

WEEK 40, 2019

THE EPOCH TIMES

# MIND & BODY



## The Unique Struggle of Forgiving Yourself

Many of us either overlook our shortcomings or believe they are all that we are **6**

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Proven Ways to Break Your Cell-phone Addiction  
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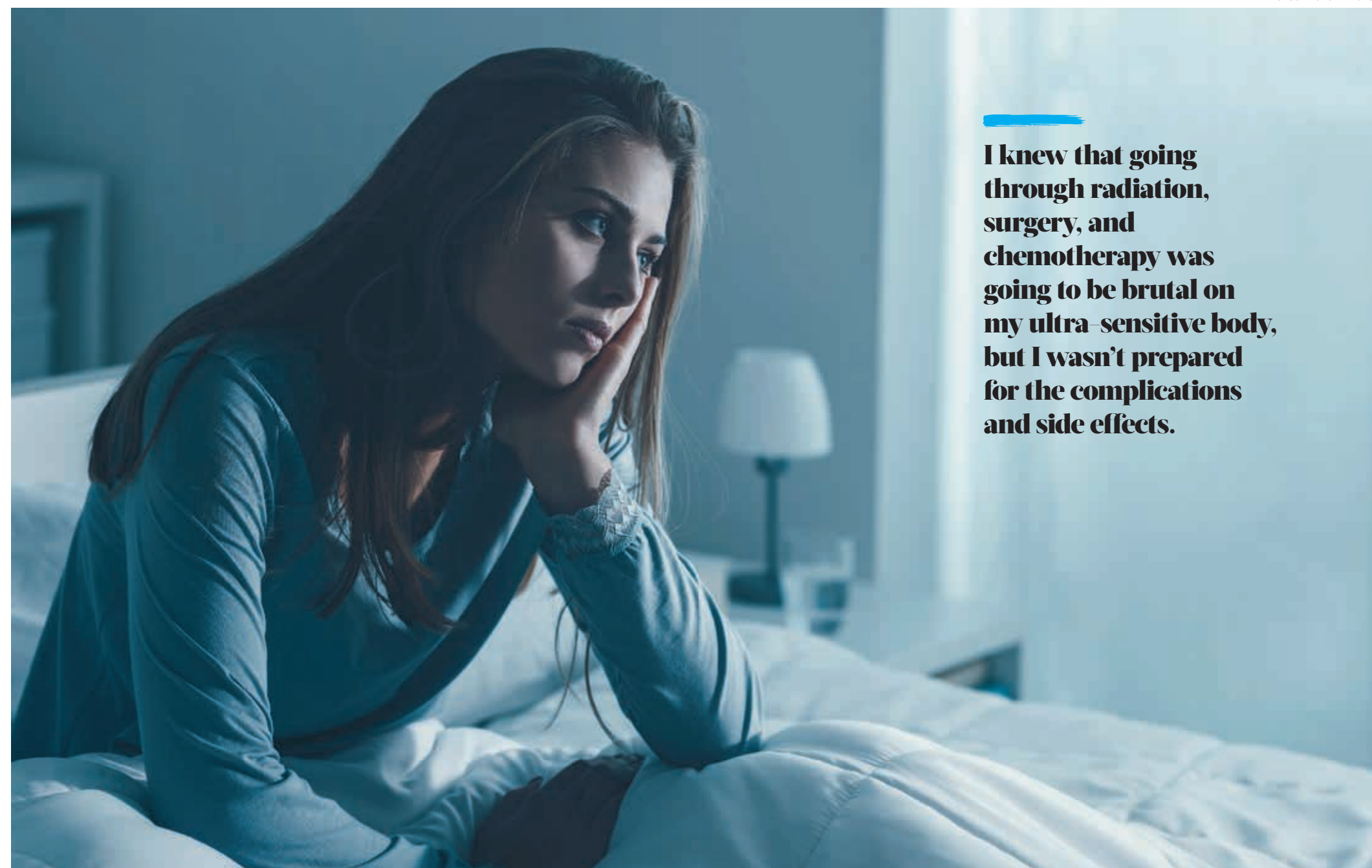
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**I knew that going through radiation, surgery, and chemotherapy was going to be brutal on my ultra-sensitive body, but I wasn't prepared for the complications and side effects.**

Cancer treatment can lead to weight loss and exhaustion. A determined effort to eat well is one of the best ways to speed recovery and weight gain.

Recovery is hard and tiring, and there may be complications, so it's best to get lots of naps—and walks are encouraged. It's important, too, to keep a healthy diet.

**CANCER UP CLOSE**

# Caring for My Body During and After Cancer Treatment

Eating well, resting often, and exercising can help you survive cancer and thrive afterward

**MICHELE GONCALVES**

*Cancer is one of the most common diseases of our age, and yet those who face it rarely know what's about to happen to them beyond the broadest terms. "Cancer up Close" is an open recount of Michele Goncalves's cancer journey from pre-diagnosis to life after treatment.*

I'll never forget what the gastrointestinal doctor who found my rectal tumor told me moments after he said I had cancer. With a bit of hope and encouragement in his voice, he said: "You are young and healthy. You'll get through it, good luck." I didn't understand fully why he said that at the time, but now having finished my cancer treatments, I get what he meant.

I knew that going through radiation, surgery, and chemotherapy was going to be brutal on my ultra-sensitive body, but I wasn't prepared for the complications and side effects. I went on short-term disability the minute I was diagnosed. It was one of the best decisions I made, since it eliminated the stress of work for six-month intervals, and let me focus on getting through the battle I was about to face. (Note: You can go on short-term disability more than once, which will be covered in another article.)

Despite cancer, I was otherwise healthy. I was a lifelong nonsmoker, with no sign of chronic disease, though I did have pretty severe gastrointestinal issues and countless food sensitivities that would

trigger auto-immune joint pain throughout my body. I had also learned through a genetics test that I had a poor ability to detoxify things from my body. I believe this is why I experienced severe side effects, especially from the chemotherapy.

**Phase 1: Radiation and Chemo**

I went through 5 1/2 weeks of radiation plus oral chemo pills as the first course of treatment. Out of all the phases of treatment, this one was the easiest. I would get my dose of radiation around 10 a.m. Monday through Friday, and by 1 to 2 p.m. I'd feel really tired. Taking a nap helped. I was also told to walk at least 30 minutes a day to keep my stamina and energy going, though some days were tough due to nausea and fatigue.

The last two weeks of treatment were my hardest. By then, my skin was burned from the radiation and my private areas had burning sores. Vaseline became my best friend. I was given pills that helped manage the stabbing-knife pain I felt when urinating. I did fairly well in the Xeloda (oral chemo pills) but I was taken off of them the last week of radiation because my feet were blistering and tender to the point that I couldn't walk. This is the most common side effect. They quickly healed when I stopped taking it. Throughout this phase, my diet was healthy, lots of green smoothies, nuts, berries, healthy proteins like fish and organic meat, and some rice. No major junk food, except coconut milk ice cream. I also had a friend (a chiropractor) who offered to give me two- to three-hour massages for free once a week during this time. It really helped soothe me and gave me something to look forward to.

**Phase 2: Tumor Removal and Ileostomy Surgery**

After a two-month rest from phase 1, I finally got my tumor removed. My surgeon said it was a long and difficult surgery because my organs were hard as a rock and stuck together due to inflammation from the radiation. I had a very tough recovery. The pain from the large incision,

the new ileostomy, my lack of appetite, and an infection that emerged five days after surgery hit my body very hard and led me to lose 20 pounds in a few weeks.

