

THE EPOCH TIMES

MIND & BODY

Good Habits for a Strong Immune System

Your best defense against
a cold or flu is a lifestyle
that will keep you well **3**

Regular workouts
can also help
strengthen our
body's disease-
fighting powers.



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Things Parents of Mentally
Strong Children Don't Do

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MY RECIPE FOR Post-Surgery Healing

After weeks of battling cancer, the keys to recovery are perseverance, prayer, and patience

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 Gonçalves’s cancer journey from pre-diagnosis to life after treatment.

I was overwhelmed and exhausted after being discharged from the hospital following my rectal tumor removal and ileostomy placement surgery, but a huge uphill battle still awaited me.

My journey to recovery was full of setbacks, but through perseverance, prayer, and patience, I was able to see real progress eight weeks later.

The first hurdle came just hours after arriving home. I had to learn how to administer antibiotics via IV into a PICC line in my arm. A nurse came to my house to teach me this complicated procedure. I had to mix a powder and liquid, flush out my PICC lines and the IV with saline, and hook up several tubes.

My head spun from all the information. Fortunately, my auditor instincts kicked in, and I asked my brother to record the whole thing on my phone to play it back later. This was a brilliant idea since there was no instructional video available (I suggested this as feedback later). After another lesson the following day, I started to get the hang of it and completed the 14 days required all by myself. I was so glad it was over and proud of how I handled it.

Although I’d feel wiped out and take a nap immediately afterward, my stamina improved, and this encouraged me to keep going.

drain surgically inserted through my bum into the huge, infected abscess I had at my surgical site for an entire month. I couldn’t sit, struggled to sleep, and could only lay in one specific position.

After a few weeks of this, I became so sore in my right hip and lower back that I had an emotional meltdown one night. I was exhausted and there was no relief. I asked God to help me, and soon found a natural pain ointment called NeoRelief that soothed the sore areas enough so I could rest at last. Soaking my feet in a warm tub of Epsom salt helped relax me as well.

When the eighth-week post-surgery arrived, which was the typical timeline for recovery, I remember proudly thinking to myself how far I had come. By this point, I could move, eat, and sleep normally again. I hope my story helps encourage anyone currently facing this situation to hang in there. It gets better, I promise.

Come back next week when I will share my experience living with an ileostomy for nine months.

Until then, breathe deep, be kind, and take it one day at a time.

Michele Gonçalves 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.



I patiently pushed myself each day to slowly build up my strength again.



PREVENTION

Good Habits for a Strong Immune System

Your best defense against a cold or flu is a lifestyle that will keep you well

CONAN MILNER

Getting sick can feel like bad luck. Symptoms, such as a sore throat, runny nose, headaches, and cough seem to descend out of nowhere just to make us miserable. This misery can drag on for a week or more, forcing us to take time off or work through an illness.

However, infections are not due to luck, but microbial pathogens. We all confront numerous illness-causing pathogens everyday—an ever changing mix of flu and respiratory viruses found in the air we breathe and the surfaces we touch. But why do some people seem to stay symptom-free, while others are constantly reaching for the Kleenex?

For the past several years, the medical establishment’s most heavily promoted stay-well strategy has been the flu vaccine. However, by design, this defense only targets a few virus strains chosen each year. It promises no protection against the many other evolving flu strains that remain in our environment. And according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC): “There is no vaccine to protect you against the common cold.”

Thankfully, there are simple, yet effective things we can do to amp up our protection against any pathogen we might face.

Basic Hygiene

The most effective anti-illness strategy is the most basic: Reduce your exposure. Functional medicine physician Dr. Lisa Ona Ballehr recommends that we stay mindful of contaminated environments, and try to minimize the contamination we spread to others. “Try your best to avoid public places, cover your coughs and sneezes, wash hands routinely and avoid touching common objects in public places such as telephones, counters, and keyboards,” Ballehr said. “Avoid touching your face without first washing your hands.”

The CDC says a good handwashing session lasts at least 20 seconds. Make sure you go through all five steps (wet, lather, scrub, rinse, and dry). Teach children the routine, and help

People in a good state of mind had better immune indicators in their saliva, blood, and plasma.

them understand why it’s important.

Eating for Wellness

Even if we do our best to avoid contamination, viruses still manage to creep into our lives. Luckily, we each have an innate defense force designed to protect us. But our immune system is only as strong as the materials we use to construct it. And our primary building blocks come from food.

According to chemist and nutritional supplement expert Paul Jenkins, nutrition plays a crucial role in the efficiency of immune system responses. “The most common cause of immune deficiency is indeed malnutrition,” Jenkins said.

Jenkins mentions a long list of nutrients that contribute to immunoregulatory strength—vitamins A, C, D, E, B-6 and folic acid, as well as minerals, such as copper, iron, selenium, and zinc. They are called micronutrients because we only need small amounts to keep our system functioning properly. They are found in optimal amounts in a variety of fruits and vegetables.

But we need a lot more of another nutrient that we don’t typically associate with immunity: protein. Jenkins says a lack of protein often leads to deterioration of our defense system.

According to registered dietitian Alicia Galvin, protein is important because the immune system is made mostly of proteins produced by our white blood cells called antibodies. Eating protein-rich foods helps build the antibodies our body needs to fight off infections.

“When the body sees an invader that it does not like, these antibodies will bind to it. That binding signals the immune cells to come in and engulf it, eradicating it from our system,” Galvin said.

If eating the right foods can boost our immune system, eating the wrong ones can weaken it. Galvin says that when we eat a diet high in refined carbohydrates, sugars, and processed foods, it significantly compromises our defenses.

Nutritionist and author Lisa Richards says for strong immunity, aim for a low-sugar, anti-inflammatory diet. She recommends fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein.

“The nutrients we eat have a greater impact on our immune system than we give them credit for, and this goes beyond just vitamin C,” Richards said. “Colorful foods rich in antioxidants like broccoli, turmeric, red bell peppers, garlic, and spinach will help boost your immunity.”

One of Richards’s favorite immune-boosting meals is a classic

“You’re more likely to catch a cold or other infection when you’re not getting enough sleep.”

Gail Trauco, registered oncology nurse and patient advocate

cold and flu remedy.

“Chicken soup and broth have been used for centuries to ward off the common cold and its symptoms,” she said. “This is due in large part to the presence of cysteine in chicken. Cysteine is an amino acid known to break up mucus while also having an antiviral and anti-inflammatory effect in the body.”

Another easy addition to an immune-strengthening diet is hot herbal tea. An herbal infusion will contribute to good hydration, but Richards adds that herbs also contain natural plant compounds known as polyphenols which act as antioxidants in the body.

“Antioxidants will work in the body to reduce inflammation and also have antiviral properties,” Richards said.

One historically good choice among immune-boosting herbs is ginger. Ancient Sanskrit, Chinese, Greek, Roman, and Arabic texts all hold this rhizome in high esteem. In traditional medicine, ginger is often used to treat cold and flu symptoms by soothing sore throats and thinning mucus so it’s easier to expel.

Most modern research on ginger looks at the herb’s ability to relieve nausea, but a few studies suggest it may also help support the immune system. Research from Japan and India shows that ginger can stimulate immune markers and inhibit viral replication. Research from the United Kingdom shows that ginger extracts inhibit the common cold virus.

Exercise

We tend to think of exercise as a way to keep fit, but regular workouts can also help strengthen our body’s disease-fighting powers. According to Dr. Sashini Seeni, a general practitioner at DoctorOnCall, exercise is a reliable way to enhance our immune system.

“It is hypothesized that exercise can increase the circulating rate of antibodies and white blood cells—the guardians of our body—so the invading organisms can be eliminated more rapidly,” Seeni said. “Besides that, our brain will release endorphin hormones when we exercise. Its role is to keep us cheerful and happy. It relaxes our body from stress, as stress is one of the major risk factors for a person to get sick frequently.”

To get the most disease-fighting power from exercise, balance is key. Research has shown that athletes who train too hard can get sick more often, due to an immunodepression effect. For example, an antibody in human saliva—immunoglobulin A (IgA)—is the first line of defense against microbial invasions. However, heavy exercise can depress IgA secretion, which results in an increased risk of infection.

Rest and Sleep

When we’re busy, it’s hard to take time for rest. But if we fail to make sleep a priority, it can cause us to lose productivity in the long run.

According to registered oncology

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The CDC says a good handwashing session lasts at least 20 seconds.

nurse and patient advocate Gail Trauco, a lack of sleep can lead to higher levels of stress hormones and inflammation, which often results in a breach of our defenses.

“You’re more likely to catch a cold or other infection when you’re not getting enough sleep,” Trauco said. “You can boost the immune system by getting seven to nine hours of sleep each night for an adult. It’s key for good health.”

The need for sleep may seem obvious, but some people often push themselves repeatedly before they realize how run down they are. When we get sick, our body seems to crave sleep even more, but nutritionist and wellness coach Lynell Ross says many people still can’t take the hint and refuse to slow down. As a result, they take longer to recover, and end up exposing more people to their infection.

“We live in a culture that tells us to keep going, but it isn’t fair to your co-workers or other students if you show up coughing, sneezing and spreading germs,” Ross said. “Let’s change the concept of being busy and working while sick, to resting until we recover. There is nothing honorable about working while sick or infecting your co-workers.”

Think Good Thoughts

Infections aren’t a result of bad luck, but bad habits. And the more bad habits we practice, the less effective our immune systems become. According to acupuncturist Jamie Bacharach, the more destructive and unhealthy our lifestyle, the more our bodies need to draw from our limited resources in order to compensate.

