every Day

A life is a series of days, and the choices we make throughout each one

JOSHUA BECKER

On June 12, 1999, I married my wife, Kim. I stood in front of friends and family, witnesses and God, and declared that I would love her and be faithful to her, for better or worse, until death do us part.

It was a decision and commitment made at a specific moment in time. Early in the afternoon on Saturday, June 12.

It was a one-time decision. But that was not the end. It's also a decision that has to be re-chosen every single day.

You see, every morning when I wake up, I am offered a choice: Will I be faithful to my wife today? And every day, I must choose faithfulness.

My marriage vows were a one-time declaration and an everyday decision.

This is true about many of the most important decisions we make for our lives.

We choose our life every day.

We don't necessarily choose our circumstances every day, but we do choose the person we are going to be.

My faith is important to me. I made a commitment to God and others many years ago, but each



ORI SONG/UNSPASH

I desire to live a life of impact and significance.

day I must choose to follow Him.

My family is important to me. I love my kids and I want to be both available for them and intentional in parenting, but every day, I must choose to put their interests ahead of mine.

My health is important to me. Countless times I have committed to regular exercise and a healthy diet, but you know as well as I do, this is an intentional decision we must make every day.

I chose minimalism as a lifestyle almost 11 years ago, but every day, I must choose to reject the empty promises of consumerism because the temptation surrounds me constantly.

I desire to live a life of impact and significance. This requires me to make intentional decisions about time and opportunity almost every day of my life.

I believe a life lived in the pursuit of wealth is a temptation and a trap, but choosing to live for greater purposes is something I must do each day.

For you, the examples may be different. But the reality is the same:

We choose our life every day. Annie Dillard said it this way, "How we spend

our days is, of course, how we spend our lives." Some may see this as a burden. Their thinking might go like this, "Oh man, I have to choose a healthy diet again today."

But seeing our daily choice as a burden is faulty thinking.

Because I get to choose my life every day, it means each day is filled with opportunity. It also means that with each new sunrise, I am provided the opportunity to change or redirect course.

When I recognize choosing faithfulness, health, significance, impact, and intentionality is the best thing I can do for my life going forward, it means each day I am presented with the opportunity to choose the greater good.

Every morning, we get to choose the direction and the habits that lead us to live our best life possible. What a privilege, honor, and opportunity.

May we choose the best for ourselves (and others) every single day.

Joshua Becker is an author, public speaker, and the founder and editor of Becoming Minimalist where he inspires others to live more by owning less. Visit BecomingMinimalist.com

Why You Need to Ditch Your Dryer Sheets

Soft and fragrant clothes come with dangerous side-effects, warn researchers

ANDREA DONSKY

If you are among the minority of people who hang their clothes on a line to dry, you are saving a ton of money and helping your family avoid the nasty chemicals that are harbored in dryer sheets.

Those fragrant dryer sheets might remove static from our clothes but they can contain carcinogens, neurotoxins, and respiratory irritants. You won't see a list of these substances on the dryer sheet box because there are no laws requiring them to be listed (not unlike labeling laws for feminine hygiene products). These chemicals are released from the sheets and spread over the clothes and linens in your dryer, and then come into contact with your skin where they can be absorbed into your body, including sensitive areas.

What types of chemicals are lurking in dryer sheets? To prevent clothes from sticking together, dryer sheets are impregnated with cationic chemicals that neutralize negative particles on clothes. These chemicals also cause fabric fibers to rise, making clothes feel softer than they do when they dry in the sun.

Another "benefit" of these chemicals is that they usually make it unnecessary to iron your outfits because they leave a light waxy coating on your clothing. We have also been told our laundry should smell "fresh and clean," so dryer sheets have a fragrance. Fragrances, which are a trademark of dryer sheets, are a significant source of hormone disruptors.

Toxins in Dryer Sheets and Fabric Softener

Only a few studies have attempted to identify the pollutants in dryer sheets and fabric softener, which are typically grouped under the same classification because their ingredients tend to be similar. (A little history lesson: Dryer sheets were introduced after fabric softeners. Although dryer sheets were initially designed to stop static cling, they were eventually formulated to provide fabric softener as well, thus the kinship between the two products.)