However, through it all, I pushed myself to get out of bed and walk. All the doctors and nurses said that this was the best thing I could do for myself. I started out walking at least 10 laps around my hospital floor. When I went home, I started with one lap around the block, then two laps, until finally I could go to the park and walk for 30 minutes.

What also saved me was my incredible flexibility. I had to contort my body into crazy positions to change my ileostomy bag. I'd lie on the bathroom floor with a mirror balanced between my knees to see what I was doing when I'd have to apply various ointments and sealants around my ileostomy when sores formed (which was often). I also ate with determination and gained back my weight over several months by, among other things, drinking more green protein powder smoothies with nuts and pouring olive oil on everything.

Most importantly, I gave my body time to be still and rest. I'd take a daily nap, sometimes two. The exhaustion during this phase really surprised me, but by the eighth week after surgery, I started to feel OK again.

**Phase 3: Chemo**

This phase didn't last long, as I experienced severe neurological side effects, random paralysis of left hand and lips from the infusions of Oxaliplatin and the oral chemo pills (Xeloda). I only did two out of six cycles of the infusions and pills.

The trouble started when my throat swelled up so bad after the first infusion that I sat outside the emergency room in my brother's car for an hour until my Benadryl kicked in. I had to take half a Benadryl pill with each chemo dose I took for the 14 days after my infusion. I also vomited quite a bit the week following the infusion. I relied on herbal peppermint tea and charcoal pills to help with this. They gave me Zofran, an anti-nausea med, but this didn't always work and I wanted to have natural solutions as well.

Honestly, I just wanted to purge this toxic stuff, so I didn't want to suppress my body's natural instinct to get it out. The walking during this phase was on and off, and I mostly focused on eating well, as I had throughout the other phases.

**Ileostomy Reversal Surgery**

This phase was also very difficult for me. I thought I was good to go when I was released three days after my surgery, but severe abdominal spasms, diarrhea, and my inability to eat or drink anything a few days later led me back into the hospital for another 11 days.

Prayer and humor got me through this phase more than anything, although I did the best I could walking around my hospital floor and home. Bathroom urgency made it difficult for me to walk too far, though. It was as if I was smacked into my previous surgery. I slowly got back to a healthy diet, but it took a while to eat normal portions of nuts, fruits, and veggies again.

**Phase 4: Post-Treatment**

At this point, I'm dealing with inflammation, fatigue, increased food sensitivities, and joint pain throughout my body. It started a few weeks after my 11-day hospital stay. I'd wake up numerous times to numb and tingling hands and feet and have to shake them out. I didn't know what was happening.

I took a heavy metals test with my functional medicine doctor, knowing that my body was probably dealing with all of the metals contained in the chemo and in the contrast dyes that I took in the hospital. I was right. My platinum levels and three other metals were through the roof.

I'm now in the process of purging these via infrared sauna visits at a spa (I just bought one for my home), and via supplements that I'm told in a few months will remove the metals. So far, after one month I'm seeing positive signs that it's working. I continue to walk about 45 minutes 3 to 5 times a week and still eat very clean and healthy with an occasional splurge on gluten-free muffins or cookies.

Join me next time when I share how faith and spirituality helped me through some desperate times. Until then, breathe deep, be kind, and take it one day at a time.

*Michele Goncalves is a financial compliance and fraud auditor for a Fortune 500 company by day and a passionate pursuer of holistic and functional medicine knowledge by night. She is also the author of the column The Consummate Traveler.*

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# Why Fidgeting Could Be Good for Your Child's Health

Moving around, even in small amounts, can have a big impact on health and longevity

**JOHN J REILLY & XANNE JANSSEN**

Fidgeting is usually considered as a sign of boredom or lack of attention which can be distracting to others. Parents and teachers often demand that their children and pupils stop doing it. But fidgeting could actually be good for their health. Research suggests it might help protect against obesity, improve cardiovascular health, and even save lives.

In our recent study, we measured the energy expenditure of 40 children aged 4 to 6, while they each spent an hour in a "whole-room calorimeter." This is a chamber the size of a small bedroom, in which energy expenditure is accurately measured from the amount of oxygen inhaled and the amount of carbon dioxide exhaled.

The children all followed the same procedure in the calorimeter: 30 minutes watching TV, ten minutes drawing or coloring, and 20 minutes playing with toys on the floor. We counted the number of times children changed posture and took that as our measure of fidgeting.

The fidgeting we witnessed—with colleagues from the Australian universities of Wollongong and Deakin—varied enormously, despite all of the children following the standard set of activities. There were 53 posture changes per hour in the most fidgety third of the sample and only 11 per hour in the least fidgety third. These differences directly affected the number of calories burned.

The difference between the most and the least fidgety groups was only around six calories per hour. But when extrapolated over months and years, this could lead to large differences in energy use.

After all, children of that age typically spend around 9 to 10 hours per day sitting down, so a six calorie difference per hour of sitting would become a difference of 60 calories per day, 420 calories per week (about three bags of chips), and 22,000 calories per year (equivalent to about 2 kilograms of body weight in a 20 kilogram child).

We also found that children were much less fidgety while watching TV than when drawing, coloring, or playing with toys on the floor. This may partly explain why time spent watching TV increases the risk of obesity so strongly in children of this age compared to other sedentary activities.

Meanwhile, an older study found that more fidgety adults resisted weight gain when overfed compared to less fidgety individuals. Taken together, this evidence suggests that differences in the tendency to fidget might partly explain why some

people are more susceptible to obesity than others.

**Fidgeting as Health Strategy?** It is now well established that prolonged periods of sitting are harmful to health, and it is possible that fidgeting might reduce the harms of sitting.

A study of more than 12,000 adult women in the United Kingdom found, as expected, that the amount of time spent sitting per day predicted the risk of premature death over the subsequent 12 years.

At the start of the study, the women had been asked to self-rate their tendency to fidget on a scale of 1 (no fidgeting) to 10 (constant fidgeting). In the most fidgety third, the risks of premature death from sitting were substantially reduced compared to the least fidgety third.

Why fidgeting seemed to reduce premature mortality was not explored in that study. However, a more recent laboratory-based study in adults found that the harmful effects of prolonged sitting on blood vessels in the legs (such as reduced blood flow) could be mitigated by asking the study participants to fidget by moving their legs while sitting. Fidgety individuals may have some protection from cardiovascular disease compared to less fidgety individuals.

**Fidgety individuals may have some protection from cardiovascular disease compared to less fidgety individuals.**

Fidgeting is not considered as being important to health at the moment, but the growing body of research suggests that it should be. The evidence might even lead to new (and much needed) approaches to preventing obesity and promoting cardiovascular health.

Such approaches might be particularly practical as they involve fairly small changes in how we live. Fidgeting or standing breaks during long periods of sitting in the classroom, or at home, far from being an annoying habit, could be precisely what we need.

*John J Reilly is a professor of physical activity and public health science at the University of Strathclyde in the UK, and Xanne Janssen is a research associate at the University of Strathclyde. This article was first published on The Conversation.*

It is now well established that prolonged periods of sitting are harmful to health.

Children's health is suffering in our sedentary age, but those who just can't sit still are faring better, finds new research.





# THE UNIQUE STRUGGLE OF Forgive Yourself

CONAN MILNER

Forgiveness is the release of resentment in exchange for compassion. It is a highly regarded pursuit in some religions, and research shows that it can improve our mental and physical health.