“For example, recovering from consumption of alcohol requires energy from our body that could otherwise be directed towards our immune system,” Bacharach said. “Similarly, the less quality sleep we get, the harder our bodies will need to work in order to make it through the day. This taxing process saps our energy and limits the amount of power our immune system has in fighting illnesses.”

A bad mental state may also take a physical toll. Bacharach refers to a 2018 journal article that reviews research on how our mind correlates to our bodies’ immune response.

One study showed that people in a good state of mind had better immune indicators in their saliva, blood, and plasma, while those who were psychologically unwell saw a decrease in immune responses. The research suggests that your thoughts may have some influence on your body’s ability to fend off illness.

“Improving our psyche is proven to have the ability to enhance immune system strength and response, which is something that not enough people are conscious of in attempting to improve their health,” Bacharach said. “A healthy mind will help contribute to a stronger, healthier body.”

SIDE-EFFECTS

Top Reasons to Avoid Proton Pump Inhibitors

Stomach acid blockers are widely taken and easy to get—but the side-effects just keep piling up

PPIs are common pills for common ailments like heartburn and indigestion. Unfortunately, they also affect a core biological function, affecting your entire body in dangerous ways.

Millions of doses of “acid blocking” proton pump inhibitor drugs are doled out every year, yet most doctors and their patients are completely oblivious to their adverse effects, like increased risk for premature death.

Proton pump inhibitors are a type of drug commonly known as acid-blockers, whose primary purpose is to reduce the amount of gastric acid secreted in the stomach wall. Available with or without a prescription, acid-blockers are used to treat common disorders such as indigestion, heartburn, acid reflux, and various ulcers. These types of digestive disturbances are so common, proton pump inhibitors, or PPIs, were prescribed at nearly 270 million hospital trips made by adults via ambulance from 2006–2010.

The standard American diet of sugar-laden, highly-acidic processed foods, and the stress-filled lifestyle that accompanies it, make it easy to swallow the fact that PPIs are among the most highly prescribed drugs on the planet.

With cumulative sales of more than \$10 billion dollars annually, drugs like Nexium, Prilosec, Prevacid, and others represent a significant chunk of Big Pharma's profits. Despite clinical research that shows an act as simple as drinking more water reduces stomach acid more than these drugs, and with no side effects, Big Pharma's relationship with the corner doctor's office often prevents these basic self-help practices from being disseminated.

PPIs work by raising stomach pH above normal range to inhibit secretion of pepsin, a digestive enzyme that can be irritating to the stomach lining. While this action may provide temporary relief, it also blocks secretion of normal, healthy enzymes, impairing the body's digestive function over the long-term. Lack of adequate stomach secretions can also expose us to harmful molds, viruses, and bacteria that may be present in our food.

PPIs have developed a list of known side effects that are reported to occur within days or weeks of onset of use. The most commonly reported short-term side effects of taking PPIs are: digestive disturbances, such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, abdominal pain, and gas; headaches; fever or cold symptoms, such as stuffy nose, sneezing, and sore throat; skin rashes; cognitive impairment; and infection.

Even more disturbing are recent announcements from the scientific community on the long-term effects of PPIs.

Safe Antacid or Smoking Gun?

Most people take acid blockers because of dietary and lifestyle choices that create an unfavorable condition in the digestive tract. Poor-quality food, consumed in a rush, is even chased down with coffee or soda. Heartburn soon follows.

When pills are so readily available that help us divorce consequence from causation, these dietary indiscretions can become common and normal. “Take a pill and enjoy the foods you love,” proclaim

‘Take a pill and enjoy the foods you love,’ proclaim commercials. Unfortunately, the systemic side-effects of proton pump inhibitors affect every cell in the human body.



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Research conducted at Stanford University and Houston Methodist Hospital in Texas uncovered shocking findings in 2016, through research supported by the American Heart Association. What co-author Dr. John Cooke, chair of Cardiovascular Disease Research at Houston Methodist Hospital, calls “the smoking gun,” is the fact that PPIs effectively inhibit acid production throughout the body, disrupting normal, healthy metabolic processes of cells. The acid bath that PPIs disrupt in the stomach carries important digestive enzymes. When this enzymatic activity is inhibited in the rest of the body (because the effects of PPIs aren't limited to the stomach), cells become unable to break down waste materials.

Cooke likens this process to “a garbage disposal that requires acid to work.” Cells rapidly become burdened by these waste products, and the damaging effects of aging are accelerated. This type of cellular damage leaves patients, particularly those taking PPIs for a year or more, susceptible to a host of diseases, and even premature death.

It is critical to recognize that the reasonable use of these drugs has been hugely overshot. Approved by the FDA for short-term use only, these drugs are now taken daily by millions of people, sometimes for decades. Doctors have fallen asleep at the wheel when it comes to safeguarding patients from the harmful effects of medication abuse, and are now guilty of over-prescribing.

The potential complications from PPIs are vast, as each individual responds to each drug differently. It is up to each person to determine his or her acceptable level of risk, and this requires knowing the facts. Based on the latest science, the following risk factors represent our top five reasons why you should not take a proton pump inhibitor.

1. Increased Risk for Kidney Disease

The evidence that PPIs are damaging to the spleen and kidneys first appeared in case reports of acute interstitial nephritis, inflammation of the tissues between

renal tubules that affect how our kidneys regulate and uptake water. This condition, which can lead to kidney failure, was observed to occur suddenly and in significantly higher rates among users of PPIs.

Cessation of use of PPIs initiated a reversal of symptoms in many cases. Once the alarm was sounded, large observational studies were conducted that found correlations of PPI use with increased incidence of acute kidney injury, chronic kidney disease, and end-stage renal disease. These risks increase when users consume more than one dose daily of these medications.

While researchers are quick to point out that correlation is not causation, the data trend was alarming enough to prompt both doctors and researchers to acknowledge that “PPIs may not be as innocuous as initially thought.” A meta-analysis of independent studies found a “positive and significant association” in thirteen of seventeen studies, between PPIs and compromised kidney function, prompting researchers to conclude that “timely cessation of PPIs might reduce kidney disease.” This is especially true in cases where use is prescribed for non-serious medical issues, which is the case with the majority of PPI users.

2. Increased Risk for Heart Disease

There is now significant evidence of adverse cardiovascular effects from PPIs. A June 2016 article published in the American Journal of Cardiovascular Drugs reviewed available information on cardiovascular risks from PPIs as well as how this harm occurs.

The study confirmed that proton pump inhibitor effects are not isolated to stomach cells. PPIs were observed to reduce the acidification of lysosomes, cells responsible for the breakdown of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, and nucleic acids. PPIs alter basic cellular functions, including those related to blood clotting, thereby increasing the risk of major adverse cardiac events.

A study conducted in Denmark involving more than 56,000 participants who had been hospitalized for myocardial infarction (MI), “reported a 30 percent increase in the incidence of cardiovascu-



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Clinical research that shows an act as simple as drinking more water reduces stomach acid more than these drugs, and with no side effects.

lar death, recurrent MI, or stroke within the first month after discharge for those patients that were taking PPIs.”

Another study on nearly 24,000 participants confirms this finding, reporting an increased risk of recurrent MI in those individuals taking PPIs. A meta-analysis of studies involving more than 100,000 patients in total, examined the link between cardiovascular risks for patients taking PPIs in conjunction with the blood-thinning drug, clopidogrel. Analysis revealed that while this drug combination is known to be avoided due to PPIs diminishing the effectiveness of the blood-thinner, “a significant cardiovascular risk” was attributable to taking PPIs alone.

3. Digestive Disorders

Most people take PPIs because of stomach upset, so it may seem oxymoronic to include this condition in the list of reasons not to take PPIs. The most common ailment cited when writing prescriptions for PPIs is gastroesophageal reflux disease, which expresses as excess acid in the stomach. But a PPI prescription is also written for 50 percent of all digestive diseases.

PPI overuse has been documented in numerous studies, so whether the cause of the digestive complaint is excess acid or other, a proton pump inhibitor is often prescribed. This makes proper diagnosis of the digestive complaint impossible as a domino-effect of symptoms that may or may not be related to the original problem can cloud the picture.

The gut is believed to be our “second brain” due to the proliferation of biological signals that originate in the intestinal tract. The acid balance in the stomach, directly altered by PPIs, is now understood to play a vital role in the health of the all-important microbiome. PPIs alter the delicate pH balance in the gut, compromising microbial communities and corrupting these biological signals.

Studies have linked PPI use to damaged health and diversity of beneficial gut microbes. A compromised microbiome can drive digestive complaints, and commonly reported PPI side-effects such as diarrhea and vomiting. Having an impaired microbiome for months or years can lead to serious diseases such as inflammatory bowel disease, obesity, diabetes, liver disease, cancers, and more.

4. Diminished Brain Function

Some of the most startling chronic health problems correlated with proton pump inhibitors are cognitive disorders. While it's not such a novel idea that food affects our mood, there isn't yet a wide consensus on food's impact on brain health. A study released in December 2015 was prompted by research showing that PPIs increase the brain burden of amyloid-beta, an amino acid that is the main component of the amyloid plaques found in the brains of Alzheimer patients.

PPIs are also known to create vitamin B12 deficiency, the second factor in Alzheimer's disease. Researchers divided sixty volunteers into five test groups and one control group. Each of the five test groups was given a different PPI: omeprazole, lansoprazole, pantoprazole, rabeprazole, and esomeprazole. All six groups participated in computerized, neuropsychological tests at the beginning of the study, and again, seven days after taking the specific PPIs maximum daily dose. While researchers admit that a larger study is desirable, the evidence was clear:

“We found a statistically and clinically significant impairment in visual memory, attention, executive function, and working and planning function. All PPIs had a similar negative impact on cognition.”

