

THE EPOCH TIMES

MIND & BODY

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Gratitude is the antidote to envy, anger, greed, and entitlement.

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Is the Way You Breathe Making You Anxious?

Breathing sets off a cascade of physical changes in the body that promote either stress or relaxation

KIRA M. NEWMAN

Scrolling social media, amid frantic election-related posts and news of escalating COVID-19 cases, you may have come across a friend reminding everyone to just breathe. In online magazine Greater Good's advice for Americans post-election, University of California-Berkeley professor John A. Powell (as he prefers to style his name) first suggested we "take a breath or two; get grounded in body, mind, and spirit."

But can just breathing really make a difference?

In the new book "Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art," journalist James Nestor argues that modern humans have become pretty bad at this most basic act of living. We breathe through our mouths and into our chests, and we do it way too fast. There's even a phenomenon called "email apnea," when multitasking office workers breathe irregularly and shallowly, or even hold their breath for half a minute or more while glued to their devices.

Besides all the worrisome health problems this may cause—detailed pointedly in Nestor's book—our ineptitude at breathing may have another big consequence: contributing to our anxiety and other mental health problems.

"The rate and depth we breathe at is a huge determinant of our mental state," said Elissa Epel, a professor at the University of California-San Francisco.

Researchers such as Epel are exploring this by using breathing techniques—some new, some ancient—to help nervous people stave off anxiety. What they're discovering is that breathing, something we do all the time anyway, could be an overlooked key to finding more calm and peace.

How Breathing Can Calm Us

We often try to tame anxiety by changing our thoughts—questioning the worst-case scenarios in our heads, interrupting rumination with some kind of distraction, or going to therapy.

But breathing offers a different approach, bypassing the complexities of the mind and targeting the body directly.

Continued on **Page 7**

The Practice of Gratitude

Cultivating gratitude takes effort but pays off with profound effects on your health and happiness

TATIANA DENNING

grati-tude — /ˈgrɑːt(y)oʊd/ - the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness

It's been called a virtue, an attitude, an emotion, and even a skill.

Poets such as Ralph Waldo Emerson opined its merit, saying, "Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you, and to give thanks continuously," while philosophers such as the stoic Cicero espoused, "Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others."

Of course, religions have long emphasized the importance of gratitude. In the East, Buddha said, "A person of integrity is grate-

Even in hardship, we should be grateful for the lessons contained therein.

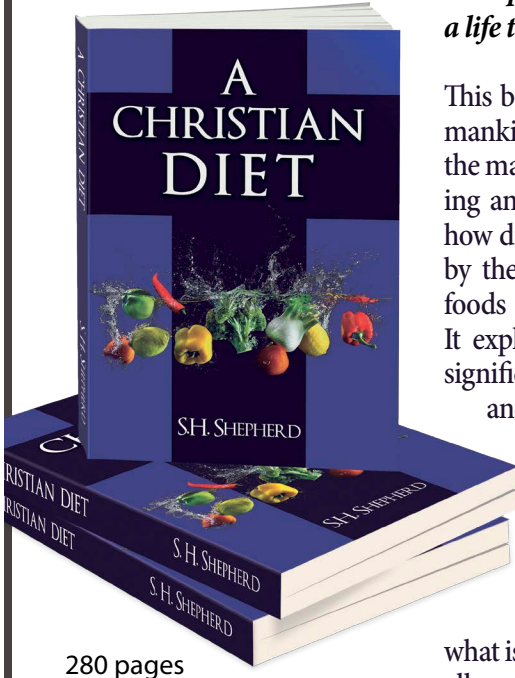
ful and thankful" (Katannu Sutta), while in the West, the Bible says, "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

In fact, its importance is valued so much that cultures around the world have holiday celebrations focused on gratitude; celebrations such as the Moon Festival in China, Sikkot in Israel, Erntedankfest in Germany, and our own American Thanksgiving, to name but a few.

As we gather with family and friends this holiday season, and pause to practice the age-old adage of counting our blessings, perhaps we should ask ourselves a question: How often do we really practice gratitude, without a holiday to remind us?

Continued on **Page 6**

Christians have a diet, one given to them by God



280 pages
Available on Amazon.com

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. He also gave to mankind a simple diet. He then showed the human race the way to live and the path of salvation through Jesus Christ. Jesus' example and teachings lead us into a simpler life, a life that is better for us in numerous ways.

This book explains why the first diet ever given to mankind is the best possible diet for us. It describes the many health dangers of our current ways of eating and why they must be changed. It describes how diseases come about and how they are healed by the foods that have the powers that heal, the foods that are tailored to our biological makeup. It explores the supernatural design and spiritual significance of this diet. It provides the incentives and encouragement needed to change not only our diets, but the very way that we live. So strong are the effects that foods have on our lives.

God knows us far better than we know ourselves. He knows what we need and what is best for us. When we abide by His Word, we allow ourselves to live as He intended for us to live.

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CHINESE WISDOM FOR SEASONAL LIVING

Winter's Arrival Is a Time to Bask in the Sun, Eat Plenty of Ginger, and Recharge

Solar Term: 'Winter Commences' (Nov. 7–Nov. 21)

MOREEN LIAO

A solar term is a period of about two weeks and is based on the sun's position in the zodiac. Solar terms form the traditional Chinese calendar system. The calendar follows the ancient Chinese belief that living in accordance with nature will enable one to live a harmonious life. This article series explores each of the year's 24 solar terms, offering guidance on how to best navigate the season.



YULIA GUST/SHUTTERSTOCK

We can better greet the arrival of winter with energizing foods like mushroom and ginger.

Winter Commences (Nov. 7–21) is the first solar term of winter. Far from being too cold to enjoy, now is the time for harvesting grains and roots, savoring cold-hardy chrysanthemums, and partaking of (or making) warming wines.

The traditional Chinese calendar system recognizes winter a full six weeks earlier than what most Americans know as winter's start, but we can already see proof in the colder parts of the world that water is starting to freeze, and frost is starting to blanket the ground.

For wildlife and people, it's the season to hibernate and conserve energy.

Plants that live above the ground have mostly stopped growing due to the cold, while grains and root vegetables are at their peak. For wildlife and people, it's the season to hibernate and conserve energy.