But the benefits don't come easy. Just try genuinely loving your enemies and praying for your persecutors. When resentment is tied to pain and disappointment, releasing it can seem impossible.

The same struggles still apply when it comes to forgiving ourselves. Many of us subject ourselves to a cruel inner dialogue for years over past mistakes. For some, even a tiny stumble can trigger a disproportionate helping of grief.

How could I have been so stupid? What was I thinking? How could I let this happen? What's wrong with me?

It's appropriate to feel some regret—the queasy twinge of guilt and shame plays a role in keeping us on the straight and narrow. But according to Dr. Gail Saltz, a psychoanalyst, best-selling author, and psychiatry professor at the New York-Presbyterian Hospital Weill-Cornell Medicine, subjecting yourself to an endless tape loop of trash talk only makes things worse.

"There's a reason why we do it, but taken too far it has other negative consequences," Saltz said. "If you are angry, upset, or intensely guilty toward yourself, this can precipitate depression and anxiety."

Being upset with ourselves is perhaps the worst feeling we can experience, and until the rift is resolved we have no escape from this inner battle. It's a relationship we're most compelled to fix, because our happiness, peace, and well-being depends on it. We either forgive, or carry on a lifelong habit of self-hate.

But Saltz said forgiving ourselves can be even more challenging than forgiving others. Both types of forgiveness have the same basic goal of finding compassion. But self-forgiveness has a unique feature that can make compassion much harder to locate: a lack of space.

We have the option to forgive people who are no longer in our lives. With time to reflect on our pain at a safe distance, the process of forgiveness may become a little easier. But we never have a chance to get away from ourselves.



AFRICA STUDIO/SHUTTERSTOCK

**It's important to have a support system of people who can encourage you and affirm that you are not a monster.**

Steve Kurniawan

Self-forgiveness is about owning up to what you did, accepting your faults, and working to avoid a repeat of the same mistake. But Saltz said that, because of the distorted perspective we often have of ourselves, we actually prevent this process from happening. Instead of really examining and acknowledging our behavior, we view it in a polarized way: either all good, or all bad. This causes us to either ignore the problem, or beat ourselves mercilessly with it.

"Many people have these rigid standards of themselves where they're either perfect or awful," Saltz said. "That's why it's hard for people to accept that they have made mistakes, to own their mistakes, and to be able to forgive themselves."

The ease with which we forgive often boils down to the amount of malicious intent we perceive a mistake to contain. Deeds filled with malice are the most challenging cases, because they're vicious and intentional. However, most mistakes are a mix of less volatile ingredients: accidents, poor judgment, laziness, bad timing, ignorance, and confusion.

When it comes to forgiving others, it's a lot easier to let things go when we see the offender's behavior as an honest mistake. If they show appropriate remorse, clarify misunderstandings, or convince you that they never meant the harm they caused, forgiveness can be a breeze.

But Saltz said people can become so attached to their self-flagellation that they're never able to have this understanding with themselves.

"There are people who think, 'If I don't feel guilty all the time, than I risk becoming a terrible person. I have to keep paying this price every day. This is what keeps me in check,' she said. 'The vast majority of people who are saying these things to themselves may not be conscious of them. They're stuck in a cycle of holding on to this.'"

## A Need for Others

We pay a high price for chronic self-resentment. Feeling hurt and fundamentally broken, we withdraw from life. Over time, we wall ourselves off for fear of

screwing something else up.

But this loner impulse can become an obstacle to resolving the relationship with ourselves.

Although self-forgiveness is primarily an internal struggle, Saltz said the way out typically involves other people. Sometimes the process involves an apology, or finding another way to resolve matters with someone we've hurt. For other instances, we just need an objective ear. A therapist, clergy person, close friend, or a family member we trust can provide the kind of clear and honest perspective we need to help us to really see our mistakes for what they are, and move on.

"It often requires some communication with someone else because it's hard to do it in the vacuum of your own head," Saltz said. "That objective other is really helpful in doing that. If you're stuck in a loop it's hard to break out of it on your own."

If sharing details of your inner struggle can help foster self-forgiveness, hiding them surely pushes this opportunity further away. A few years ago, marketing strategist Steve Kurniawan suffered with a gambling addiction. This led to financial disaster, followed by an escalating series of lies told to family and friends to secure loans and conceal the extent of the damage.

As his life was falling apart, Kurniawan was devastated by what he had become, but he still couldn't stop the cycle.

"After the mistake, we see ourselves as some kind of a monster and hate ourselves," Kurniawan said. "We keep blaming ourselves and often it leads to a relapse of making the same mistake."

What ultimately allowed Kurniawan to move on was divulging his problem with those closest to him, and demonstrating that he was dedicated to change. In turn, the people he let in were able to acknowledge his improvement. The feedback let Kurniawan slowly see himself in a better light.

"I personally went through a long spiritual journey before being really able to forgive myself," Kurniawan said. "It's important to have a support system of people who can en-

**Self-forgiveness is about owning up to what you did, accepting your faults, and working to avoid a repeat of the same mistake.**



MARCOS MESA SAM WORDLEY/SHUTTERSTOCK

## Proven Ways to Break Your Cellphone Addiction

Don't let your phone devour the time you need for a meaningful life and relationships

JOSHUA BECKER

### 7 Proven Ways to Break Your Cellphone Addiction

The statistics about how we use our cellphones are overwhelming.

The typical cellphone user touches his or her phone 2,617 times every day. 2,617 times. Most people, on average, spend 3 hours and 15 minutes on their phones each day. And half of all phone pickups happen within three minutes of a previous one.

And the impact of this usage is staggering. Researchers have found that our overuse of cellphones is:

- Reducing the quality of conversations
- Adversely impacting short-term memory and problem-solving
- Negatively affecting our sleep patterns
- Resulting in more negativity, distress, and less emotional recovery in young children
- Increasing obesity
- And the positive correlation between smartphone addiction and depression is alarming.

You would think, given the statistics and what we know to be true about cellphone usage, it would be easy to put the screen down and walk away. But, as too many of us know, the struggle is real.

As a parent of two who makes his living online in this modern world, I know full-well the addictive nature of mobile devices and how great the internal battle is to harness the benefits of the smartphone without falling prey to its intentionally addictive design.

Nor do I overlook the ironic fact that many of you are reading this very article on your phone. Phones are good and helpful. But we know all too well they also have the potential to become a negative presence in our life—if we allow them.

So how do we keep cellphone usage in proper alignment with our lives?

Here are some tools and ideas I have used myself or learned from others to help cut down on cellphone usage.

### 4. Don't charge your phone near your bed

Want to know the best way to keep your kids off their phones too much? Don't allow them to charge their phones in their bedroom.

Want to know a great way to keep yourself off your phone? Don't charge it in your bedroom.

Many of the negative effects of overuse (poor sleep, hindered communication and intimacy) can be eliminated by keeping your cellphone out of your bedroom. As with many of the items on this list, this is a principle I've found personally helpful.

### 5. Put your phone away when you walk in the door

Christopher Mims writes a weekly technology column for The Wall Street Journal—a job that certainly requires the use of tech on a consistent basis. His simple and proven way to keep

life in healthy balance with his cellphone use is. Just because someone in the world wants to text you, email you, or tag you in a post on Facebook doesn't mean they deserve your attention. My cellphone screen is not currently set to grayscale, but I have found that setting helpful in the past.