One 2008 study from the University of Washington noted 15 substances in the dry-

- dizziness, twitching muscles, and convulsions.
- Chloroform. A known carcinogen and neurotoxin.
- Dichlorobenzene. A possible human carcinogen, it may also irritate the skin, throat, and eyes.
- Ethanol. Considered to be "hazardous waste" by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Ethyl acetate. Considered to be "hazardous waste" by the Environmental Protection Agency and can cause headache, irritated throat and eyes, and stupor.
- Limonene. A known carcinogen, specifically when it is exposed to ozone as it creates formaldehyde. It also can irritate the skin and eyes.
- Linalool. Known to cause central nervous system damage, respiratory problems, and to limit motor activity.
- Pentane. Associated with central nervous system damage, motor activity limitations, dizziness, nausea and vomiting, respiratory problems and loss of consciousness if inhaled.

- Alpha-terpineol. Known to cause central nervous system damage, respiratory problems, issues with muscle coordination, and headache.
- Benzyl acetate. A known carcinogen, it also may cause confusion, dry skin, red eyes, and dizziness. Inhaling the vapors can cause burning in the throat and breathing problems.
- Benzyl alcohol. Can affect the nervous system, causing confusion, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, headache, and even death.
- Biodegradable cationic softeners. Can cause nervous system damage, including confusion.
- Camphor. A neurotoxin that can cause cognitive symptoms such as confusion,

AVAVA/SHUTTERSTOCK



While dryer sheets may make fabrics smell nice and feel soft, these products frequently contain carcinogens, hormone disruptors, and neurotoxins.

In a study of products that contain endocrine disruptors and asthma-associated substances, dryer sheets were named as one of the products with the highest concentrations of endocrine disruptors. In addition, dryer sheet use has been associated with asthmatic effects, allergic contact dermatitis, and skin sensitivities.

Safe, Natural Alternatives to Conventional Dryer Sheets

If you are yearning for a safe, natural alternative to conventional dryer sheets (and you don't want to or can't hang your clothes out to dry), here are four for you to consider.

- Baking soda. Although adding 3 table-spoons of baking soda to the wash cycle won't eliminate static, it will soften your clothes as well as remove those annoying detergent residues.
- White vinegar. You gotta love white vinegar for all of its super benefits, and here's yet another one: a mere 2 ounces added to your rinse cycle will reduce static, get rid of stiffness in dried clothes, and remove detergent residue. Worried about mildew? Yes, it can eliminate that too.
- D-I-Y chemical-free dryer cloths. Soak a washcloth in white vinegar, wring it out, add a drop or two of your favorite essential oil, and toss it into your dryer.
- Dryer balls. You can purchase wool or nontoxic hypoallergenic balls or make your own wool dryer balls. They minimize static and also help clothes dry faster.

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Doing Crosswords and Sudoku Can Maintain Aging Brains

Study finds regularly doing word and number puzzles can reduce brain degeneration by as much as 10 years

Two linked papers published in the International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry have found that older adults who regularly play number and word puzzles have sharper brain function. Researchers previously had presented findings on a connection between word puzzles and brain health, but this new information builds on this to include those who regularly complete number puzzles.

The findings show that the more regularly adults over the age of 50 play puzzles such as Sudoku and crosswords, the better their brain function. The research was drawn from more than 19,000 participants lead by the University of Exeter and King's College London.

The participants were asked in the study to report how frequently they would play number and word puzzles. They were then asked to engage in a series of cognitive tests sensitive to measuring changes in brain function. The results showed that the more regularly participants played the puzzles, the better they performed on tasks assessing reasoning, attention, and memory.

From these results, researchers were able to calculate that those who play word puzzles regularly have brain function equivalent to those ten years younger than their age on tests assessing grammatical reasoning. They also found that they showed as eight years younger than their age on tests measuring short term memory.