Now is a good time to make wine, or enjoy wines made in previous seasons, as the temperatures are perfect to facilitate winemaking without risking the further fermentation that turns it to vinegar.

And a special treat, beautiful chrysanthemums are in full bloom during this time.

The abundant petals of certain species of this flower can be enjoyed as a tea, which is especially gorgeous to admire in a glass teapot.

Petals may also be cooked into a hot soup or stew, together with meat or beans. Chinese chrysanthemum is good to cleanse the lungs and blood, and to prevent buildup inside the blood vessels.

If you want to try cooking with chrysanthemum, make the soup base, and add the petals at the end of the cooking process.

Although it is getting too cold outdoors for most plants to grow, there's a nice and aromatic one we can keep indoors around this time—daffodils.

Now is the perfect time to plant daffodil bulbs. Water them throughout the winter and they will be ready in early spring with both aroma and pretty flowers. The flower will lift your mood in the grey, cold days with anticipation for its delicate scent and elegant shapes.

Impact on People

It's common to feel depressed around this time of the year. The body feels cold, the sky is dark, and we feel sleepy.

A nice energy recharge is highly recommended. Try basking in the midday sun, drinking quality herbal tea, or listening to classical music such as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven,

Epoch Times contributor Moreen Liao is a descendant of four generations of traditional Chinese medicine doctors. She is also a certified aromatherapist, former dean of the New Directions Institute of Natural Therapies in Sydney, and the founder of Ausganica, a certified organic cosmetic brand. Visit Ausganica.com.au

Microbiome May Be Linked to Dementia, Parkinson's, and MS

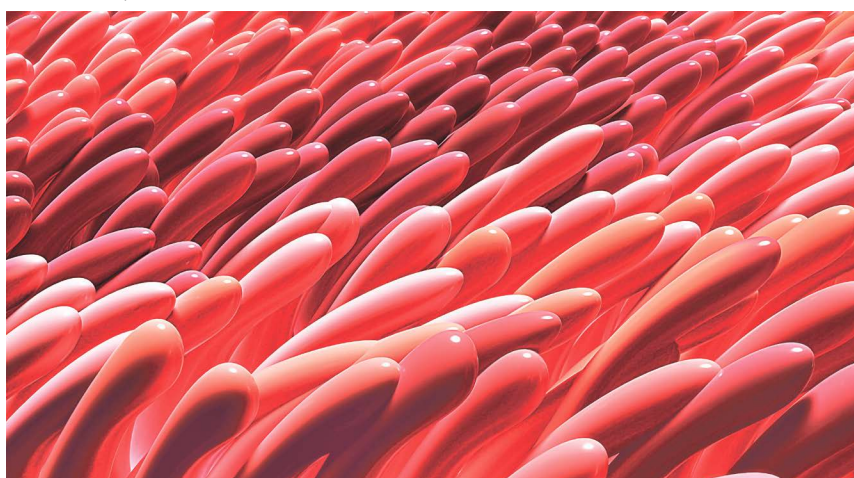
The health of the microbes in your stomach could be a deciding factor in your long-term neurological health

LYNNE A BARKER & CAROLINE JORDAN

The gut-brain axis is known to play a role in irritable bowel syndrome, celiac disease, and colitis.



DANIEL OAKFIELD/SHUTTERSTOCK



DANIEL OAKFIELD/SHUTTERSTOCK

We may think of our intestines as simple tubes, but at a microscopic level, they are more complex.

stomach bug or poor diet can be more easily fixed than a disease or illness such as cancer, obesity, or diabetes.

Scientists have investigated the impact of dysbiosis on different neurological disorders, including Alzheimer's, Huntington's, Parkinson's disease, and multiple sclerosis, with early research finding a link between the two. For example, researchers found that gut dysbiosis, often as constipation, is common in patients with Parkinson's disease. Gut problems may be present several decades before typical symptoms appear, with evidence showing the microbiome is altered early in the condition. Research also shows that the mix of bacterial species present in the gut is different compared to people without the disease.

Gut dysbiosis, in the form of diarrhea and constipation, is also associated with multiple sclerosis (MS). Researchers have found that patients with MS have a different microbiome compared to those who don't have the condition. Other research has found that patients with dementia-like conditions, including mild cognitive impairment and AL-

zheimer's disease, have dysbiosis compared to those without memory problems.

All of this early research suggests a disrupted microbiome contributes to the development of neurological disorders by negatively affecting the gut-brain axis. It does this by transmitting abnormal proteins and pathogens along the vagal nerve route. However, the initial cause of microbiome disruption in those with neurological conditions is not yet known.

But on a positive note, our gut microbiome can be modified. A lifestyle that includes daily exercise, a diet rich in fiber, and limited stress, alcohol use, and smoking, can bolster microbiome health. Using a probiotic can also help.

It's currently uncertain whether daily probiotic use can help prevent neurological diseases, which is something we're currently investigating. We are the first team to investigate probiotic use in Parkinson's disease patients to study their microbiome before and after use.

As our knowledge increases, microbiome-targeted therapies might present a new way of treating or minimizing diseases. Probiotic use is a promising approach because there are few adverse effects, medications are likely to be better absorbed in a healthier gut environment, it's less complicated than changing your diet, and is quick and easy to implement. It is early days, and there is still much to learn, but based on current research it appears that gut microbiome health is more intimately tied to our brain health than we imagine.

Lynne A Barker is an associate professor in cognitive neuroscience at Sheffield Hallam University in the UK. Caroline Jordan is a psychologist at the Centre for Behavioural Science and Applied Psychology at Sheffield Hallam University. This article was first published on The Conversation.

The Relationship Between Diabetes, Kidney Disease, and High Blood Pressure

MAT LECOMPTÉ

Diabetes, kidney disease, and high blood pressure are a triple threat to many American's who may be unaware. For those diagnosed with one of these health problems, it is crucial to understand the association between all three to reduce their risk of developing a second one of these conditions.

This interplay of conditions usually begins with diabetes, which can affect small blood vessels. This can then result in hypertension, and that can result in kidney disease. "It is essentially a vicious circle," says Dr. Vivek Bhalla, past

Health care professionals agree that many people can reduce the risk of disease by living a healthy lifestyle.

chair of the American Heart Association's Kidney in Cardiovascular Disease Council.