When you finish your day of work, put your phone in a drawer or cabinet. This is a helpful practice for all people, but I think it is especially important if you have kids or a spouse at home in need of your undivided attention.

### 6. Change your phone settings

Among the most often suggested ideas for reducing cellphone usage is simply changing the settings on your phone. The most common suggested ideas:

- Turn off notifications
- Set screen to black-and-white
- Remove distraction-based apps from your home screen
- Set a longer passcode
- Use airplane mode
- Turn on "do not disturb" mode

In my opinion, turning off notifications is something everyone should do

regardless of how habitual their cellphone use is. Just because someone in the world wants to text you, email you, or tag you in a post on Facebook doesn't mean they deserve your attention. My cellphone screen is not currently set to grayscale, but I have found that setting helpful in the past.

### 7. Put a hairband around your phone.

In one of the most thoughtful personal stories I've ever read on how to overcome cellphone addiction, Brad Soroka recommended placing a hairband around your cellphone. When placed in the middle of the phone, the hairband allows users to answer phone calls easily, but makes other uses of the phone more difficult (including simple texting).

**Turning off notifications is something everyone should do regardless of how habitual their cellphone use is.**

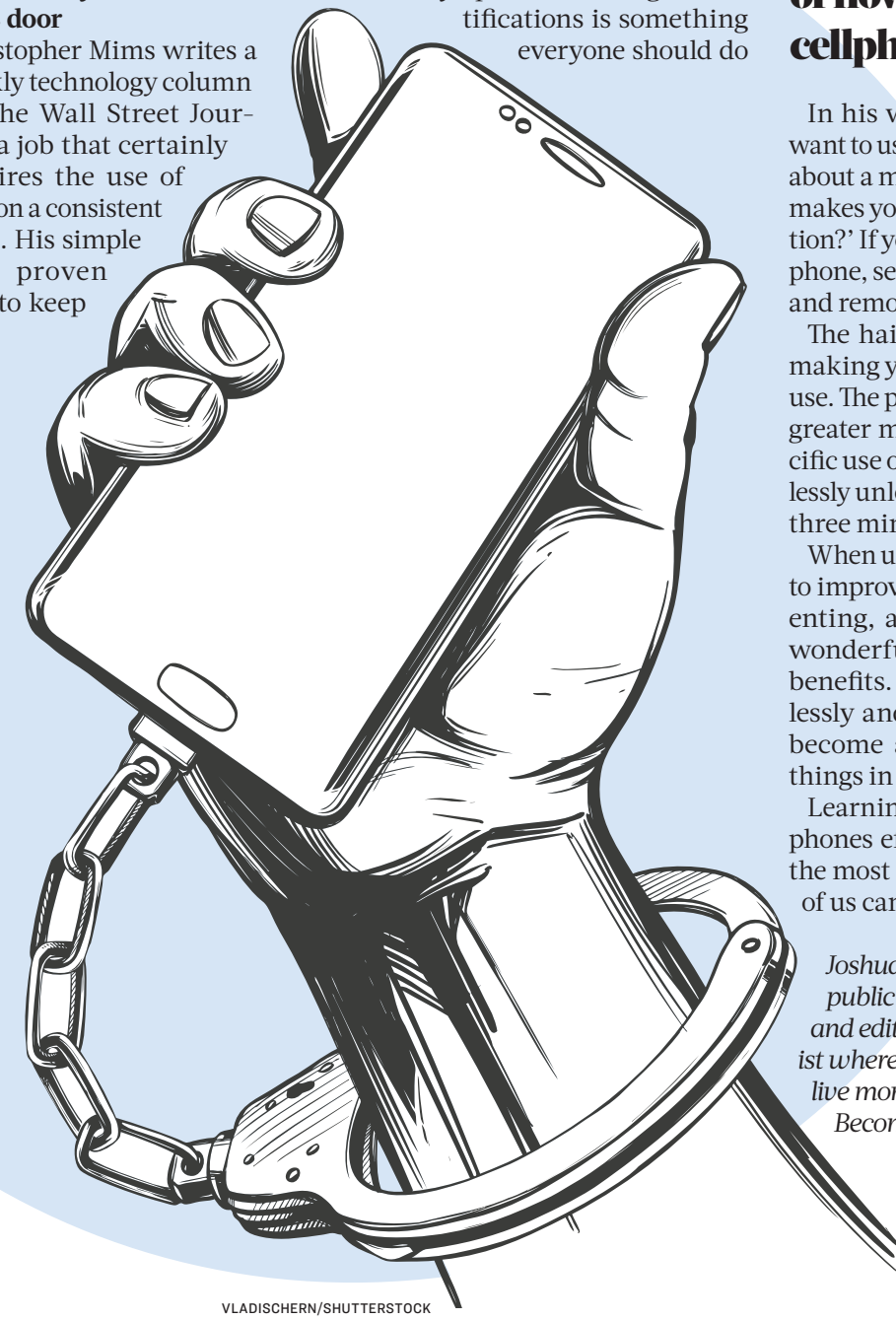
In his words, "Every time you want to use your phone, this brings about a mindfulness exercise and makes you ask 'What is my intention?' If you really want to use the phone, set your intention for why, and remove the hairband."

The hairband trick isn't about making your phone impossible to use. The practice is about bringing greater mindfulness to each specific use of it, as opposed to mindlessly unlocking your phone every three minutes.

When used as a collection of tools to improve my work, health, parenting, and life, cellphones are wonderful and bring countless benefits. But when used mindlessly and unintentionally, they become a distraction from the things in life that matter most.

Learning how to use our smartphones effectively may be one of the most important life skills any of us can learn.

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](http://BecomingMinimalist.com)



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# Put More Bliss in Your Life

Bliss is good for the mind, body, and for warding off distractions



ROBSON HATSUKAMI MORGAN/UNSPASH

Take the time to tune into a sustained experience of joy.

LAWRENCE W. REED

"You can't buy happiness but you can buy fishing gear, and that's kind of the same thing," or so said an unknown author.

As always, a week in the glorious wilds of Montana will be the calmest, most relaxing, and rejuvenating seven days of my year. I'll think of it at least once every 24 hours until I go again next year. We'll hike, spot moose and deer (and a bear if we're really lucky), devour our own cabin-cooked food, and solve many of the world's problems over a campfire with cigars and liquid refreshments. But I know the best moments will find us in the water with rod and reel in hand.

"Fishing" isn't the best term for what we'll be doing. We'll be "angling." Fishing is the generic word for catching fish, which can be accomplished with or without a rod and reel. For instance, you can catch a fish with string, with a club, with a net, with a spear, with dynamite, or even with your bare hands.

An angler uses a rod, a reel and, at the end of a line, a lure with a hook in it. The lures we're using in Montana are "flies" with names like "hopper," "nymph," and "midge"—man-made imitations of insects. We'll wade into streams up to our waists, stalk our prey, revel in the sheer beauty of a perfect cast and plant each fly where a trout can't resist it. We'll release most of what we catch but save a few for dinner.

**Nature, Bliss, and Angling**

Why do we love doing this? I'll speak for myself but I'm pretty sure Robert, Javi, and Tyler will agree: It's sheer bliss. We all need bliss. Bliss is good for the mind and body. It's the antidote to the unabating bombardment of noise, stress, and distractions we deal with the other 51 weeks of the year.