Dramatic Improvement

Dr. Anne Corbett, of the University of Exeter Medical School, said: "We've found that the more regularly people engage with puzzles such as crosswords and Sudoku, the

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Striving for Happiness Could Be Making You Unhappy



Happiness research has uncovered some enlightening elements about happiness and well-being

LOWRI DOWTHWAITE

Happiness is big business, with sales of self-help books reaching record levels in the past year. Perhaps that's because happiness is no longer the birthright of the elite.

A half century ago, psychologist Warner Wilson said a happy person is generally "young, healthy, well educated, well paid, extroverted, optimistic, worry-free, religious, married, with high self-esteem, high job morale, modest aspirations, of either sex, and of a wide range of intelligence."

The suggestion in his description was that it was harder to be happy for the poor and uneducated.

But today, happiness is something we are all told to aspire towards. But many of us who take up gratitude journals, meditation, and positive affirmations, discover that these tactics don't make us meaningfully happier. The same often goes for achieving those goals that society prescribes—such as career success or physical fitness.

We're told happiness will make us better parents, workers, and people. This cure-all is supposedly so potent, we seek it endlessly. Sometimes this pursuit of happiness can lead us down harmful paths, like overeating, or be stressful. In fact, researchers have found that people that over-value happiness actually end up less happy.

Researchers have tried to unravel the mysteries of happiness with quantitative methodologies that reveal what makes most people happy. But these studies and statistical averages, while insightful, cannot reflect the deeply different things—from material possessions to intellectual growth—that bring individuals happiness.

Originally, the branch of science



People value fundamentally different things in life, from material possessions to intellectual growth.

most devoted to happiness studies—positive psychology—assumed that well-being was achieved by maximizing positive emotions and minimizing negative emotions. But this approach has come under increasing doubt from findings that suggest it is far too simplistic. Newer findings support much older ideas about what creates real happiness.

Meaning Versus Positivity

The view of many researchers today ties in Aristotle's view of the "good life." This Greek philosopher argued that happiness is not just about feeling good but about feeling "right." He believed that a happy life involves experi-

encing the right emotions based on your values and beliefs. Or, in other words, happiness came from a balanced and virtuous life.

Therefore, happiness is not simply about a hedonistic pursuit of pleasure, but a meaningful engagement with life. At times it may be appropriate to be sad or angry as well as being optimistic and hopeful that things can change.

Meaning is a close relative of happiness. The pair often go hand in hand but are two entirely separate constructs. It is possible to lead a pleasurable life, but without much meaning. It is also possible to experience a meaningful life dedicated

passionately to a cause but experience very little positive emotion. My own forthcoming study has found that meaning—more so than positive emotions—is more predictive of happiness in the long run.

Personality and Maturity

But meaning and pleasure can be subjective. For one person, raising children in a stable and homely family house may be the best way to achieve meaning, while for someone else it may be building a successful company—with or without children.

What's more, our personalities change over time—we tend to get more emotionally stable and consci-

entious as we age. That means our approach to happiness may change. One qualitative study exploring the way individuals talk about happiness and personal growth found that people experience well-being differently based on what stage they are in of their conscious development, as determined by the researchers.

In the stages of early development, our happiness is mostly dependant on social norms—being loved and accepted by others. As we mature, we can differentiate between our own and other people's emotions in order to pursue meaningful goals. Even higher stages of development are associated with a self-transformation which involves a shift of awareness from pursuing goals to the process of living. For example, when it comes to family time, it may be more important to just be together than doing certain things as a group—such as going to Legoland because everyone else is. The researchers found that mature individuals exercised more control, choice, and flexibility over their well-being and that this opened up more opportunities for happiness.

So it's unlikely that a few simple rules could make everyone happy.

So the next time a well-meaning relative tells you that renovating your house will boost your life satisfaction, don't feel rushed to start tearing out walls. We all have different ways of being happy and there isn't a universal formula. As tempting as it is to find happiness through learning from others—and being accepted by them—if it's someone else's version of happiness, it might not be the best for you.

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