Of the PPIs studied, omeprazole had the most significant impact (significant results on 7 of 7 cognition tests), and

esomeprazole showed comparatively less (significant results on 3 of 7 tests). Fueled by this kind of result, a larger study was conducted in 2016 that analyzed more than 73,000 participants, aged 75 years or older, and free of dementia. The patients receiving regular PPI medication had a significantly increased risk of incident dementia compared with the patients not receiving PPI medication. Researchers made the shockingly forthright conclusion that “the avoidance of PPI medication may prevent the development of dementia.”

5. Increased Risk of Death

It's clear from the evidence, as well as common sense, that PPIs have a systemic effect on the entire body. PPIs launch an attack on basic cellular functioning, inhibiting healthy cell metabolism from taking place. When the body's ability to convert the building blocks of life, namely proteins, carbohydrates, fats, and nucleic acids, into useable fuel is compromised, so is our immune system, and life begins shutting down.

An older study that helped pioneer awareness of harm due to PPIs is a 2013 study called “Inhibition of lysosomal enzyme activities by proton pump inhibitors.” Researchers observed that many of the adverse effects of PPIs are caused by systemically compromised immunity, a result of PPI inhibition of lysosomal enzymes. Lysosomes are essentially tiny membranes or sacs that carry enzymes essential to cellular metabolic functions. When PPIs inhibit this function, there is an increased incidence of tumors (tumorigenesis) and infectious diseases.

A 2016 study examined the association between PPI use and “risk of all-cause mortality” among U.S. veterans. In this study, nearly 350,000 veterans' records were analyzed, including new users of either PPIs or the older antacid type, H2 blockers, in addition to control groups taking no medications. Health events were observed over approximately six years. Researchers were “startled” by the results. Increased risk of death was associated with PPIs across all controls, including a 25 percent greater risk of death compared to individuals taking H2 blockers. The risk of death was greater still when compared to those taking no antacid medications. In addition, the longer a person was on PPIs, the higher the risk of death.

While researchers admit they don't know how each person in the study met their end, it was noted that PPI use was most prominent in older, sicker individuals. Considering that PPIs impair the body's ability to carry out healthy cellular functions, it makes sense that people taking them would end up biologically older and sicker.

When taking or considering a proton pump inhibitor, take precautions against drug interactions or complications. Stomach acids are often instrumental to absorb swallowed medication, and for this reason, PPIs have the potential to reduce the effectiveness of any oral drug.

Consult your doctor for advice on this and any matter related to medication. Above all, trust in your body's ability to self-heal when given the right ingredients and opportunity. Dietary change can be the best antidote for digestive disturbances, and simple natural remedies deliver powerful support with no negative side effects.

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THE ROOT CAUSE

Are Peptide Therapies Right for You?

Researchers are using these mini proteins in a growing list of treatments

ARMEN NIKOGOSIAN

Peptides have been around for nearly 100 years, but have seen a renaissance over the past two decades with potential treatment targets against cancer, anti-aging, infertility, and even obesity, to name a few. Peptides, as a class of treatment, have a huge span of biological activity from hormones to antimicrobials to potential targets in every organ system.

Peptides are essentially short proteins, defined as being less than 50 amino acids in length. They can be natural or synthetic. Their small size, low molecular weight, and simple amino acid structure let them move through barriers in the body that would normally exclude larger and more complex molecules.

The first and probably most well-known peptide therapy, insulin, was discovered in 1921. The lesser-known but commonly used peptides of oxytocin, ACTH, calcitonin, vasopressin, and leuprolerin then followed by the late 1980s. The peptide therapy boom we have seen in recent years started in the 1990s. To date, 60 peptide drugs have been approved in the United States, Europe, and Japan. There are more than 150 in active clinical development, and an additional 260 are being tested in human clinical trials.

So why is this topic being covered in a weekly functional medicine column?

I'm the guy who usually writes about good sleep, exercise, taking vitamins, herbs, and so forth. Functional medicine is about utilizing useful tools available to address the root causes of disease. Peptide therapy can be one of those useful tools. It offers a safer, and possibly more effective, alternative to the traditional chemical entities used to develop most pharmaceuticals. Peptide therapy brings us one step closer to the prospective marriage of personalized medicine and pharmaceuticals in the near future. This is a future of safer and more effective targeted therapies suited to a person's specific imbalances driving their disease.

Due to their distinct characteristics, peptide therapies offer more effective treatments that have less side effects than their chemical-pharmaceutical cousins.

Here are some peptide therapies are now currently available from your doctor: exenatide for Type 2 diabetes targeting GLP-1 receptor; teriparatide, a truncated parathyroid hormone analog offers a distinctly different way to treat osteoporosis compared to the pharmaceutical standard of oral bisphosphonates; glatiramer for multiple sclerosis by targeting the immune system through T-cell differentiation.

There are some newer peptides like BPC-157, thymosin beta 4, and thymosin alpha 1 that have very promising results with gut healing, inflammation reduction, and immune system modulation.

But be wary of some of these newer peptide therapies, as they can be purchased directly online without an experienced supervising practitioner coordinating the treatment. Due to their natural peptide state and presence in the body, some patients have a false sense of security when using them. They may not be viewing the peptides with the healthy skepticism necessary when placing any substance into their body. Keep in mind that insulin is a completely natural peptide that could kill a person rapidly if used inappropriately. Although safer than traditional chemical pharmaceuticals, you must always maintain that healthy skepticism toward any treatment.

The importance of this shift in pharmaceuticals from a broad range of chemicals with a variety of effects to engineered and targeted peptide therapies opens the door to the higher potency of the intended effect and decreased probability of adverse reactions.

Armen Nikogosian, MD, practices functional and integrative medicine at Southwest Functional Medicine in Henderson, Nev. He is board-certified in internal medicine and a member of the Institute for Functional Medicine and the Medical Academy of Pediatric Special Needs. His practice focuses on the treatment of complex medical conditions with a special emphasis on autism spectrum disorder in children as well as chronic gut issues and autoimmune conditions in adults.



BRANISLAV NENIN/SHUTTERSTOCK

Peptides offer a more personalized way to treat disease with less risk than the chemicals used in many drugs.



▲ It takes a certain mental discipline to think logically, but the effort is well worth it.

STRONG MIND

Habits of Logical People

The authentically logical person keeps his logic rooted in truth not verbal trickery

DAN LATTIER

Becoming a logical person is not a matter of memorizing and applying formulas, or just learning how to tell the difference between a valid and an invalid syllogism. Rather, it involves cultivating intellectual habits and skills that, though they may seem simple and obvious, are only achieved after years of struggle and education.

In his book “Being Logical: A Guide to Good Thinking,” venerable philosophy professor D.Q. McNerny lays out the following 10 habits that people must cultivate if they are to think clearly and effectively:

1. They’re Attentive
“Many mistakes in reasoning are explained by the fact that we are not paying sufficient attention to the situation in which we find ourselves,” writes McNerny. The logical person has thus trained himself to always pay attention to the details—even in situations that are familiar—lest he make a careless judgment.

2. They Get the Facts Straight
“If a given fact is an actually existing thing to which we have access, then the surest way to establish its factualness is to put ourselves in its presence. We then have direct evidence of it. If we cannot establish factualness by direct evidence, we must rigorously test the authenticity and reliability of whatever indirect evidence we appeal to so that, on the basis of that evidence, we can confidently establish the factualness of the thing.”

Logic is ultimately about determining whether statements are true or false.

3. They Ensure That Their Ideas Are Clear
Our ideas are the means by which our minds understand the objective world. Clear ideas faithfully reflect that world, whereas unclear ideas give us a distorted view of the world. The logical person is constantly testing his ideas to make sure they accurately depict their objects.

4. They’re Mindful of the Origins of Ideas
The logical person knows which of his ideas are based on things that actually exist in the world. He knows, for instance, that his idea of “cat” corresponds to things in the objective world known as “cats.” As a counterexample, there are a lot of people who have an idea that there existed a female pope named Joan in the 9th century. But if they spent time looking into the source of that idea, they would find that it’s widely regarded by respectable historians to have originated in legend.

5. They Match Ideas to Facts
McNerny writes, “To prevent my idea from being a product of pure subjectivism, in which case it could not be communicated to others, I must continuously touch base with those many facts in the objective world from which the idea was born.” This is easy to do with ideas that have a simple correspondence to things in the world outside our minds (e.g. my idea of “cat” refers to an actual cat). It’s much harder to do, as we’ve all experienced, with more complex ideas such as capitalism and socialism, or conservatism and liberalism. For these ideas to remain sound, they must constantly be linked to, and

supported by, facts that are accessible to all.

6. They Match Words to Ideas
We can only communicate our ideas to others if we use words that accurately convey those ideas. But finding the right words can be difficult. When difficulty arises, we should go back to the sources: “How do we ensure that our words are adequate to the ideas they seek to convey? The process is essentially the same as the one we follow when confirming the clarity and soundness of our ideas: We must go back to the sources of the ideas. Often we cannot come up with the right word for an idea because we don’t have a firm grasp on the idea itself. Usually, when we clarify the idea by checking it against its source in the objective world, the right word will come to us.”

7. They Communicate Effectively
Logic is ultimately about determining whether statements are true or false. If others are to accurately determine a statement’s truth, it needs to be communicated to them in a clear manner. McNerny offers the following guidelines for clear communication: Don’t assume your audience understands your meaning if you don’t make it explicit; speak in complete sentences; don’t treat evaluative statements (e.g. “That work of art is ugly”) as if they were statements of objective fact; avoid double negatives; and gear your language to your audience.