The cycle begins with diabetes, causing kidneys to become less efficient at filtering blood and stiffening blood vessels. This leads to high blood pressure. High blood pressure accelerates kidney disease, which is similar to throwing kerosene on a fire. High blood pressure worsens and leads to many heart-related problems.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it is estimated that 37 percent of adults in the United States who have been diagnosed with diabetes also have chronic kidney disease. The National Kidney Foundation also estimates up to 40 percent of people with Type 2 diabetes eventually will develop kidney failure.

Unfortunately, for many people, this cycle can go on without them even knowing. Most people with

Type 2 diabetes don't receive a diagnosis for about five years into having the disease. High blood pressure is widely known as the "silent killer," and kidney disease has no symptoms until it is almost end-stage.

New Generation of Drugs

Research has shown that one way to stop this vicious cycle is through a new generation of diabetes drugs. One type known as SGLT2 inhibitors works by preventing blood sugar from being absorbed by the kidneys. Another type called GLP-1 receptor agonists mimics a hormone that helps the pancreas produce insulin. They both promote and support healthy blood glucose levels.

These drugs are "game-changing therapies," said Dr. Janani Ranganaswami, writer for AHA scientific statement on the drugs. Not only do the medicines dramatically cut deaths from kidney disease,

but studies also show they can reduce rates of heart failure, stroke, and death from cardiovascular causes. Multiple trials looking at patients with varying risk profiles have shown these benefits pretty consistently.

Of course, no drug is without potential side effects.

Health care professionals agree that many people can reduce the risk of disease by living a healthy lifestyle. A healthy diet is the best way to reduce the risk of diabetes. This is also a good way to reduce high blood pressure and prevent kidney disease. It is not easy to achieve, but it is possible, and it just may be the key to preventing all three conditions—diabetes, high blood pressure, and kidney disease.

Mat Lecompte is a freelance health and wellness journalist. This article was first published on Bel Marra Health.

The Simple Eating Hack That Could Prevent Most Diseases Including Blindness

JOSEPH MERCOLA

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a leading cause of blindness in the United States, is said to be a disease associated with aging but Dr. Chris Knobbe believes it's mostly related to diet.

Nine years of extensive research and investigation has led Knobbe to conclude that AMD is driven by nutrient deficiencies and toxicity caused by processed foods.

Knobbe, an ophthalmologist, is the founder and president of the Cure AMD Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to the prevention of AMD.

If Knobbe is correct, and his data and biochemical analysis suggests he is, it would line up with what we know about the most common chronic diseases today, including Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.

The root of the problem lies in mitochondrial dysfunction, which is caused by the excessive consumption of the so-called Standard American Diet, including toxic industrially processed seed oils (incorrectly called "vegetable oils"), refined flour, refined added sugars, and trans fats. Laying out his case in an ALLDOCS presentation, Knobbe noted that these substances make up a large portion of the average American diet.

Chronic Metabolic and Degenerative Disease 'Didn't Exist'

According to Knobbe, chronic metabolic and degenerative disease "clearly didn't exist 125 years ago," at least not nearly to the extent it does today. Knobbe bases that statement on a study by Dr. David Jones and colleagues, published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 2012. The study looked at the history of disease over the past 200 years, comparing the top 10 causes of death in the United States from 1900 to 2010.

In 1900, the top four causes of death were infectious in nature: pneumonia/influenza, tuberculosis, gastrointestinal infections, and cardiac valvular disease. The latter is classified as heart disease, but Knobbe says: "This wasn't coronary artery type heart disease. This was cardiac valvular disease driven by syphilis, endocarditis, and rheumatic fever... It was infectious still."

By 2010, this had all changed, with chronic diseases replacing infectious diseases as the top killers.

"Today, heart disease, cancer, stroke, COPD, Alzheimer's disease, Type 2 diabetes, kidney disease, all chronic diseases account for seven of the top 10 causes of death," says Knobbe.

In reviewing the data, Knobbe found that diabetes of any type was rare in the 19th century, but it increased 25-fold in a period of 80 years.

He also cites data that found the obesity rate in the 19th century was 1.2 percent. By 1960, it had already risen to 13 percent—an 11-fold increase. It continues to climb steadily to this day.

He notes that if current trends hold, half of adults in the United States will be obese by 2030.

"So the increase looks something like ... a 33-fold increase already in 115 years."

That change in disease tracks another major change—the shift of the American diet.

"That's the theme of this, essentially."

"And I will submit to you that this has really been a global human experiment that began in 1866, it didn't begin in 1980, you know, with our low-fat, low saturated-fat dietary guidelines, it began in the 19th century and nobody gave informed consent of us. Not one of us knew what we were getting into and most of us still don't."

That change was the introduction of polyunsaturated vegetable oil.

4 Primary Processed Food Culprits

The four primary components that make up processed foods that are, in turn, contributing to chronic diseases such as AMD, are sugar, industrially processed seed oils, refined flour, and trans fats. "Sugar has been in the food supply for hundreds of years, but between 1822 and 1999, sugar increased 17-fold ... Cottonseed oil, the world's first, highly polyunsaturated vegetable oil, introduced right here in the good old US of A in 1866. The entire world, or at least 99.9-plus percent of it had never seen a polyunsaturated vegetable oil, ever."

The other major change was the invention of the roller mill, sometime around 1880, in Minneapolis.

"[The] roller mill gives us refined white, wheat flour, which is a nutrient deficient food. And then fourth, 1911, Proctor and

Gamble introduced Crisco. That's trans fats, they're hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated vegetable oils."

"By 2009, our own USDA reports that those four foods make up 63 percent of the American diet—63 percent. That's the recipe for disaster."

As the consumption of processed foods rose, so too did chronic diseases. According to Knobbe's research, AMD was rare from 1851 to about 1930, but had reached epidemic proportions by the 1970s. As of 2020, 196 million people worldwide suffer from AMD.

"And what we always see is that the processed foods come first and then the AMD hits later," Knobbe says.

"It's always this way. There's a temporal relationship. It's at least 30 years of this consumption, probably closer to 50."