Nearly 400 years ago, an Englishman named Izaak Walton wrote a classic

about fly fishing. "No book, apart from the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer," claims one reviewer, "has been more often reprinted." Titled *The Compleat Angler* and modernized in more recent editions as *The Complete Angler*, the first edition appeared in 1653. The book exudes praise for this remarkable pastime:

"God never did make a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation than angling."

"You will find angling ... [to have] a calmness of spirit and a world of blessing attending upon it."

"Blessings upon all that hate contention, and love quietness, and virtue, and angling."

"Doubt not but angling is so pleasant that it will prove to be, like virtue, a reward to itself."

Maybe fly fishing isn't your thing. For bliss, maybe you listen to classical music or lie on a beach, read a good book, or do a little yoga. That, of course, is perfectly alright. Life is personal and value is subjective. By whatever means you choose, I hope bliss is on your agenda.

Take the time to tune into a sustained experience of joy.

Be assured that when you get back to the grind in a few days, there'll be plenty of noise, stress, and distraction. Getting away from it for a spell helps keeps it in check.

Lawrence W. Reed is president emeritus, Humphreys Family senior fellow, and Ron Manners ambassador for Global Liberty at the Foundation for Economic Education. He is also the author of *Real Heroes: Incredible True Stories of Courage, Character, and Conviction* and *Excuse Me, Professor: Challenging the Myths of Progressivism*. This article was originally published on FEE.org



## Why Do We Think Money Buys Happiness?

A Pennsylvania couple's \$120,000 spending spree is case study on humanity

EMILIANA R. SIMON-THOMAS

What would you do if a large amount of money suddenly appeared in your bank account?

For Robert and Tiffany Williams of Montoursville, Pennsylvania, this was more than a thought exercise. In May, their bank accidentally put \$120,000 in their account. While nobody knows quite why this happened, we all know what the police said they did next.

Instead of notifying their bank, the Williamses allegedly spent their inadvertent windfall on an SUV, two four-wheelers, and a camper, among other things. They also apparently gave \$15,000 to friends who needed money.

They are facing felony theft charges—and massive overdraft fees from the bank.

"All I'm going to say is we took some bad legal advice from some people, and it probably wasn't the best thing in the end," Robert Williams told CNN affiliate WNEP outside the court early this month, when the couple made their first appearance in the case.

Research on human social behavior suggests that we should not be too surprised by what they did—but we also shouldn't be too quick to draw cyni-

cal conclusions about humanity from this story.

**Humans Prefer Fairness**

Despite the allure of gratuitous wealth, exploiting others for personal profit is not considered admirable or virtuous—and, in most circumstances, getting something for nothing doesn't feel nearly as good as earning it fair and square.

According to research in psychology and neuroscience, people are born with an overriding impulse to cooperate and to make choices that are fair and serve the greater good.

Very young babies prefer friendly, helpful people over villains, and children routinely help strangers without being prompted or congratulated.

Involuntary social isolation (e.g., loneliness, imprisonment) is inherently punishing, while having a friend close by makes challenges feel more doable, or even fun. People naturally form trusting relationships, and befriend, encourage, and console each other. All of this is for the purpose of fostering and maintaining long-term, supportive social bonds.

**Wired to Cooperate**

When people act generously, do something to uphold justice, or meet a shared goal, the reward pathways in their brains light up with pleasure. The

People who play the lottery believe winning will make them much happier than it actually does.

tenth cranial nerve, which relays key signals between the brain and body, inherently links systems for personal calm with pathways that drive interpersonal care and affection. Worldwide, the more charitable residents of different countries are, the higher their national happiness levels are.

Humans, it turns out, are a deeply social species. Our innate "prosocial" urges to concern ourselves with the welfare of others and care about community, to enjoy being generous, and to prefer fair and equitable contexts, are tied to several biological systems that ensure our collective success.

At the same time, however, humans learn from experience and adapt to dynamic features of their physical and social settings. When we feel threatened, for example, our biological systems for self-preservation get priority over systems that help us socially connect.

In making decisions, we're strongly affected by how things are framed and what's normal amongst the people around us. Very small nudges in language can influence behavior.

For example, if a laboratory task is called "The Community Game," people play more generously and cooperatively than they do if the exact same task is called "The Wall Street Game."

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TRUTH and TRADITION

COVERING IMPORTANT NEWS OTHER MEDIA IGNORE

The very fabric of America is under attack—our freedoms, our republic, and our constitutional rights have become contested terrain. The Epoch Times, a media committed to truthful and responsible journalism, is a rare bastion of hope and stability in these testing times.

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# DEFEND YOUR COMPANY

There is a clear trend to growth in countries the west considers unethical. The countries that are growing the fastest don't adhere to our standards, morals or ethics. Their success is because we have no effective defence and no systematic attack strategies. 7Tao is at home in an honourable ethical business environment, but when attacked by forces not sharing your values - 7Tao gives you the power to fight back.

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TRUTH and TRADITION

# A NEWSPAPER GEORGE WASHINGTON WOULD READ

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Affirming the goodness in life and acknowledging that sources of goodness lie beyond ourselves – can strengthen our common humanity, healthy optimism, and binds us in trusting relationships where others help us and we lend help.

## Why Do We Think Money Buys Happiness?

A Pennsylvania couple's \$120,000  
spending spree is case study on humanity

Continued from Page 9

The same principle seems to apply in other ways as well. If we see others choose a wrong answer, we're also more likely to choose the wrong answer compared to if we faced the same question alone.

### Feelings Affect Decisions

Given the complex array of day-to-day circumstances and choices, people tend to cost-benefit analyze their options based on things like how they feel right then and there, what they think they might gain or lose, and who's watching—all of which, regrettably, can be surprisingly inaccurate.

When it comes to helping others, we mistake our self-doubt about being able to help for worry that the effort required will deplete us, and thus we fail to intervene. If others are watching, we try harder; if others are there but not reacting, we take the cue to do the same, even if there's smoke billowing under the door.

As a general pattern, people tend to over-focus on immediate threats and desires and on upholding a favorable personal and social identity. This mostly serves our safety and guides social experience. But under some circumstances, without watchful eyes or collaborative input, our brains can lead us astray.

Our predictions about day-to-day dangers or how pleasurable events will delight us don't often match what really happens. For example, driving to the beach is far more dangerous than sharks in the ocean, but many ocean swimmers fear sharks more than the drive. And people who play the lottery believe winning will make them much happier than it actually does.

With these facts in mind, it's not hard to see how people around the Williamses may have influenced them to take the money, by encouraging them to do so. The Williamses also likely overestimated how much pleasure the money would bring them and underestimated the problems that could come from taking the money. And since they likely planned to give

some money to their friends right from the start, they probably also thought it would boost their social identity.

### When Do We Make Unethical Choices?

There are also other factors that could have affected the Williamses decision. We can't know for sure, but science suggests that several other forces may have been in play.

First, the money came from a bank error not connected to a particular person—which took empathy out of the equation. If the Williamses had considered the fact that their gain would be another person's loss, they might have acted differently.

This bank error issue also made it seem like nobody was watching, which tends to make people less accountable. When laboratory studies give people chances to cheat in self-interest without hurting others, and without being detected, most do.

Second, people who make morally questionable choices often underestimate their chances of getting caught in the long term, and fall prey to a more fleeting “cheaters high.” People have a cognitive bias toward thinking that they are more invincible than others. The raw appeal of getting away with taking the money may have fueled the Williamses' decision to go on their ill-advised spending spree.