8. They Avoid Vague and Ambiguous Language
“Vague” and “ambiguous” both come from Latin words that mean “wandering.” Vague and ambiguous language tends to wander around ideas rather than having a fixed, definite meaning. A logical person uses precise language so his listener knows exactly what he is talking about and can adequately evaluate the truth of his claims. If he refers to more complex terms such as “freedom” or “equality,” he makes sure to establish his particular understanding of those terms.

9. They Avoid Evasive Language
“The problem with evasive language, language that does not state directly what a speaker or writer has in mind, is twofold. First, and obviously, it can deceive an audience. Second, and more subtly, it can have a deleterious effect on the people who use it, distorting their sense of reality. The user shapes language, but language shapes the user as well. If we consistently use language that serves to distort reality, we can eventually come to believe our own twisted rhetoric.”

10. They Seek to Arrive at the Truth of Things
The purpose of logic, according to McNerny, is to arrive at the truth of things. He explains that there are two basic forms of truth: “ontological” truth—what actually exists and has real being; and “logical” truth—the truth of statements. Ultimately, he reminds us, “What determines the truth or falsity of a statement is what actually exists in the real world. Logical truth, in other words, is founded upon ontological truth.” The authentically logical person, therefore, keeps his logic rooted in truth and never lets it devolve into mere verbal trickery.

Dan Lattier is a former senior fellow at Intellectual Takeout. He holds a bachelor’s in philosophy and Catholic Studies from the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota, and also holds a master’s and doctorate in systematic theology from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pa. You can find his academic work at Academia.edu. This article was republished from FEE.org



A difference of opinion can give us a way to expand our understanding, if we don’t let it turn into an argument.

and then empowered and then left alone to make the choice for yourself.

For the sake of your past selves and for the sake of the people whose minds you want to change, share truth compassionately.

No one had to drag you when you finally came around to a new way of doing and seeing things. Now that you have that new way,

don’t forget how you got here. For the sake of your past self and for the sake of the people whose minds you want to change, share truth compassionately. Lead people in. Entice them. Excite them. Empower them. Truth is not a tool for domination. It operates a lot more like love than war. Or have you forgotten where first changed you?

James Walpole is a writer, start marketer, intellectual explorer and perpetual apprentice. He is an alumnus of Praxis and a Foundation for Economic Education’s Eugene S. Thorpe fellow. He writes regularly at jameswalpole.com. This article was originally published on FEE.org

MINDSET MATTERS

Are You Lonely When You’re Alone?

Asking ourselves the right questions can bring us home

NANCY COLIER

While our use of technology has profoundly changed our relationships with other people, it has changed our relationship with ourselves even more, and this is the most important relationship of all.

We no longer see our self as a destination. Our self is a void to be filled, with entertainment, information, or anything else that feels good. To be alone is to be lonely, as if our own company is worth nothing. The instant our friend gets up to go to the bathroom, we’re waiting in a line, or we’re between activities, we grab our phone to check whatever we can check—anything but to be with ourselves. We relate to ourselves as the hole at the center of the donut.

As a result of our disappeared sense of worth, we survive on validation as our source of meaning. “Does anyone else think this matters? How did I do in other people’s eyes?” We offer our experience up to social media to find out what it means to everyone else so we can know what it should mean to us. In so doing, we effectively give away our experience and its corresponding value. We deprive ourselves of the nourishment that could come from our own life.

The important thing is no longer what we think of ourselves, but rather what we think others think of us.

Furthermore, we create a persona, a brand, the person who stands in for our real self who’s gone missing. We then use life to support and defend that persona, capture our experience on our devices to prove that we are indeed the person we’re advertised to be, the person the rest of the world thinks we are. Life is not lived directly but rather used as evidence to support our identity. As a result, we have a photo library that’s full, but our inner well is empty.



▲ Time alone, in silence, is a precious way to connect with yourself and discover what you truly want.

TYLER NIX/UNSPASH

It’s also no wonder that we struggle with self-esteem these days. Our new value system places ease and immediacy above all else. But a true sense of self-worth doesn’t come from what’s easy. It’s built on hard work, effort, and time. We can get to the top of the mountain by helicopter and even take selfies once we’ve arrived, proving that we’re a hiker and that we travel to mountain tops. But none of that branding will build self-respect like walking and sweating each step to the top.

In one study, young people were faced with an empty room with nothing in it but a small shocking machine. With a choice between doing nothing and giving themselves mild shocks, 70 percent of men and 25 percent of women chose to shock themselves rather than sit with their own thoughts and feelings. The goal in life seems to be to entertain ourselves and stay busy all the way to the grave so we can avoid bumping into ourselves along the way.

Moreover, we have forgotten our own inner authority, our own wisdom. We no longer trust that the answers to our questions

might come from inside us—not Google. We’ve stopped asking ourselves what we think is best and what we want. We’ve given up on ourselves as our guide in life. We’ve discarded our greatest source in exchange for an algorithm.

The important thing is no longer what we think of ourselves, but rather what we think others think of us. Comparison is the gauge by which we experience ourselves. Are we measuring up to everyone else’s Instagram feed? Where do we fit in the greater cultural photograph? Rather than ask “Who do I want to be?” we ask “Who do you (or they) think I should be?”

We need to remember that we ourselves are a destination. And, what matters to us matters, what we think, feel, and want is something to discover. We need to start consulting with ourselves again, not just Google, rediscovering our own inner authority—the real source that knows what’s best for us. We want to start spending time in just our own company, being curious about how we are in the midst of this wild ride called life.

We need to remember what it feels like to have an experience and keep it for ourselves, without asking anyone else for their commentary and approval. So too, we must get back in the habit of doing hard things, things that take time, but build true self-esteem. We need confidence that’s reliable and doesn’t come and go with likes or followers.

We need to get back in the habit of inviting our own wisdom to the table—asking ourselves the important questions. “What do I think? What do I want? What matters to me? What’s the most important thing to me? Who do I want to be?” Ask yourself these questions—every day. Spend time in just your own company. While it can appear that we are focused entirely on ourselves these days, in fact, our relationship with technology has led us to abandon ourselves at a profound level, to make our own presence invisible. Starting today, now, I invite you to come home to yourself, to remember that you are a destination deserving of your own attention. Indeed, you are your own best company.

Rev. Nancy Colier is a psychotherapist, interfaith minister, and the author of the book “The Power of Off: The Mindful Way to Stay Sane in a Virtual World.” For more information, visit NancyColier.com

The Easy Way to Change Minds

Truth is not a tool for domination, it’s a way to connect and share

JAMES WALPOLE

Remember when you changed your mind? Do you remember all the dozens of times you had to give up one idea to get closer to the truth? Whether in politics, culture, art, or philosophy, you may have experienced what it’s like to make an about-face on an idea. It’s terribly vulnerable. Were you convinced by someone who argued angrily at you? Were you convinced by someone who used truth to gain superiority over you and others? Were you convinced by someone who insulted your intelligence, or your morality, or your community? Were you convinced by some-

one who threatened you with consequences for your belief, or by someone who threatened to force their beliefs on you? No? Then why do you expect those same strategies to work on other people? When you changed your mind, you probably didn’t change it because someone won an argument with you. You probably changed your mind because someone spoke your language and listened to yours. You probably changed your mind because someone made one “over there” less scary and more beautiful than “right here.” You probably changed your mind because you were invited

How the ‘Christmas Creep’ Can Influence Your Health

DEVON ANDRE

I’ll mark the day—November 9. I had gone out for a lovely brunch with my wife before stopping at the pharmacy for toothpaste. When we walked through the door, it was like we’d entered Santa’s village. Christmas decorations, gift ideas, chocolates, and, of course, Christmas carols. It’s quite possible we missed the “Christmas creep” altogether and were swept up into a Christmas vortex. I love Christmas and the

entire holiday season. But it’s November and I’m not sure I can handle hearing “jingle bells” every time I need to run an errand. Hearing Christmas songs before November or even Thanksgiving can be a major stressor for some people. Some psychologists insist that the songs can serve as a constant reminder of the endless “to-do” lists of the season, as well as stir up old memories that may be less than fond. As these songs come on, some can begin to feel

Set a schedule that works for you and leaves you confident you’ll accomplish everything you need.

overwhelmed. This stress can take a toll. Holiday stress can make it difficult to sleep and can wear down your immune system. It’s impossible to block out the sounds of the season, but here are some ideas to manage the stress:

- **Make sure you’re eating enough magnesium.** Estimates suggest nearly 50 percent of American adults are deficient in magnesium, which plays a major role in relaxation and sleep.



▲ The holidays can bring a lot of extra stuff to do, leaving some of us stressed out.

- **Stay active.** Getting outside for some fresh air and a few laps around the block—even in the cold—can help you de-stress and feel your best.
- **Ignore it.** You don’t have to get involved in all things Christmas. Set a schedule that works for you and leaves you confident you’ll accomplish everything you need.
- **Shop online.** If you can stay out of the shops, you’ll have a happier holiday. Buying gifts online for the next month can be a major source of relief—just don’t wait too long. Deliveries get backed up this time of year.
- **Practice mindfulness.** Mindfulness may help deal with the stress when it hits to help slow things down and provide perspective.

Devon Andre holds a bachelor’s of forensic science from the University of Windsor in Canada and a Juris Doctor from the University of Pittsburgh. This article was first published on Bel Marra Health.