Knobbe says it takes a certain amount of time on this diet for these chronic diseases to develop. There is also a dosage relationship, meaning the more of these foods that are eaten, the more disease that is seen.

"I believe if you look at all of our data, this becomes nearly a mathematical certainty that this relationship between food and macular degeneration exists."

Knobbe also cites the work of Weston A. Price, the dentist who wrote the classic book "Nutrition and Physical Degeneration." In the 1900s, Price did extensive research on the link between oral health and physical diseases.

He was one of the major nutritional pioneers of all time, and his research revealed that refined sugar and white flour were the primary agents in tooth decay. In many ways, Knobbe is the 21st-century equivalent of Price.

Diet-Related Macular Degeneration

Knobbe believes "age-related" macular degeneration should be called diet-related macular degeneration instead. He says that out of all the components in processed foods, polyunsaturated vegetable oils are the greatest contributor. Comparing them to "biological poisons," Knobbe notes that industrially processed seed oils are not only nutrient deficient but also pro-oxidative and

pro-inflammatory.

To produce these oils, the seeds must first be crushed, heated, and pressed.

"When vegetable oils are produced ... oil seeds are crushed, heated, pressed. They go through about four or five heatings ...

It is vital that you reduce your intake of industrially processed seed oils as much as you can.

"Then they go to a petroleum drive, hexane, solvent bath, right? And then it's steamed, degummed ... then they go through a chemical process of being alkalized, bleached, and deodorized before they go into this bottle—and we think they're healthy."

"They're extraordinarily oxidized. They're toxic. Aldehydes in these, these are literally poison. These are extremely noxious agents."

These oils replaced healthier animal fats that had previously been used. He cites the work of nutrition pioneer Elmer V. McCollum, who, in the early 20th century, fed rats diets enriched with either 5 percent cottonseed oil or 1.5 percent butterfat.

"This is good butter," Knobbe points out. "It's coming from pasture-raised cattle grazing on grass, right? That's all they had back then."

Stark differences were observed among the rats, with the cottonseed oil group experiencing stunted growth, illness, and shorter survival. The rats fed butterfat fared much better, growing to about twice the size of the other rats and living about twice as long. The fat-soluble vitamins A, D, and K2 in the pastured butterfat were a likely factor in the marked health differences.

"We need them to maintain our health and prevent degenerative disease."

Knobbe says these vitamins are essential to maintain health and prevent degenerative disease.

"There's absolutely no question in my mind—all the data supports this—that macular degeneration patients are vitamin A-, D-, and K2-deficient."

Knobbe cites data from native populations around the globe, including the Maasai tribe in Eastern Africa, inhabitants of Papua New



Guinea, and Tokelau in the South Pacific, which had very different diets with one major similarity: "In general ... they have no refined sugar, no refined wheat, no processed foods, no vegetable oils."

They also have little or no macular degeneration.

Vegetable Oils Cause Mitochondrial Failure, Insulin Resistance

AMD is ultimately a disease process rooted in mitochondrial dysfunction, insulin resistance, and the catastrophic cascade of health declines are triggered by the long-term consumption of vegetable oils (omega-6) and other processed foods.

Knobbe explains the complex process in his presentation, describing how omega-6 fatty acids in this diet induce nutrient deficiencies and causes "a catastrophic lipid peroxidation cascade."

This damages a phospholipid called cardio lipid in the mitochondrial membranes.

"And this leads to electron transport chain failure ... which

causes mitochondrial failure and dysfunction."

Mitochondria are the powerhouses of your cells and provide most of the chemical energy needed for your cells' biochemical reactions. When they malfunction, they can create reactive oxygen species, warns Knobbe. These substances are highly reactive chemical molecules, also called free radicals, that wreak havoc in your body.

These free radicals then feed back into peroxidation cascades, which is when those free radicals "steal" electrons from the lipids in cell membranes and start a chain reaction that damages the cell. Lipids are the main constituents of your cells.

"So, you're filling up your fat cells and your mitochondrial membranes with omega-6, and these are going to peroxidize because of the fact that they are polyunsaturated."

"All right, the next thing that happens is insulin resistance,

which leads to metabolic syndrome, Type 2 diabetes, nonal-

The four primary components that make up processed foods that are, in turn, contributing to chronic diseases such as AMD, are sugar, industrially processed seed oils, refined flour, and trans fats.

coholic fatty liver disease. When the mitochondria fail, you get reduced fatty acid and beta oxidation, meaning you can't burn these fats properly for fuel."

If you can't burn fats for fuel, you have to depend on carbohydrates solely. That leaves you feeling tired and gaining weight, warns Knobbe.

"This is a powerful mechanism for obesity," he says.

"So, the energy failure at the cellular level leads to nuclear mitochondrial DNA mutations, and this leads to cancers. Three weeks on a high-PUFA diet causes heart failure in rats—three weeks."

This process also leads to a defective form of apoptosis, which is normally the healthy process of cell death, and necrosis, which is cell death due to traumatic injury, warns Knobbe.

"And of course, that's how you get disorders like AMD and Alzheimer's."

Knobbe has also been studying the toxic aldehydes that result from omega-6 fats. When you consume an omega-6 fat, it first reacts with a hydroxyl radical or peroxide radical, producing a lipid hydroperoxide.

This lipid hydroperoxide then rapidly degenerates into toxic aldehydes, of which there are hundreds, which in turn lead to cytotoxicity, genotoxicity, mutagenicity carcinogenicity, and more, along with being obesogenic, at very low doses.

Ancestral Diet Key to AMD Prevention

According to Knobbe, there were only 50 cases of dietary blindness described across the globe between 1851 and 1930, some of which were likely other diseases. This skyrocketed to an estimated 196 million cases in 2020. Dr. Knobbe believes that by following an ancestral diet, rich in grass-fed meat and poultry, pastured dairy, wild-caught fish, vegetables, nuts, and seeds, the majority of AMD cases would disappear.

"Could modernized processed foods drive this disease? That's the question. I mean, is it as simple as this, you know, could this difference be due to diet and diet alone?" Knobbe asked. "I will submit to you that everything I have found so far indicates that it is, and I can't find anything that doesn't support this concept."

For more details, Knobbe discusses more of this eye-opening information in his book, "Ancestral Dietary Strategy to Prevent and Treat Macular Degeneration," as well as via his website, on CureAMD.org.