Thirdly, today's constantly-on media culture incessantly promotes the idea that happiness comes from consumerism and entertainment. Mainstream channels promise genuine happiness from the fleeting pleasure that comes with new possessions, increased status, or exclusive access to luxury. But studies show that pursuing happiness this way actually makes people less happy. It's possible that the Williamses, like many others, believed that their new things would bring more happiness than doing the right thing.

In a related vein, we are also in an age of social-media propelled FOMO (fear of missing out), or muted resentment about how much more impressive other

people's privileges and opportunities are than our own. What better way to allay this malaise than to stock up on fancy stuff?

Fourth, the Williamses actually did do something nice—they gave away a chunk of the money to other people. Back to the cost-benefit equation, this variable likely bolstered their moral righteousness in a Robin Hood sort of way. The illusion of restoring broader fairness by giving the nameless-faceless bank's money away to people who needed it may have countered their sensitivity to the immediate moral failure of theft.

Finally, news stories about people in positions of power behaving unethically and not having to pay the consequences have been dishearteningly common in recent days.

At the same time, there is a wide chasm between sectors of society with deeply conflicting social and political beliefs. These divided sectors face ambiguity about what is factual or “alternate factual,” which undermines a spirit of national consensus and compromise.

This combination of divisiveness and unaccountability is ideal for morally devious behavior.

Put simply, we're strongly influenced by what's happening outside of our heads. If those influences are positive, we're more likely to make good decisions. If they're not—if we take “some bad legal advice from some people,” as Robert Williams said—then we find ourselves on the way to jail.

**The more charitable residents of different countries are, the higher their national happiness levels are.**

### Happiness and Social Goodness

If freely spending \$120,000 doesn't boost happiness, then what does?

According to the science to date, the most promising route to real happiness is through meaningful social connection, contributing to the welfare of others, and having a sense of purpose—in short, feeling like you matter in the world. Fortunately, there are many science-backed practices, activities, and exercises for working toward this kind of happiness.

Mindfulness, for example, helps us be more aware of real-time inner experiences and outer circumstances, in ways that reduce overly self-focused, imagined, or otherwise biased thinking. Getting be-

eyond this self-focus also helps tether decisions to compassionate, ethical values.

At the Greater Good Science Center (GGSC), we define mindfulness as “maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, through a gentle, nurturing lens.” This is a practice that can make you more alert to the good things and positive influences around you.

**Today's constantly-on media culture incessantly promotes the idea that happiness comes from consumerism and entertainment.**

Studies also showcase gratitude—which means affirming the goodness in life and acknowledging that sources of goodness lie beyond ourselves—can strengthen our common humanity, healthy optimism, and binds us in trusting relationships where others help us and we lend help. This is a happiness-increasing formula.

The skills of apology and forgiveness, which the Williamses might need to embrace, also improve happiness. The kind of happiness that comes from prioritizing activities and behaviors like gratitude and helping others feel good and last. They also improve health and longevity, lead to better relationships—and make you more successful. Happier people earn higher salaries, are rated as more socially appealing and deserving of leadership roles, and bring out more happiness in others.

Even if the Williamses hadn't gotten caught, it is likely that their short-sighted, self-focused, and dishonest choices would chip away at their happiness, even with their small nod to helping others.

While stories like this one can inspire cynicism, they are also great opportunities for reflection and learning. Are there aspects of popular culture and lifestyle that made their choice, alongside the bad legal advice, seem reasonable?

Perhaps this story should compel us to ask deeper questions about what kind of society we have—and what we can do to bring out the best in all of us.

*Emiliana R. Simon-Thomas holds a doctorate in psychology and is the science director of the Greater Good Science Center. This article was originally published on Greater Good Magazine.*

### WISE HABITS

# Embrace Groundlessness When Everything Seems Out of Control

Life goes in some unexpected directions, but that can be wonderful if you let go—and let it flow

LEO BABAUTA

It's a fundamental fact of human life that we want our lives to be under control—we develop plans, goals, routines, systems, tools, and schedules to give structure to our lives.

But while developing some structure is a very helpful thing for most of us, the truth is, there's so much that we don't control. Life is chaotic.

It's what Pema Chodron calls “groundlessness”—the feeling of no solid ground under our feet. Other Buddhists might call it impermanence, which is a basic fact of life that we very often don't want to accept. Whatever you call it, we don't usually like it. People want solidity.

So what do we do when life feels out of control? We open up to it.

Normally, we seek some kind of control or permanence. The routines and systems, the hardened opinions about how life should be and how others should act, the comfort foods and distractions, all provide certainty and comfort. It contributes to why we procrastinate, put off healthy habits, get angry at others' behavior, and feel so much anxiety.

But what if we could embrace the groundlessness?

### Fresh, Open Experience of Groundlessness

We normally think of the world around us, other people, and ourselves as solid things. But in fact, the things we think of as solid are just our ideas of them. The things themselves are constantly in flux.

Consider yourself:

- You think you're an individual person, separate from everything around you. But in fact, you breathe in the air and it becomes a part of you. What separates you from the breath of air you just took in?
- You drink water and eat food that becomes a part of you, and that food was brought to you by others, the water was brought by a whole system of water distribution, a whole weather system before that. You are only existing because of everything around you. Where do you begin and everything else ends?
- You are made out of atoms with electrons that are bouncing off, generating heat waves from your body and sound waves from your voice. You radiate an electromagnetic field. In a very real way, you are this field, from a quantum perspective. And you are absorbing the energy from the atoms around you, through breath, your skin, and so on.

In fact, we're all just interrelated phenomena, constantly shifting. The line between one thing and everything else is in our minds.

OK, that might all seem too abstract. The idea is that nothing is as solid as we think, and everything is interconnected in such a way that we can't really say that “this is this, and that is that.”

To take it to an experiential level, try this:

1. Pause for a moment and take in everything around you in this moment. Notice all the objects, the space, the light, the sounds. Bring everything around you, yourself included, into your awareness.
2. See everything as less than solid. Imagine that everything isn't as solid as it seems. The air isn't solid, it's constantly flowing and changing—now imagine that everything else is similarly fluid, yourself included. Imagine that it's all just one big sea of changing flowing matter.
3. Experience the openness. If nothing is solid and permanent, then everything is changing and open. Feel this openness as freedom, a fresh, exhilarating vastness. Relax into this openness, and feel its beauty.

This is the openness of groundlessness. Nothing is solid, nothing is fixed, but this is the good news. Openness is unconstricted, free, peaceful, and gorgeous.

### Learning to Find the Beauty in Groundlessness

So things seem out of control and it brings up anxiety in you. How can we work with this?

First, we can allow ourselves to feel the sensations of uncertainty in our body as physical sensations. How does your fear, anxiety, frustration feel in your body? Forget the story about it and just feel the feeling. Being present with this is a courageous first step.

Next, we can experience the groundlessness of the situation. Your life is up in the air—feel the openness of this, the freedom of nothing being fixed. It's beautiful.

Yes, you have some things to do—that's the practical aspect of needing to get things done in your life. But for now, just experience the beautifully fresh freedom, the vastly open groundless moment.

Relax into it. Appreciate it. See it with fresh eyes, as if you've never experienced this particular moment before. Because you haven't. No one has.

Then, from this place of openness, ask yourself, “What's the most important thing I can do right now? What's the most loving thing I can do for myself and others?”

Take that next step, not out of anxiety or fear, but out of love.

*Leo Babauta is the author of six books, the writer of “Zen Habits,” a blog with over 2 million subscribers, and the creator of several online programs to help you master your habits. Visit ZenHabits.net*



Your life is up in the air—feel the openness of this, the freedom of nothing being fixed. It's beautiful.