SELF-MASTERY

Greed and Worry Have the Same Effect on Our Lives

These troubled emotions lead to a pattern of behavior that cuts us off from the joy of giving

JOSHUA BECKER

Greed is a powerful motivator. Defined, the word means “an intense and selfish desire for something, especially wealth, power, or food.”

Worry, on the other hand, is a very different emotional state. If greed is “intense, selfish desire,” worry is “a state of anxiety and uncertainty over actual or potential problems.”

They are different, but I’m starting to recognize they might have more in common than we think. Because, in many regards, they produce the same negative outcome in our lives.

Greed and worry have the same effect: The accumulation and possession of more things for ourselves than we need. And subsequently, the missed opportunity and joy of giving to others.

Both worry and greed keep us from living our best lives in the same way.

From the outside, we recognize greed as blatantly negative, maybe even evil. It is something we assign to others, but rarely see in ourselves. Greed has far too many negative connotations to ever assign it as motivation to our own hearts and minds.

Worry, on the other hand, is rarely seen as such a negative emotion. In fact, we sometimes use the phrasing with pride, “Oh, I’m just a worrier.” Or perhaps even more frequently in passing, “I’m just worried that …”

Worry, you see, is more culturally accepted than greed.

Worry is seen as prudent and wise, even thoughtful at times. But don’t be fooled, there is a likelihood it is producing the exact same result in our lives as greed and selfishness.

It keeps our fists tightly clenched on mon-



While worry brings anxiety by focusing on the problem, hope directs our attention to the solution.

ey and possessions.

It seems to me there are only two reasons that keep people with means from being more generous with their money and possessions. Either they intentionally want to keep as much for themselves as they can (greed), or they are so worried about the future they can’t imagine giving away money or time to someone else (worry).

Two very different emotional states, same result.

We would benefit from recognizing their presence in our lives. And taking intentional steps to overcome them.

If either condition is present, the antidote is to intentionally pursue their counterparts: selflessness and hope.

Through selflessness, we give ourselves to others. We take the very resources (time, money, energy, talents) used for selfish gain and spend them on someone else.

Selflessness is often overlooked as a key to happiness and living our best life because it appears to run contrary to the very notion. But only when we embrace service and selflessness do we find lasting significance. Selflessness benefits the receiver and it benefits the giver. It is the ultimate win-win situation.

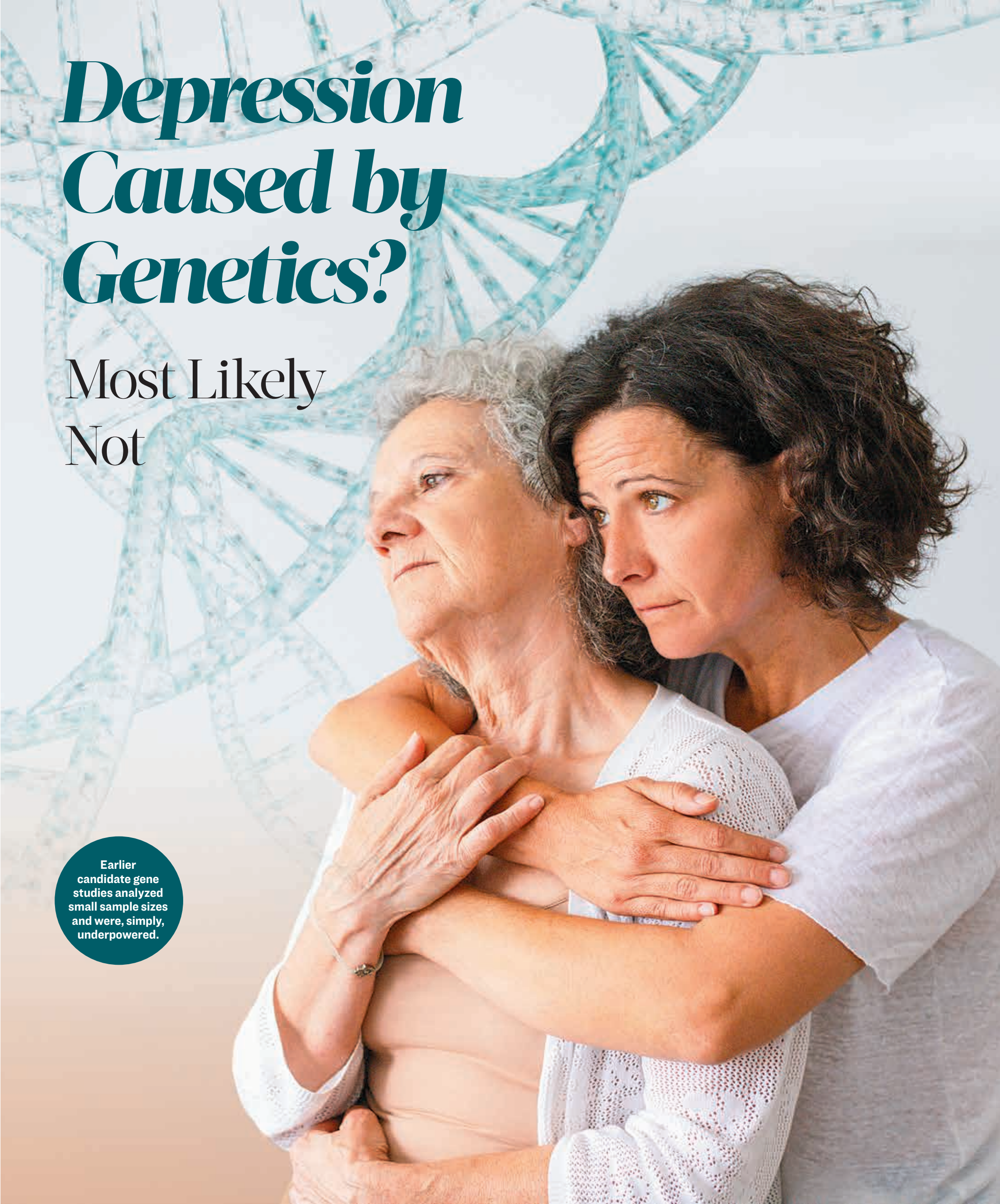
Hope, on the other hand, is the counterpart to worry. While worry brings anxiety by focusing on the problem, hope directs our attention to the solution. It allows us to see the obstacle through a different lens and

replaces debilitating worry with life-giving expectation.

It frees us to become generous and giving. When we worry less about what we will eat or drink in the future, we open our eyes to those around us who are unable to eat today. And we are freed to give out of our excess.

May each of us live our lives to their greatest potential. And may we no longer allow greed or worry to keep us from them.

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



Maybe we should be moving past a reductive and misleading interpretation of depression to understanding that our bodies create symptoms when things are out of alignment.

THE EPOCH TIMES

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Larger, stronger studies debunk previous research that was based on small sample sizes

KELLY BROGAN

Since the discovery of DNA, the central dogma of genetic translation has lured us in with the promise of a simple explanation: from genes to illness.

But with the completion of the Human Genome Project, we were forced to begin to explore the limitations of the mutation model of illness and our assumptions about the biology behind illness and health.

Despite this sobering reality, and the history of genetic studies of depression coming up empty-handed, many of the 30 million people in the United States taking medication still believe that genes play a role in their “disease.”

Frustration with the field’s current approach has been seeping into the industry. In 2017, Dr. Thomas Insel, former director of the National Institutes of Mental Health, said, “I spent 13 years at NIMH really pushing on the neuroscience and genetics of mental disorders, and when I look back on that I realize that while I think I succeeded at getting lots of really cool papers published by cool scientists at fairly large costs—I think \$20 billion—I don’t think we moved the needle in reducing suicide, reducing hospitalizations, improving recov-

ery for the tens of millions of people who have mental illness.”

Many gene candidate studies have been sifting through haystacks, trying to pinpoint the exact snippets of DNA sequence that might be causing you to feel lethargic, unmotivated, and generally terrible. Your depression, they say, is your own DNA betraying you.

A new study is helping us understand how the field’s previous genetically-inclined direction of study might have been nothing more than a distraction.

Study Finds No Correlation Between Genes and Depression

A recently published study in the American Journal of Psychiatry found no support for the association between genetic polymorphisms and the development of “major depressive disorder.” A team of Colorado researchers compiled data gathered from the UK Biobank (with more than 502,682 individuals from 22 centers across the UK between 2006 and 2010) and closely examined 18 candidate genes hypothesized to be genetic underpinnings of depression and found that previous depression candidate gene findings were most likely Type 1 errors—or false positives.

Using the UK Biobank data, collected from



Many of the 30 million people in the United States taking medication still believe that genes play a role in their ‘disease.’

online mental health questionnaires and DNA samples, the researchers were able to analyze the relationship between several depression phenotypes and moderators, and supposed genetic markers for the different manifestations of depression.

But more importantly, the researchers tried to replicate the results of studies that have implicated the top 16 candidate genetic loci for causing depression. Performing analyses with a much larger sample size than those of previous false-positive studies, their results debunked the idea that these loci were actually linked to depression. Out of these 16, only three attained statistical significance, but those results are consistent with the low power to detect small associations.

Led by Richard Border and Dr. Matthew Keller, the research team suggested that the field should abandon the idea that depression is genetic.

“Our results demonstrate that historical depression candidate gene polymorphisms do not have detectable effects on depression phenotypes. Furthermore, the candidate genes themselves (with the possible exception of DRD2) were no more associated with depression phenotypes than genes chosen at random.”

Their study is the most comprehensive and well-powered investigation of historical candidate polymorphism and candidate gene hypotheses in depression to date.