Knobbe doesn't profit from his book or his work with Cure AMD. The information he is trying to get out could turn the tide on the disease he sees so often.

"Today, about 534 people will go blind due to AMD. They've al-

ready lost vision in their first eye. They'll lose vision in their second eye. And I think this is a travesty because I believe it's all preventable. So, our mission at Cure AMD Foundation is to prevent and treat AMD through ancestral dietary strategy advocacy. And we need more scientific research in order to convince all of us and our peers."

Knobbe believes 'age-related' macular degeneration should be called diet-related macular degeneration instead.

A Strategy to Implement

It is vital that you reduce your intake of industrially processed seed oils as much as you can. This means eliminating all of the following oils: soy, corn, canola, safflower, sunflower, peanut. Olive and avocado oil should also be on the list as more than 80 percent of these are adulterated. But even if they weren't, it simply isn't worth it to have high levels of olive oil as it is loaded with the omega-6 fat called linoleic acid.

It will also be important to avoid nearly all processed foods as it is the rare processed food that doesn't include these toxic oils. Nearly every fast food restaurant is also guilty of using high levels of these toxic fats. This is why it is so important to prepare as much of your food as you can in your home so you can know what you are eating.

Most health "experts," including many I have previously interviewed, simply don't understand how much more dangerous these oils are than sugar. These fats become embedded in your cell membranes and stay there for years wreaking havoc on your health.

This is one of the reasons why a high fat diet can be harmful. If it is loaded with these dangerous omega-6 fats, it will make you metabolically unhealthy and radically increase your risk for nearly every chronic degenerative disease, such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and blindness.

Dr. Joseph Mercola is the founder of Mercola.com. An osteopathic physician, best-selling author, and recipient of multiple awards in the field of natural health, his primary vision is to change the modern health paradigm by providing people with a valuable resource to help them take control of their health. This article was originally published on Mercola.com

Berries: A Top Anti-Diabetes Food

Berries contain the seeds of life for a plant—and a potent combination of life-sustaining nutrients for people

Berries aren't called superfoods for nothing. A review covering 336 scientific articles on these fruits has shown that berry consumption can go a long way in preventing and managing Type 2 diabetes and its complications.

From the hunter-gatherers of ancient times to modern humans, berries hold incredible health benefits that only get further proven and respected over time. Coming in different varieties and forms including raw, frozen, and dried, these compact and versatile fruits can be easily incorporated into your diet year-round.

Berries are chock-full of antioxidants, which are substances that help prevent the oxidation associated with inflammation, aging, and the development of diseases such as heart disease and cancer.

They're deemed "promising functional fruits" for their distinct therapeutic contents of anthocyanins, flavonoids, flavanols, alkaloids, organic acids, and polyphenols that may be beneficial for oxidative stress, obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

In studies, polyphenols, along with other berry components such as fiber and micronutrients, have been linked with better car-

diovascular health. Each type of berry has its specific "superpower," from cranberry's efficacy in treating and preventing urinary tract infections to strawberry's outstanding vitamin C content to black currant's support for brain power and efficacy against rheumatoid arthritis.

Polyphenol-Rich Berries Deter Diabetes

An August 2020 review discussed how consuming berries can prevent diabetes and its complications. Analyzing the differences in glucose and insulin levels after food intake in diabetic subjects, the reviewed studies found that consuming berries can be a reliable method to prevent and manage hyperglycemic and hyperlipidemic states.

The researchers examined berry consumption and the management of Type 2 diabetes by searching various scientific databases using keywords such as "berry consumption and diabetes," "berries and high-glycemic diets" and individual berry names. This yielded 336 articles deemed relevant for the review.

Various berries have been probed for their potential diabetes benefits, including

They're deemed 'promising functional fruits' for their distinct therapeutic contents of anthocyanins, flavonoids, flavanols, alkaloids, organic acids, and polyphenols that may be beneficial for oxidative stress, obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

blueberries, bilberries, cranberries, raspberries, mulberries, lingonberries, blackberries, strawberries, goji berries, acai berries, chokeberries, black currants, and maqui berries. The review showed berries' various mechanisms of action against diabetes, including the following:

- Anthocyanins promoted glucose uptake and metabolism as well as inhibited weight gain and pro-inflammatory responses
- Berry intake led to improvements in insulin sensitivity and lowering glucose
- Berry consumption favorably altered gut microflora, thus assisting in diabetes management

The primary potential health-promoting bioactive compounds in berries include the following:

- Glycosides
- Glucosides
- Catechins
- Epicatechins
- Quercetin
- Myricetin
- Flavonoids

- Flavonols
- Caffeic acids
- Phenolic acids
- Polysaccharides

What will it take to obtain the healthful effects? According to the reviewed papers, the daily recommended dose of whole berry varies from 200 to 400 grams (0.875 to 1.69 cups) of berries for a 70-kilogram (154 pound) middle-aged person.

It's fairly established in studies that the body needs less insulin for sugar balance after a meal if berries are consumed as well. A Finnish study among healthy women found that adding berries to white and rye bread significantly reduced the post-meal insulin spike. Strawberries, bilberries, lingonberries, and chokeberries were considered effective.

Other Berry Benefits Worth Noting

Berries work their wonder not just on diabetes but also on a wealth of other health issues:

Hair loss—Antioxidant-rich and anti-inflammatory foods may help reverse hair loss suffered by both men and women. Some of those with the highest antioxidant potential include Indian gooseberry, bilberries, fresh black currants, blackberries, cranberries, crowberries, goji berries, strawberries, and red sour berries.

Anti-aging and improved brain health—An analysis of data on berry intake showed that mental decline slowed for women over age 70 who regularly consumed strawberries or blueberries. Subjects who had greater intakes of the berries had slower mental decline, with the estimated effects translating to a delay in cognitive aging by about 1.5 to 2.5 years.

Cardiovascular wellness—A study published in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics involving postmenopausal women concluded that eating 22 grams of blueberry powder every day for eight weeks reduced blood pressure and arterial stiffness. This was likely due to increased nitric oxide production.