## THINK WELL, WORK WELL



Sometimes our mind tells us an irrational story of how we can't do what we hope to do before we even give it a try. Sometimes we don't even notice that we're listening to it.

# Seeking Love Taught One Man How to Conquer His Thoughts

Albert Ellis's pursuit of romance taught him how to conquer his fear, help others beat learned helplessness

JEFF GARTON

One of the difficult challenges we face in life is controlling what we think. But when we do, we can improve how we feel and thus find the will to take action.

Controlling your thoughts allows you to choose your emotions, and doing so can affect all aspects of your life, including your work, where supervising your thinking can help you find and maintain a contented work life. A resource on this topic I sometimes refer to was developed based on a young boy's fear of talking with members of the opposite sex.

To conquer this fear, Albert Ellis forced himself to speak with as many women as possible. This would ultimately lead to his becoming a clinical psychologist and, in 1955, his creation of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) as the solution.

REBT is a form of psychotherapy that is still in use today. It was designed to help Dr. Ellis's clients understand how their doubts and fears were caused by thoughts they might not have realized were irrational. And by learning to challenge the rationality of your thoughts, you can prevent the negative feelings that can impair your actions.

REBT relies on what Ellis referred to as the ABC model where A stands for the activating event or adversity that occurs. B stands for the belief or thoughts you have about A, and C stands for the consequence of having that thought, the emotional reaction and behavior it motivated. Here's a sample of the ABC model in action.

A - The job you've had your eye on for some time suddenly becomes available and this prompts you to think about whether you should post for the opportunity.

B - You think your chances of being offered the job are dismal. You believe others are more qualified and your last performance rating wasn't that great. You think you may never get out of the job you're in.

C - You feel helpless, down, and blue about yourself and this situation. You consequently lack the mo-

By learning to challenge the rationality of your thoughts, you can prevent the negative feelings that can impair your actions.



Albert Ellis became an influential clinical psychologist via the unusual route of trying to talk with women.

ivation to apply for the job you've always wanted. You give up.

Was this the best decision? It depends on whether the beliefs that motivated it were rational. Was it rational to think you'll never move out of your current job? Or that other people are more qualified when you don't know who the competition is? Or that you won't be liked because of an old performance appraisal?

Not only was the belief in this example irrational, it motivated a self-destructive behavior that could have been avoided. If only the person had developed the skill of challenging or disputing their irrational thoughts and habitual pessimistic thinking.

In his bestselling book, "Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life," educator and psychologist Martin Seligman makes good use of Ellis's ABC model in explaining how to control your thoughts and feelings. That you should "go on the attack and give your thoughts an argument."

Dr. Seligman is the founder of positive psychology and past president of the American Psychological Association. He refers to the giving up reaction in the above example as learned hopelessness, which is caused by your explanatory style or how you habitually explain to yourself why things happen in either a pessimistic or optimistic manner.

In his research, Seligman found that people feel hopeless and give up when their explanatory beliefs take the form of being personal (e.g., your chances of being offered a job are dismal), pervasive (e.g., your performance appraisal will always become a problem), and permanent (e.g., you may never get out of the job you're in). But when explanatory beliefs take the opposite form, which is more optimistic, you become energized and won't give up. This is the benefit of attempting to control your thoughts.

But because your beliefs have been reinforced over time, their underlying thoughts can occur automatically or without you realizing what you were habitually thinking. And since they're your thoughts and beliefs, you make the mistake of believing they're true even if they may be irrational.

For example, if you were to encounter a stranger who gives you an unflattering comment, you're likely to believe what they said about you is untrue since they don't actually know you. But when you give yourself an unflattering comment, there's a greater chance you'll believe it's true. You don't normally dispute your own thoughts.

The solution to correct for Seligman's learned helplessness and faulty explanatory beliefs is his learned optimism. You learn to "tune-in to your internal dialogue." Pay attention to how you feel as an indicator of what you were thinking then look for evidence to dispute the thoughts that caused the feeling. You can also look for a different or better explanation to dispute your thoughts. Ask yourself, "Is there a less destructive way to look at this situation?"

While Seligman found that disputing your thoughts offers the most reliable means for improving your explanatory beliefs, he also suggests redeploying your attention. This involves distracting yourself from thinking a pessimistic thought.

Here are some of the examples he provides. When the troubling thought occurs, distract yourself from thinking by standing up and slapping the wall, while saying STOP. Carry a 3x5 inch card with the word STOP written on it and pull it out as a reminder. Wear a rubber band on your wrist and snap it when the thought occurs. Pick up a small nearby object and meditate on it instead of thinking the thought. Or write the thought down and move on without thinking any more about it.

The desire to establish a relationship with a woman certainly motivated Ellis to conquer his fears. And in doing so, he enabled all of us the means to conquer the difficulties involved in how we think, feel, and take action in a rational manner. To quote Seligman, "It's as easy as ABC."

Jeff Garton is a Milwaukee-based author, certified career coach, and former HR executive and training provider. He holds an MA degree in organizational communication and public personnel administration. He is the originator of the concept and instruction of career contentment.

## Gearing Down to an Early Death?

Exercise is important as you age, and downsizing your activity level can shorten your life

SCOTT LEAR

It's well-documented that regular exercise is good for us. Being active can reduce your risk for a variety of diseases such as heart disease and cancer, as well as improving psychological well-being.

Current guidelines from the World Health Organization recommend getting 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per week. This works out to about 20 to 30 minutes per day of activity such as brisk walking, swimming, or playing tennis.

It's not much of a time commitment, yet most people don't achieve it. Barely 20 percent of Canadians are considered physically active, according to national guidelines. And if things in Canada are the same as in the United States, this number likely hasn't changed in the past 15 years.

The good news is that the very best time to start exercising is now. Research from the United States and the UK reveals that middle-aged and older adults can reduce their risk of death by becoming more physically active, irrespective of past physical activity levels.

**Why We Exercise Less as We Age**  
Hidden among these statistics on physical activity is how much it decreases with age. As an adult, our activity usually peaks in our 20s. After that, there is a steady decline in vigorous activity (exercise that increases heart rate) throughout life, while light physical activity (such as easy walking) stays relatively constant until around 60 years of age and then declines. In addition, sedentary time increases.

Many will argue that this is part of the aging process: we get weaker as we age and therefore we can't do as much vigorous activity.

However, the physiological changes in our body with age likely only account for a small portion in the decline in activity. People who remain active see only a fraction of the decrease in fitness compared to their inactive counterparts.

Much of this decrease in activity is due to conscious and unconscious changes in life circumstances. In our 20s, we're more likely to have been engaged in competitive and recreational sports, rely more on transit and active transportation as we can't afford our own car. Our entry-level



Every little bit helps throughout the day, not just the time you go to the gym or do a run.

jobs are more active, but as we progress up the career ladder, we're likely to spend more time sitting at a desk.

**Downsizing to an Early Death?**  
Retirement is also another significant stage at which time most people experience a further decrease in activity. Even if one's job was sedentary, it usually provides a small amount of activity. So unless a conscious effort is made to keep some form of activity up in retirement, it will be lost.

Many people also downsize their home in retirement, perhaps moving to a one-story apartment and losing their yard. While there may be good reasons for downsizing, it also results in further decreases in activity, as there are no stairs to take or yard to manage. Some people downsize purposely, thinking they should be doing less activity.