Continued on Page 10

Those facing Alzheimer's disease would be well advised to stay up-to-date on ongoing research into factors that affect the progress of the disease and research-supported treatments that may not be used in clinical practice.

CLEAN AIR

House Plants That Absorb Toxins

These plants will eat formaldehyde and churn out fresh clean oxygen

DEBORAH MITCHELL

How would you like to breathe easier and cleaner at home or in your office? You can do so by adding some selected house plants to your environment. Certain house plants are better than others at adding oxygen to your living space and improving the overall air quality in that space.

House Plants Clean the Air

The science behind this suggestion has been around for decades and actually started with a trio of investigators with NASA and the Associated Landscape Contractors of America. They reported that specific house plants were good at removing off-gassing elements from building materials and furnishings as well as air pollutants.

Plants are a natural air purifier because they produce oxygen from carbon dioxide (which you exhale) while also helping remove toxins from the air. Tiny openings in the leaves take in air, and the plant absorbs the carbon dioxide and other substances from that air.

While the plant uses carbon dioxide to make food, it then releases oxygen and water back into the air. Pollutants, on the other hand, are translocated to the roots of the plant, where they may be broken down, used by the plant, or released into the soil.

The use of plants to remove harmful elements from the air is called phytoremediation. If you want to breathe easier at home or at work, feel good about the air you breathe and know you are providing yourself and your family with better air quality, then consider adding one or more of the following air-purifying plants to your home or office space. We will even tell you how to make that plant flourish so you can reap the most benefits from it.

Which House Plants Clean the Air

Aloe Vera: This succulent is probably best known for its ability to help in the treatment of burns and cuts. However, it also takes in benzene and formaldehyde. If you want a healthy aloe vera, keep it in a sunny place. It also should be planted in a pot with many drainage holes, because the plant does not do well in standing water.

Areca Palm: This tropical plant can live in just about any indoor environment. It has broad fronds that are adept at absorbing formaldehyde, toluene, and xylene. Be



Pollutants are translocated to the roots of the plant, where they may be broken down, used by the plant, or released into the soil.

aware, however, that the areca palm can top seven feet in height. If you purchase a small plant, it will grow about 6 to 10 inches a year in indirect sunlight. These plants do enjoy water and fertilizer.

Bamboo Palm: This plant loves the tropics as well as bright, indirect sunlight. Placing the bamboo palm in your environment will help remove trichloroethylene, a toxin that can damage the kidneys and liver.

Care for your bamboo palm by watering it when the soil is dry. Never overwater the palm or let it sit in water, or it will rot.

Boston Ferns: This frond-rich plant does more than improve oxygen levels. The Boston fern also assists in removing formaldehyde from the air. Exposure to formaldehyde is associated with irritation to the eyes, nose, and throat, which suggests having a few Boston ferns in any area prone to formaldehyde exposure could be helpful. Items associated with formaldehyde exposure include cigarettes, carpet, permanent press fabrics, cleaning agents, fertilizers, cosmetics, paints, varnishes, preserved foods, and insulation for electrical uses.

If you welcome a Boston fern into your environment, be prepared to give it a lot of space. The beautiful fronds enjoy soil that is rich in peat moss and is watered frequently and stays wet. You also should mist the plant once or twice a week for best growth.

Gerber (aka, Gerbera) Daisies: If you like to color-coordinate your space, then Gerber daisies could be a good choice. These flowers are available in a variety of colors (e.g., bright red or orange, yellow, medium and striking pink, peach, light purple, and white) and sport broad, green leaves that absorb benzene, formaldehyde, and trichloroethylene from the air.

Gerber daisies enjoy direct sunlight and moist soil. For best results, don't allow the soil to dry between waterings.

Peace Lilies: Do you know which pollutants are lurking in your home or office? If two of them are benzene and trichloroethylene, then it's time to get some peace lilies.

If you want to grow this beautiful plant, you should know they do not tolerate the cold and that they enjoy a warm, humid climate. They thrive in well-draining soil and indirect light.

Snake Plant (aka, mother-in-law's tongue): The snake plant comes in a combination of yellow and dark and light greens. It effectively removes formaldehyde, benzene, toluene, xylene, and trichloroethylene from the air. These toxins are often present in enclosed buildings.

This tough plant likes dry soil, so don't water it too often because the roots can easily rot. Avoid getting the leaves wet when watering. Snake plants prefer indirect light.

Spider Plant: If you want a plant that is super resilient and easy to care for, this is the one. Spider plants can absorb many different indoor pollutants while gracing your room with its long, flowing leaves.

Be sure to give your spider plant lots of bright yet indirect light. It does best in well-drained soil and when the soil is allowed to dry out between waterings.

Weeping Fig: This official tree of Bangkok will look great and perform well in any room, but especially those with carpeting and furniture that may be off-gassing. That's because the weeping fig helps remove pollutants from these items.

You can keep your weeping fig healthy by providing consistent temperatures and lots of indirect sunlight. Provide the plant with well-draining soil and only water it when the first two inches of soil are dry.

Bottom Line

Using house plants in your home or office is a great, eco-friendly way to clean the air of toxins.

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

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Get the Jump on Your Health With These Up and Coming Superfoods

2020 will bring attention to a fresh crop of superfoods ready to fuel your adventures all year long

DEVON ANDRE

Every year, the list of superfoods keeps growing, and while kale, goji berries, and quinoa have enjoyed some attention, the spotlight has shifted. 2020 will bring attention to other nutrient-dense, healthful foods for you to try.

Devon Andre holds a bachelor's of forensic science from the University of Windsor in Canada and a Juris Doctor from the University of Pittsburgh. This article was first published on Bel Marra Health.

Sea Vegetables

Two sea vegetables getting attention this year are Irish sea moss and bladderwrack. Irish sea moss is very high in potassium chloride, which may help relieve edema and promote healthy blood pressure. Bladderwrack might be useful for improving digestion, immunity, energy, and reducing inflammation.

You don't have to wait until 2020 to add these foods to your shopping list. They are available now and can fit in as a nice complement to the superfoods you're already eating.

Hemp Seeds

Hemp seeds are one of the few plant-based products featuring all nine essential amino acids, which means they may help with immune function. They have twice the protein of other popular seeds and are a rich source of omegas to keep you satiated. They can be sprinkled atop salads, oatmeal, or included in a smoothie.



Lemon Balm

Never heard of lemon balm? You're not alone. But this sweet-scented herb could blast onto the scene in the coming months. It may aid digestion by calming nerves in the gastrointestinal tract and liver, perhaps relieving bloating and gas. It can be purchased as a tincture or herbal tea.

Reishi Mushrooms

These mushrooms have been growing in popularity and are set to reach superfood status for their potential effects on anxiety, depression, and relaxation. Reishi powder can be added to tea, coffee, smoothies, or mushroom soup.

That Sick Feeling Might Actually Be an Emotion

Feeling lousy might help your body recover more quickly from disease

JIM BARLOW

That weary feeling that sets in with an illness is an emotion that helps you fight off infection, researchers say. Slack facial muscles and drooping eyelids appear early. Exhaustion, loss of appetite, and increased sensitivity to cold and pain come on. Those signs are among a long list of features that researchers have linked to the emotion of being sick, which the authors label lassitude, a now little-used term for weariness from 16th-century Latin.

In a paper in the journal Evolution and Human Behavior, researchers argue that the state of being sick qualifies as an emotion following a review of the literature on sickness behavior, most of which focused on behavioral and physiological changes in animals.

Feeling Sick to Feel Better

In the paper, the researchers merge the accrued knowledge from 130 published studies and proposed that lassitude is a complex adaptation, like the immune system, that evolved to help people fight infectious disease.

"The immune system clearly helps us fight off infections, but activating the immune system costs a lot of energy," said lead author Joshua Schrock, a doctoral student at the University of Oregon. "This cost creates a series of predicaments for the body's regulatory systems."

"Lassitude is the program that adjusts your body's regulatory systems to set them up for fighting infection," Schrock said.

“When threat levels are high, the system sends a signal to various motivational systems, configuring them in ways that facilitate effective immunity and pathogen clearance.”

researchers

"These adjustments make you feel sadder, more fatigued, more easily nauseated, less hungry, and more sensitive to cold and pain."

Lassitude, the researchers write, persists until the immune response subsides. During that response, the body calls upon various mechanisms to coordinate the fight against infection, which, they note, can trigger symptoms resembling psychological depression.

Changing Your Behavior

During the battle, lassitude coordinates adjustments to patterns of movement, risk avoidance, body temperature, appetite, and even how a person elicits caregiving behavior from social networks.

Lassitude, the researchers write, "modifies the cost-benefit structure of a wide range of decisions." Those who are ill place lower value on food and sex, for example, and often prefer to avoid social and physical risks.

"When threat levels are high, the system sends a signal to various motivational systems, configuring them in ways that facilitate effective immunity and pathogen clearance," the researchers write in their conclusion. "We believe that investigating the information-processing structure of lassitude will contribute to a more complete understanding of sickness behavior, much like the information-processing structure of hunger helps us understand feeding behavior."

While the paper focused primarily on illnesses that bacteria, viruses, parasitic worms, and protozoans trigger, they also theorized that other situations—such as injuries, poisoning, and chronic degenerative diseases—may present similar adaptive problems.

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You might feel terrible when you are ill, but that emotion could be just what you need.

SAM WORDLEY/SHUTTERSTOCK

How Long Should It Take to Reach Your Weight Goals?