Oral cancer and colorectal cancer—Animal studies have suggested that black raspberries may inhibit the growth of oral cancers. In a study on patients with biopsy-confirmed oral squamous cell carcinomas, researchers confirmed that the fruit may be effective for oral cancer chemoprevention, reducing adverse gene expression of the condition. Black raspberry may also help colorectal cancer patients including by altering amino acid metabolism, energy, and lipid metabolism.

Breast cancer—Previous studies have associated a high intake of fruit during adolescence with a lower risk of breast

cancer. In separate research, anticancer activity and lack of toxicity against normal cells indicate a chemopreventive potential of Goji berries in breast cancer treatment. Find almost 1,000 abstracts about berries in the GreenMedInfo.com database to guide you in studying the nearly endless benefits of berries across various areas of well-being.

The GMI Research Group is dedicated to

investigating the most important health and environmental issues of the day. Special emphasis will be placed on environmental health. Our focused and deep research will explore the many ways in which the present condition of the human body directly reflects the true state of the ambient environment. This work is reproduced and distributed with the permission of GreenMedInfo LLC. Sign up for the newsletter at www.Greenmedinfo.health



Polyphenols, along with other berry components such as fiber and micronutrients, have been linked with better cardiovascular health.



The Practice of Gratitude

Cultivating gratitude takes effort but pays off with profound effects on your health and happiness

Continued from **Page 1**

We may find our answer is “not often enough.” But the good news is, with a little self-awareness and conscious effort, we can strengthen our gratitude muscle—and live a better life for doing so.

Improved Relationships

Relationships form the cornerstone of our lives. Because they have such a profound impact on our lives, nurturing them is imperative—and showing gratitude is a great place to start.

Just ask Robert Emmons, professor of psychology at UC-Davis, and the founding editor-in-chief of *The Journal of Positive Psychology*. Considered the world’s leading scientific expert on gratitude, Emmons says gratitude has a significant positive impact on relationships.

“People with a strong disposition toward gratitude have the capacity to be empathic and to take the perspective of others. They’re rated as more generous and more helpful by people in their social networks,” he writes on his website.

Emmons says grateful people place less importance on material things, tend not to judge the success of others based on what they’ve accumulated, are less envious of others, and share more readily with others.

The practice of gratitude can also lead to the pay-it-forward effect, meaning the more grateful we feel, the more likely we are to practice helpful behaviors, and the more likely those that we help will go on to help others. A study in *Psychological Science* showed gratitude drives these helping behaviors, and can even increase levels of assistance provided to strangers.

Gratitude can also have a positive impact in the workplace. According to Emmons, gratitude is “the ultimate performance-enhancing substance.” It drives people to be more helpful and kind, exhibit compassion, encourage others, and even volunteer for extra work assignments.

The growing plague of excessive entitlement, whereby people feel life or others owe them something, can actually be thwarted through the practice of gratitude. Entitlement harms not only relationships with others, but oneself, and can manifest in the form of aggression and violence, theft, hostility, poor work performance, envy, greed, resentment, lack of accountability, and blaming others. According to Emmons, “A person who feels entitled to everything will be grateful for nothing; gratitude is the antidote to entitlement.”

Better Sleep

Sleep impacts our performance at work and how we go about our entire day. Without a good night’s sleep, we feel foggy, unfocused, lethargic, and even irritable. Poor sleep is also associated with an increased risk of



Gratitude is the foundation of our healthiest relationships.

The growing plague of excessive entitlement, whereby people feel life or others owe them something, can actually be thwarted through the practice of gratitude.

obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. It exerts significant harm to our health.

A number of studies have found that gratitude helps improve sleep. For example, a study in the *Journal of Behavioral Sleep Medicine* found that the practice of gratitude can help us sleep longer and more soundly, perhaps by acting as a remedy for pre-sleep worries or depression.

So the next time you’re having trouble falling asleep, instead of reaching for that bottle of medication, why not reach for a gratitude journal? Or try a gratitude sleep technique. Lie in bed with your eyes closed, and focus on something you’re grateful for, recalling all the reasons why. Then relax, as the good feelings wash over you. You can also do a breathing technique, inhaling gratitude, while exhaling any unwanted feelings, tension, and negativity.

Improved Physical Health

While we’re continually discovering the impact our minds have on physical health, it may surprise you to know that something as simple as the practice of gratitude can be so beneficial.

Studies have shown that gratitude can help improve fibromyalgia, memory, blood pressure, and heart rate variability. Gratitude also leads to lower levels of endothelial dysfunction, and even improves cardiovascular outcomes.

And according to UC-Davis Medical Center, gratitude lowers LDL (bad) cholesterol, while raising HDL (good) cholesterol. It can also lower cortisol levels and improve immune function.

While research in this area is still limited, studies are promising. With all the potential health benefits from the simple act of practicing gratitude, why not give it a try? Your body will thank you.

Greater Mental Well-Being

Perhaps the most significant impact of gratitude comes from an improved sense of mental health. Emmons’s many studies have revealed this fact.

“Grateful people report higher levels of positive emotions, life satisfaction, vitality,

optimism and lower levels of depression and stress,” he writes.

Sonja Lyubomirsky, professor of psychology at UC-Riverside and author of “*The How of Happiness*” and “*The Myths of Happiness*,” has studied the positive impact gratitude has on happiness. She says gratitude not only helps us savor the good things, but also helps us to not take things for granted. Gratitude also leads us to be more helpful to others, and when all combined, these things increase our feelings of happiness.

Lyubomirsky says gratitude also neutralizes negative emotions and experiences.

“It’s almost impossible to feel grateful and at the same time to feel greedy, or envious, or bitter, or anxious,” she said in a presentation shared by the Greater Good Science Center. “I’d never looked at it in this light, but how true this is.

Research presented at the American Psychological Association’s 2012 annual conference confirms that gratitude can not only make us happier, but can lead us to make positive life choices.

“Grateful teens are more likely than their less grateful peers to be happy, less likely to abuse drugs and alcohol and less likely to have behavior problems at school,” the study found, according to a summary by *Science Daily*.

Gratitude can also play a major role in overcoming trauma. A study of Vietnam veterans with PTSD, in the *Journal of Behavior and Research Therapy*, found that gratitude can foster resilience and improve PTSD, while a study in *The Journal of Positive Psychology* showed that gratitude confers a protective effect against mental distress in the wake of natural disasters.