As activity decreases, so do our fitness and strength levels. Because of those changes, we become even less capable of doing activities we did when we were younger, so we further decrease our activity, and the cycle continues.

As a result, risk factors such as high blood pressure, obesity, and high blood

When it comes to exercise and health, what you have done lately is more important than what you did years or decades ago.

Scott Lear is a professor of health sciences at Simon Fraser University in Canada. This article was originally published on The Conversation.

## FOOD IS MEDICINE

## Daily Probiotics Can Ease Depression and Anxiety

Brain-gut connection drives link between the microbes in our stomach and our state of mind

DEBORAH MITCHELL

Once upon a time, experts considered beneficial bacteria (probiotics) to be helpful in managing only physical symptoms and conditions, such as diarrhea, heartburn, and irritable bowel.

The presence of these microorganisms in the gut environment has been shown to help restore balance to the intestinal tract and assist in keeping related functions running smoothly.

This line of thinking goes hand-in-hand with the growing evidence of the strong link between the brain and the gut, also known as the brain-gut connection or brain-gut axis. This link is the basis of the constant communication and reciprocity between these two areas of the body and the effect they have collectively on our health.

**Probiotics for Mental Health**

The majority of research thus far has looked at the impact of probiotics on the gut bacteria environment in animals, and the findings are promising. We have seen, for example, that providing probiot-

ics to mice, which modified the bacteria in their gut, caused the rodents to be less anxious and lowered their levels of cortisol, a stress hormone.

Human studies have demonstrated a significant relationship between beneficial bacteria in the gut and mental health. In a clinical trial involving 40 patients with major depressive disorder, for example, half were given a placebo and the other half took a probiotic supplement (Lactobacillus acidophilus, L. casei, and Bifidobacterium bifidum, 2 billion CFUs each) for eight weeks. At the end of the study, individuals who had taken the probiotic had significantly lower scores on a depression test when compared with placebo.

The probiotic group also experienced other benefits, including significantly lower insulin levels, reduced systemic inflammation, lower insulin resistance, and a significant rise in the antioxidant glutathione.

In another study, a group of individuals with chronic fatigue syndrome was given a probiotic and anxiety symptoms were reduced. For two months, the patients in the double-blind, randomized study took either a placebo or 24 billion CFUs of Lactobacillus casei strain. At the end of the study, those who

had taken the probiotic showed a significant decrease in anxiety symptoms.

**Probiotics and the Gut-Brain Connection**

Researchers are delving deep into the mysteries and functions of the gut-brain axis and uncovering various relationships. For example, a new study entitled "Anxiety, Depression, and the Microbiome: A Role for Gut Peptides," the authors explain how the two-way communication between the brain and the gut is very much a cooperative effort of different systems, including the immune, endocrine, enteric, and autonomic nervous systems.

Despite this realization, however, there is still much to be learned about all of the interactions and how they affect mental and physical health. The authors noted that, "given the emerging role of the gut-brain axis in a variety of brain disorders, such as anxiety and depression, it is important to understand the contribution of bidirectional interactions between peptide hormones released from the gut and intestinal bacteria in the context of this axis."

These experts believe gut peptides and brain peptides are very significant in the regulation of brain-gut communication and

they name names. For example, they call out neuropeptide Y, pancreatic polypeptide, peptide YY, corticotropin-releasing factor, oxytocin, and ghrelin, among others.

These and other peptides play a significant role in brain-gut signaling in stress-related psychiatric conditions. Two examples are gut peptides that are known to bind with receptors on immune system cells and vagus nerve terminals, which enables indirect brain-gut communication.

Another way that probiotics affect mental health may be through their ability to produce neurotransmitters, such as serotonin, gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), and acetylcholine. When these neurotransmitters are secreted in the gut, they may cause cells in the gut lining to release molecules that send messages to the brain and impact behavior.

**Taking Probiotics for Mental Health**

So what does this mean for the average person? Maintaining a healthy balance of bacteria in the gut is paramount to good mental as



Healing the body can help heal the mind, and fermented foods, like yogurt, can help.

well as physical health. To that end, if you aren't getting enough probiotics in your diet, daily supplementation with a high-quality and clinically proven probiotic is recommended.

Deborah Mitchell is a freelance health writer who is passionate about animals and the environment. She has authored, co-authored, and written more than 50 books and thousands of articles on a wide range of topics. This article was originally published on NaturallySavvy.com





## NATURES MEDICINE

# Natural Ibuprofen Alternatives Backed by Clinical Research

*Pain medication linked to thousands of cardiovascular disease-related deaths each year*

SAYER JI

With the public's growing awareness of the deadly side effects associated with the regular use of synthetic painkillers like ibuprofen, the need for natural, evidence-based alternatives has never been greater.

People generally think that over-the-counter drugs are safer than physician-prescribed ones. Unfortunately that doesn't hold true for drugs like ibuprofen, consumed at a rate of billions of doses annually, and responsible for thousands of cardiovascular disease-related deaths each year.

Did you know that Merck's blockbuster drug Vioxx caused more than 27,000 deaths and heart attacks between 1999 and 2003? In fact, it was the FDA's own drug safety researcher, David Graham, who blew the whistle on the agency in 2004 at a congressional hearing, estimating that more than 60,000 Americans died as a result of its use, and the FDA's inaction around their well-known side effects.

What does this have to do with ibuprofen? Researchers have known that ibuprofen is at least as dangerous as Vioxx for at least six years. But millions continue to take this drug, daily, without receiving adequate warning.

For more information, you can view Green-

Medinfo's ibuprofen database online. It collates the peer-reviewed research on the link between ibuprofen use and more than 30 different conditions.

Considering the veritable nightmare of adverse effects associated with ibuprofen use, it behooves both the medical profession and the health consumer to find safer alternatives, even if that means going back to the time-tested, multi-culturally validated tradition of herbal medicine.

## 5 Clinically Validated, Natural Alternatives Worth Considering:

1. Arnica: A 2007 study found that arnica, applied topically, was as effective as ibuprofen for relieving symptoms associated with osteoarthritis of the wrist, and with less side effects.
2. Ginger: A 2009 study found that ginger was effective as ibuprofen for pain symptoms associated with difficult menstrual cycles (dysmenorrhea).
3. Turmeric: A 2014 study found that turmeric extracts were as effective as ibuprofen for relieving symptoms of knee osteoarthritis.
4. Thyme: A 2004 study found that an extract of thyme was as effective as ibuprofen in reducing pain and spasm symptoms associated with difficult menstrual cycles (dysmenorrhea).

5. Omega-3 fatty acids: A 2006 study found that omega-3 fatty acid supplementation with fish oil helped neurosurgery patients reduce their need for medications, and experience results consistent with previous research indicating palliative effects at least as effective as ibuprofen.

6. Cinnamon: A 2015 study found that cinnamon was as effective as ibuprofen for pain associated with difficult menstrual cycles (dysmenorrhea).

For related research, use the GreenMedInfo databases on natural anti-inflammatories and analgesics. Consider also that ibuprofen isn't the only NSAID with debilitating and even lethal side effects. Learn more about the dangers of this chemical class, including aspirin, on our NSAID database.

*Sayer Ji is the founder of Greenmedinfo.com, a reviewer at the International Journal of Human Nutrition and Functional Medicine, co-founder and CEO of Systeme Biomed, vice chairman of the board of the National Health Federation, and steering committee member of the Global GMO Free Coalition. This article was originally published on Greenmedinfo.com*



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