When it comes to weight loss, slow and stead definitely wins the race

DEVON ANDRE

Unless you've been living under a rock, you're aware that weight influences several health conditions. High body weight is often associated with high cholesterol, inflammation, joint pain, and a number of other chronic illnesses. Of course, seeking liberation from the rock also means you've heard million-and-one gurus promising quick and healthy fat loss. But is losing fat at lightning speed good for you?

It most certainly is not. In fact, multiple studies have indicated that dropping fat quickly is detrimental to long-term health. Highly restrictive crash diets tend to lead to more future weight gain shortly after completion, leaving you worse off than you

were before.

For example, a close relative of mine used to exercise and make major dietary alterations to hit their goal as soon as possible. What started out as a goal of 15 pounds in three weeks turned into 20-30 because following each bout of rapid cutting, they would get fatter.

The ideal pace to cut digits from the scale is one-to-two pounds per week. So, if dropping 15 is the goal, budgeting 7-15 weeks is reasonable, safe, and sustainable.

Sustainable fat loss is achieved through lifestyle changes. Drinking more water, limiting processed foods, and eating more fruits, vegetables, healthy fats, and lean proteins are the way to go. Increasing activity can also help you burn calories. For

many, simply making these changes will be enough. When you hit a sticking point and the scale isn't moving, simply cut 250-500 calories per day or boost activity levels.

Doing all of this will allow you to keep weight off, and more importantly, lead to lower cholesterol, inflammation, and the risk of chronic illness.

The next time you think about dropping a few, think about sustainability, not speed. When it comes to reaching weight goals, slow and steady wins the race.

Devon Andre holds a bachelor's of forensic science from the University of Windsor in Canada and a Juris Doctor from the University of Pittsburgh. This article was first published on Bel Marra Health.



A healthy diet should include half a plate of fruits and vegetables.

More Plants and Less Meat Could Cut Brain Risks Later

If you are unsure how much meat to eat, a plate-shaped pie chart can help you figure it out

Sticking to a healthy diet with more plants and less meat in midlife could be associated with a reduced risk of cognitive impairment in old age, researchers report.

Researchers looked at the diet patterns of the nearly 17,000 middle-aged participants of the Singapore Chinese Health Study over a period of 20 years. Researchers scored the participants on how similar their diet patterns were to five high-quality diets: the alternative Mediterranean diet; the Alternate Healthy Eating Index 2010; the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension diet; the plant-based diet index; and the healthful plant-based diet index.

Dietary patterns rich in plant-based foods—including whole grains, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and legumes—and low in red meat and sugar-sweetened beverages, have been shown to reduce the risk of cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases.

The results revealed that participants with the most similarity to these dietary patterns had a significant reduction in risk of cognitive impairment—of 18 percent to 33 percent—compared with those with the least similarity.

People in Singapore currently lead the world in life expectancy, with life spans averaging 85 years. This, along with an aging population, has increased the need to identify and take measures to prevent the development of common conditions associated with old age such as cognitive impairment and dementia.

"Our study suggests that maintaining a healthy dietary pattern is important for the prevention of onset and delay of cognitive impairment," says Koh Woon Puay, principal investigator of the Singapore Chinese Health Study and a professor at Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health at the National University of Singapore and the Duke-NUS Medical School.

"Such a pattern is not about the restriction of a single food item but the composition of an overall pattern that recommends cutting back on red meats, especially if they are processed, and including lots of plant-based foods—vegetables, fruit, nuts, beans, whole grains—and fish."

The Health Promotion Board in Singapore (HPB) recommends eating across all food groups for a balanced and varied diet.

"A simple guide is to fill half our plate with fruit and vegetables, a quarter with whole grains such as brown rice and wholemeal bread, and the last quarter with protein foods such as bean products, seafood, and meat," advises Annie Ling, group director of the HPB Policy, Research, and Surveillance Division.

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BECOMING MINIMALIST

What Makes a Home Beautiful?

Square footage and fine furnishings are mere props to the action a home inspires

JOSHUA BECKER

I have a friend who was recently diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. An awful diagnosis for anyone, at any stage of life. But as a 48-year-old father of four, with two in elementary school, it has shaken everyone in our community. He's now in a daily battle to fight off cancer, provide for his family, and be a parent to his children as well as a husband to his wife.

In preparing themselves for the long days and years to come, my friend and his wife decided to downsize their home—moving from a 3,400 square foot home to 1,800. They saw the move as an opportunity to save money, time, energy, and effort for the journey ahead—a journey that would require strength, focus, energy, and intentionality.

They hadn't lived in their larger home for long before the diagnosis. In fact, I still remember the first time I visited—Christmas, last year. It was for a party and their home (the larger one) was decorated immaculately.

"Your new home is beautiful. Thank you for having us over," my wife and I told our hosts.

As the party attendees continued to arrive that evening, I watched as many had similar greetings: "Your house is gorgeous!" "This is stunning!" Customary greetings, I know, but these compliments were not empty words of praise—the house guests were genuinely impressed with their hosts' home.

We are, after all, a culture that loves big houses and expensive furnishings. Most people spend their lives, and most of their money pursuing bigger homes in nicer neighborhoods.

When our money, time, and energy is not spent accumulating and caring for things, we have money, time, and energy for people, adventures, and dreams.



These are the ideals we should strive for with the home we create: a safe harbor and an effective port of departure.

In fact, the average American home has nearly tripled in size during the last 60 years, all while the average American family has decreased in members. And if all this increased space isn't enough, 10 percent of us rent offsite storage and 25 percent are unable to park even one car in their garage.

But sometimes I wonder if these bigger homes and what we fill them with are actually benefiting our lives. And if they are not, are they worthy of our praise and admiration?

The concept of home as an ideal for safety, comfort, and belonging is one that resonates with almost everyone. But somewhere along the way, we began chasing a different ideal. "Home" became a place to upscale, store possessions, and chase a perfection portrayed in Pottery Barn catalogs and home-improvement reality shows.

But what is the purpose of "home" and what makes the concept beautiful in the first place?

Home is a place to come home to. It offers a place to relax and rest. It provides opportunity for time with family members—a safe harbor from the storms of life.

But home is also a port of departure when you're ready to brave the high seas once again. As John Shedd said, "A ship in harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for." Home offers us rest and security so we can live our best lives in the world outside—accomplishing the most good for the most amount of people.

These are the ideals we should strive for with the home we create: a safe harbor and an effective port of departure. We don't

need to constantly increase square footage to meet this ideal.

In fact, oftentimes, reducing the square footage and decluttering allows us to better realize those ideals. When our money, time, and energy is not spent accumulating and caring for things, we have money, time, and energy for people, adventures, and dreams.

Last week, my wife and I dropped off dinner at our friends' new, smaller home. It had been a long day for them full of scans, doctor visits, diagnoses, and treatments. We did not intend to stay long—they needed rest as much as they needed a fresh meal.

However, while dropping off the food, I asked my friend how he was liking his smaller home. He said, "It's great! I no longer have a mortgage payment because we removed that burden when we downsized. We're in a more stable position financially, which is important to me. Sure, we're still adjusting to living in smaller quarters as a family. But this house is easier to clean and take care of so I can focus more on things that matter. Most importantly, it's bringing us closer together as a family. And Joshua, that is the thing that means the most to me right now as I fight for my life and theirs."

I looked around the room one more time. I saw a family growing closer, better prepared in this smaller space for their difficult journey ahead. "Bob, I think it's beautiful."

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

CONNECT TO LEAD

The Importance of Building Rapport

Meaningful cooperation can't happen until we establish rapport

SCOTT MANN

In the mid-90s, I was going through the Special Forces qualification course, and the final exercise is called Robin Sage; the largest role-playing exercise in the world. We were a student team of Green Berets immersed into a fictional nation, Pineland, which was experiencing an insurgency.

An occupation force had moved in, and Green Beret teams were linking up with local partisans, farmers, bakers, and shop owners to help them fight back against the occupation.

Our goal was to advise a local guerrilla force against the enemy. The only problem was that we had not established rapport with the locals. As the team leader, it was my job to meet with the guerrilla chief and convince him to invite us into his camp.

The first couple of times invariably he'd ask me a question about Pineland. I'd mess it up, he would get angry and throw me out. It took time and a radical mindset shift to finally make a connection. This is true for all business

leaders, entrepreneurs, and anyone who has to deal with people. We are always faced with situations in which we have to establish rapport.

Rapport is the initial connection in which two parties understand each other and connect. If you don't develop it, they won't connect with you, they won't buy from you, and they won't invest in you. They'll keep their distance and it's going to be hard to close the trust gap.

The reality is that we're social creatures and we're not going to do anything unless we have a human connection. History is full of strategic leaders who understood this principle, including T.E. Lawrence, who mobilized an entire Badu nation and defeated the Ottoman Empire. He was highly decorated for valor, but history doesn't remember him for valor. He's remembered for the skillset of interpersonal connection that got those tribesmen mobilized to take action.

Active listening, storytelling, interpersonal skills, and being present in the conversation are skill



Once we've formed a genuine connection with someone, it is much easier to get to work on our shared goals.

sets that are typically grouped under "soft skills." It's sometimes harmful to call these tools "soft skills" because most leaders view that as weak and they push it aside. That's why I prefer to call them "Lawrencian skills" and they require a very intentional shift in mindset to achieve.

You can use Lawrencian skills to shift your mindset and establish rapport. You need to be able to understand and identify what it is that allows you to establish rapport with someone very different than you; maybe a client

who's upset, or a client you're meeting for the first time. Are you practicing that skill? If not, you're just relying on instinct. Train and prepare for what it takes to build a rapport mindset.