It’s important to note that while studies show that gratitude has many mental health benefits, some of these benefits require time and regular practice to be fully realized. This is a key reason why it’s important to not just practice gratitude during the holidays, but to make it a regular habit.

Practicing gratitude can even produce changes in the brain. A study published in *NeuroImage* in 2015 found that months after doing a simple gratitude writing task, participant’s brains were still wired to feel extra thankful. Another study published in *Frontiers in Psychology* showed that “gratitude intensity correlated with brain activity in distinct regions of the medial pre-frontal cortex associated with social reward and moral cognition.” The authors proposed that gratitude may even impact mu-opioid receptors, affecting the brain similarly to pain medication.

Putting It Into Practice

So is it true that you either have gratitude or you don’t? The answer is no. Gratitude, like other virtues and good habits, can be cultivated.

To discover your level of gratitude, *Greater Good Magazine* has an online test you can take to find out where you rank. There are a number of other gratitude tests, with the GQ-6 test being one of the most commonly used by psychologists and researchers.

If our gratitude level is low, we may take things for granted and lack appreciation when life is going well. Then, when life hits a rocky patch, we may focus on the problem and forget about the good things.

To help cultivate gratitude, Emmons recommends a simple exercise. “First, think about

The practice of gratitude can help us sleep longer and more soundly, perhaps by acting as a remedy for pre-sleep worries or depression.

one of the unhappiest events you have experienced. How often do you find yourself thinking about this event today? Does the contrast with the present make you feel grateful and pleased? Do you realize your current life situation is not as bad as it could be? Try to realize and appreciate just how much better your life is now.”

Even in hardship, we should be grateful for the lessons contained therein. To complete Ralph Waldo Emerson’s quote above, “And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude.” And without the rain, we would never appreciate the sunshine.

According to the site *The Daily Stoic*, gratitude is an integral part of stoicism. “The Stoics saw gratitude as a kind of medicine, that saying ‘Thank you’ for every experience was the key to mental health.”

Cultivating gratitude isn’t difficult. It just takes a little mindfulness and mental effort. Simple things, such as keeping a gratitude list or journal, saying a heartfelt thank you to someone, or writing a thank you note, all strengthen our sense of gratitude. Keeping thoughts of gratitude, by recognizing things we’re grateful for, is also important.

Other possibilities include using gratitude cues, such as keeping positive notes or pictures around, or a gratitude jar for you and your family to contribute to and share around the dinner table. Or try getting a gratitude buddy to share the things you’re both grateful for each week.

While it won’t happen overnight, with consistent practice, gratitude will strengthen and grow. The more effort we make today, the easier it will come tomorrow. And remember, true happiness comes not from the occasional thank you, but from cultivating a disposition of gratitude.

Perhaps the best words we can remember during this season of thanks are those that Emmons quotes from our 16th president, Abraham Lincoln:

“We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation ever has grown; but we have forgotten God! We have forgotten the gracious Hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.”

Gratitude. It requires humility. It requires self-reflection. It requires recognizing that there is a force greater than ourselves, to which we owe a world of thanks.

There are so many things to be grateful for. So, what are you grateful for today?

Tatiana Denning, D.O., is a family medicine physician who focuses on wellness and prevention. She believes in empowering her patients with the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain and improve their own health.

Is the Way You Breathe Making You Anxious?

Breathing sets off a cascade of physical changes in the body that promote either stress or relaxation

Continued from **Page 1**

Instead of trying to think yourself out of feeling anxious, you can do something concrete—breathe slow or fast, in a particular rhythm, or through a nostril—and sometimes find immediate relief.

In a 2017 study, highly anxious people were assigned to take a course in diaphragmatic breathing relaxation. They practiced twice a day at home. Diaphragmatic breathing, or belly breathing, involves breathing deeply into the abdomen rather than taking shallow breaths into the chest. After eight weeks, they reported feeling less anxious compared to a group that didn’t receive the training. They also showed physical signs of reduced anxiety: lower heart rate, slower breathing, and lower skin conductivity.

So, a regular breathing practice might help you feel calmer in your everyday life. But other studies suggest that focusing on your breathing in moments of acute stress could also be useful.

In an older study published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, researchers brought participants into the lab and told them they were going to receive electric shocks. Some of the participants practiced breathing slowly before the shocks (which were actually never administered), while others focused on breathing at a normal rate or didn’t regulate their breathing at all. The slow breathers—at about eight breaths per minute—not only reported feeling less anxious while anticipating the pain; they also showed lower anxiety on a physical level, as measured by sweat and blood flow to the fingers.

Another study followed up on this research and tested three different breathing rhythms: fast inhaling with slow exhaling; slow inhaling with fast exhaling; or evenly paced inhaling and exhaling. Here, the fast inhaling with slow exhaling (2 seconds in, 8 seconds out) was the most effective at relieving both the physical and mental experience of anxiety.

Of course, breathing is an important component of many meditation and Buddhist mindfulness practices.

In a small 2017 study, researchers asked people with anxiety disorder to try either alternate nostril breathing or mindful breath awareness for 10 minutes, two days in a row. They found that practicing alternate nostril breathing was about three times as effective at reducing people’s feelings of anxiety.