The number of Green Berets who will walk into a key leader engagement without preparation is astounding, yet it's the most strategic thing that they'll do on the mission. The same is true with business. Business leaders will walk into a meeting to meet people for the first time and they haven't prepared. You have to do

the homework before the legwork.

The reason that I got thrown out of the guerrilla camp is that I wasn't trying to meet the chief's goals. I was trying to sell him on mine. He wasn't interested in that. Reciprocity drives human action, and we're not going to feel a reciprocal obligation to do something unless we feel like we're understood and our goals are being met. So, whether it's a negotiation for a six-figure deal, a job, or talking to your kids about coming home by curfew, meet their goals, then yours.

It takes an intentional mindset to get to where you can build rapport that results in deep connections and relationships that ultimately culminate in loyalty and reciprocity.

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

Parents of Mentally Strong Children Don't Do These Things

Resilience is like a muscle—It needs to be worked if it's going to get stronger

JONATHAN MILTIMORE

My five-year-old was a blubbering, hot mess. He tackled kindergarten fine nine months before, but the first day of summer camp was too much for him. "I don't want to go. I don't want to go," he moaned, sobbing fat crocodile tears.

Most parents have been in situations like this. It's one of the toughest jobs of being a parent, helping kids through situations like this. But nudging them through is important.

Resiliency—in both children and adults—is achieved by confronting the challenges our brain and body want to shrink from. Maybe it's getting on the school bus. Maybe, for adults, it's applying for one more job after being rejected a dozen times that month. Maybe it's facing a scary test result or a bully. Whatever the challenge is, the important thing is recognizing you can face it. Both history and research offer evidence of a near-infinite human capacity to endure hardship and confront obstacles, even terrifying ones.

"The human capacity for burden is like bamboo," author Jodi Picoult wrote in her bestselling novel "My Sister's Keeper," "far more flexible than you'd ever believe at first glance."

Raising Resilient Children

However, numerous cultural trends suggest we're forgetting this crucial lesson, at least as it applies to raising our kids. There's helicopter parenting, which shows that many parents struggle to get out of the way and just let kids play. There's also the self-esteem movement, which erupted in the 1980s and seeks to shelter kids from criticism, failure, and the adverse consequences of their actions. In many schools, it's now verboten to have best friends lest someone's feelings get hurt. And we've all heard of "everyone gets a trophy."

As a father of three little kids, I understand the instinct to want to shield children from the harsh realities of life. It's not easy telling your little girl to wipe away the tears and get back on. But it is important to do so.

Amy Morin knows a few things about hardship. She was widowed at just 26 years of age. Despite the tragedy she suffered, Morin went on to become a psychotherapist, columnist, and author. She says a key to raising resilient children is avoiding the many unhealthy parenting practices that have grown common in our society.

These practices, she says, rob children of mental strength. Resilience is like a muscle. It needs to be worked if it's going to get stronger.

"Mental strength is what helps kids bounce back from setbacks and it gives them the strength to keep going, even when they're plagued with self-doubt," writes Morin, who also teaches psychology at Northeastern University in Boston. "A strong mental muscle is the key to helping kids reach their greatest potential in life."

Writing at Inc., Morin enumerated a long list of things parents of mentally strong children don't do. Here are 12 of them. (Note: Descriptions have been abridged.)



Show your kids that the best way to conquer fear is to face those fears head-on.

duties aren't overburdened. Instead, they're gaining the mental strength they need to become responsible citizens.

1. Condoning a Victim Mentality

Rejection, failure, and unfairness are a part of life. Refuse to attend your kids' pity parties. Teach them that no matter how tough or unjust their circumstances, they can always take positive action.

2. Parenting Out of Guilt

Show your kids that even though you feel guilty sometimes—and all good parents do—you're not going to allow your uncomfortable emotions to get in the way of making wise decisions.

3. Making Their Kids the Center of the Universe

If you make your entire life revolve around your kids, they'll grow up thinking everyone should cater to them. And self-absorbed, entitled adults aren't likely to get very far in life.

4. Allowing Fear to Dictate Their Choices

Although keeping your kids inside a protective bubble will spare you a lot of anxiety, playing it too safe teaches your child that fear must be avoided at all times. Show your kids that the best way to conquer fear is to face those fears head-on.

5. Giving Their Kids Power Over Them

Letting kids dictate what the family is going to eat for dinner or where the family is going on vacation gives kids more power than they are developmentally ready to handle. Treating kids like an equal—or the boss—actually robs them of mental strength.

6. Expecting Perfection

Expecting your kids to perform well is healthy. But expecting them to be perfect will backfire. Teach your kids that it's OK to fail and it's OK not to be great at everything they do.

7. Letting Their Kids Avoid Responsibility

Kids who perform age-appropriate

Resiliency—in both children and adults—is achieved by confronting the challenges our brain and body want to shrink from.

8. Shielding Their Kids From Pain

Hurt feelings, sadness, and anxiety are part of life. And letting kids experience those painful feelings gives them opportunities to practice tolerating discomfort.

9. Feeling Responsible for Their Kids' Emotions

Cheering your kids up when they're sad and calming them down when they're upset means you take responsibility for regulating their emotions. Kids need to gain emotional competence so they can learn to manage their own feelings.

10. Preventing Their Kids From Making Mistakes

Correcting your kids' math homework, double-checking to make sure they've packed their lunch, and constantly reminding them to do their chores won't do them any favors. Natural consequences can be some of life's greatest teachers.

11. Confusing Discipline With Punishment

Punishment involves making kids suffer for their wrongdoing. Discipline, however, is about teaching them how to do better in the future.

Raising a child who fears "getting in trouble" isn't the same as raising a child who wants to make good choices.

12. Taking Shortcuts to Avoid Discomfort

Although giving in to a whining child or doing your kids' chores for them will make your life a little easier right now, those shortcuts instill unhealthy habits in your kids.

The list is helpful and full of wisdom, but I also have to admit that it was somewhat convicting for me. Many things listed here are things I do with some regularity (No. 3, No. 5, and No. 9, if you really want to know).

Alas, parents are no more perfect than children. But the larger point is that parents should heed Morin's advice, at least if they're interested in raising children who will grow into self-sufficient, responsible young adults.

Life is a journey. We all will experience failure and pain, shame and loss. We will all face challenges at one time or another that will feel insurmountable. It's how we choose to face these challenges that will determine who we are.

"The voyage of the best ship is a zigzag line of a hundred tacks," Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in his timeless work "Self-Reliance." "Character teaches above our wills. Men imagine that they communicate their virtue or vice only by overt actions, and do not see that virtue or vice emit a breath every moment."

Keeping children from experiencing conflict, challenges, and failure might make parents feel better, but it's not doing their offspring any favors.

Jonathan Miltimore is the managing editor of FEE.org, where this article was originally published.



MINDSET MATTERS

The Philosophy of Success

Being certain of a goal, if not when or how it will be reached, keeps you moving forward

RANDY TAYLOR

We begin life with a curious fascination in what is possible and what we can become. We all have dreams, passions and thoughts. Some blossom into brilliant reality while others wither and die before ever taking form.

The constant focus on a prediction of a goal arrival is what creates the belief that it is not happening for us and ultimately leads to stopping what would have brought success.

Many of us look upon the success of those with lives lived with purpose and success and wonder why not us? There is a reason. It stems from the philosophy we take into the process.

All dreams and goals begin as a simple thought. Emotion then takes over and pushes us to take the first step. That first step is what transcends thought into the beginning of physical reality. What truly creates success is the continuation of activity, moving with purpose in the necessary direction to see it through. What stops this continuous action is what steals away our dreams.

We don't get to know how it is going to happen. We don't get to know how and when opportunities will present. We don't get to know the timeline. When I started my career in radio in 1983, part-time at \$4.25 per hour, I had no way of knowing how it was going to happen or when.

All I knew was what I wanted and I kept moving towards it one day at a time. That

simple process took me to the number one radio station in the country, which eventually led to launching a company and career in personal and professional growth that has allowed me to create more than I ever thought possible.

One of the great philosophical examples of what it takes to actually realize the goals we set comes from a prisoner of war during Vietnam.

John Stockdale was the highest-ranking officer held in the Hanoi Hilton. Over the 8 years he was there he was beaten and starved, tortured and deprived. He survived when almost no one who entered this camp did.

When interviewed years later, he was asked why it was that he survived. He said, "That was easy, the others were the optimists." When pressed for an explanation he said, "The others would say, "Hang in there, we will be out by Christmas," and Christmas would come and go. Then they would state that they believed they would be out by Easter, and that day would come and go. Over time it eventually broke their spirit and they died." John Stockdale said the moment he was captured he made the decision that he didn't know how and he didn't know when, but he absolutely knew that one day he would be free and that's what saved his life.

The constant focus on a prediction of a goal arrival is what creates the belief that it is not happening for us and ultimately leads to stopping what would have brought success.

So therein lies the truth. If we can't predict where our next phone call or opportunity will come from, how could we possibly predict when our goals and dreams will happen? Putting a false estimate of next year or next Thursday makes as much sense as predicting the weather on any random February day in 2011.

Adopt this philosophy "I don't know how



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and I don't get to know when but I absolutely know and believe it will happen." If you do, one day others will look upon your life and wonder how it was possible for you.

Success comes to those who keep moving toward it.

Randy Taylor survived poverty, parent alcoholism, and life on the streets to become the drive home talk show host of CFRB 1010 and as the host of Summit of Life on Global Television in Canada. He has won several national broadcast awards and wrote a book on leadership philosophy called "Life Before Can't." His seminars, personal coaching, and consulting have attracted a client list that includes Aim Trimark, Investors Group, the government, Remax Realty, and others.

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