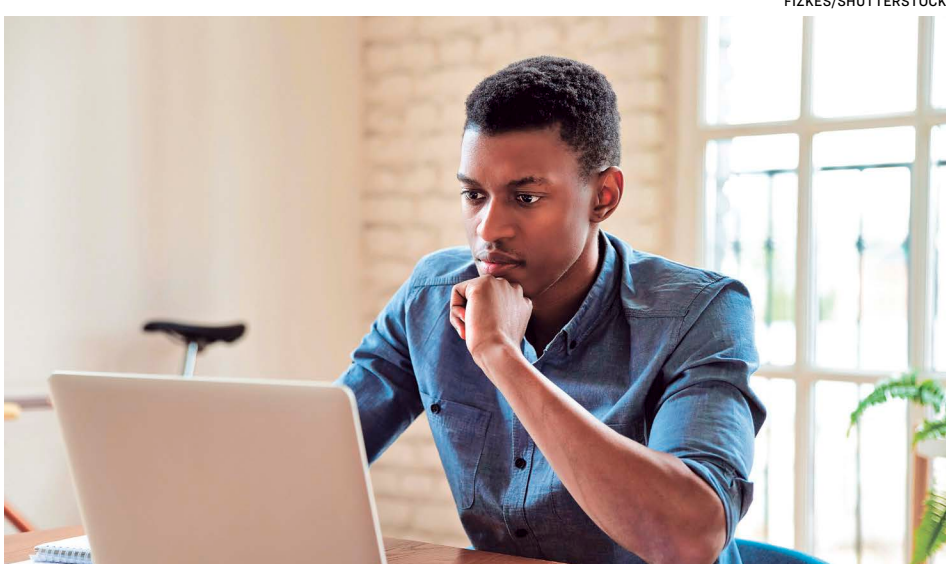
These benefits felt profound to the participants in a small, 12-week yoga breathing class in the United Kingdom. According to researchers from the University of Southampton:

Modern humans have become pretty bad at breathing—a most basic act of living. We breathe through our mouths and into our chests, and we do it way too fast.

“Participants described feeling ‘more in control,’ noting ‘anxiety doesn’t feel debilitating anymore.’ One participant reported marked increases in confidence, mindfulness, and spirituality; [and] greater ability to relax. ... Three participants returned to paid employment, another was able to secure a long-desired job, and another became able to contemplate a return to work, having been unable to do so for many years.”

The Ripple Effects of Breathing

The way we breathe can set off a cascade of physical changes in the body that promote either stress or relaxation.



Working on the computer can leave many people breathing irregularly.

“If we’re breathing really shallowly and fast, it causes our nervous system to up-regulate and we feel tense and anxious,” Epel said. “If we’re breathing slowly, it actually turns on the anti-stress response.”

Technically, breathing influences the sympathetic (“fight-or-flight”) and parasympathetic (“rest and digest”) branches of our nervous system, and certain techniques can promote more parasympathetic calm and relaxation. Some may also cause us to release hormones such as prolactin and possibly oxytocin, the feel-good hormone of love and bonding.

The way we breathe can set off a cascade of physical changes in the body that promote either stress or relaxation.

“[Breathing techniques] are allowing you to consciously take control of your breathing so you can take control of your nervous system so you can take control of your anxiety,” Nestor said. “When we breathe in a certain way, we are sending messages to those emotional centers of our brain to calm down.”



Many meditation practices begin with a focus on breathing well.

Other techniques, such as tummo—a yogic breathing practice that involves forceful or gentle breathing, abdominal contractions during breath-holding, and visualization—actually amp up the sympathetic nervous system, spiking our body’s stress to activate a deeper relaxation afterward, the same way tensing a muscle and then letting it go works.

This is similar to the kind of breathing that “Iceman” Wim Hof teaches his followers, a method that Epel is currently researching. Hof is famous for his seemingly superhuman feats, such as climbing Mount Kilimanjaro in shorts and changing his immune response to *E. coli*, which he attributes to a finely tuned control over his own physiology thanks to breathing practices and more.

Fast breathing can be triggering for people with anxiety—causing the tingling limbs and lightheadedness that often accompany panic attacks—but that’s part of the point. When you breathe fast and start to feel symptoms that you normally associate with anxiety, it may help you re-interpret those symptoms in a less threatening way. They become less worrisome because they have a clear cause, the same way an elevated heart rate during exercise doesn’t bother us. And if you can connect anxiety to faulty breathing habits, it means you can change the way you breathe and potentially see some improvement.

How to Breathe Better

If you want to practice breathing for better mental and physical health, there are endless techniques you can try. Although these shouldn’t be seen as a replacement for therapy or a cure for severe anxiety, they can be a free, simple tool for both short-term relief and long-term benefit.

“Breathing techniques could be used as first-line and supplemental treatments for stress [and] anxiety,” write Ravinder Jerath and his colleagues in a 2015 study.

Many of the techniques that have been formally researched are derived from pranayama (yogic breathing) that dates back to ancient India:

- Ujjayi, deep breathing with a narrowed throat, creating an ocean-like sound, often recommended while doing yoga asanas.
- Bhastrika, or “bellows breath,” inhaling and exhaling forcefully.
- Nadi Sodhan and Anulom Vilom, types of alternate nostril breathing in which air is inhaled in one nostril and exhaled through the other, sometimes with breath-holding.

There are also a variety of “box breathing” practices, derived from the pranayama Sama Vritti, in which you inhale for four seconds, hold for four, exhale for four, hold for four, and repeat. Other timed techniques include 4-7-8 breathing, often recommended to help you fall asleep.

In the same way that mindfulness practice isn’t just meditation, breathing as a practice isn’t just waking up every morning and doing 10 minutes of box breathing. Another important component is being aware of the way you breathe in everyday life (or while you’re checking your email).

In “Breath,” Nestor’s tips boil down to a short list of general principles: For example, make sure to breathe through your nose, slow your breathing down (to five or six seconds in and five or six seconds out), and extend your exhales for even greater relaxation.

So much talk about breathing might have you feeling anxious—that’s how I felt, at least, while reading about all the ways our breathing habits are faulty. In one study, the researchers noted that anxious people were skeptical in the beginning of the experiment and had some difficulty practicing. But this group still went on to feel better at the end of 12 weeks of practice.

All this research illustrates just how much influence our body has on our mind. Modern life brings many things to be worried about, but, as Nestor writes, not being able to breathe remains one of our deepest and most primal anxieties. If somehow the way we’re breathing is signaling to our brains that something is wrong, it’s no wonder we feel anxious—and it’s no wonder that all these breathing techniques can bring such profound healing.

Kira M. Newman is the managing editor of Greater Good. Her work has been published in outlets including The Washington Post, Mindful magazine, Social Media Monthly, and Tech.co, and she is the co-editor of The Gratitude Project. This article was originally published in Greater Good online magazine.

You Can't Quite Buy Happiness, but Almost

Researchers have found there are specific ways to spend your money if you want to increase happiness

JOSHUA BECKER

I would never assume everyone reading this article has their financial needs met. However, there are two assumptions I make when writing about money.

1. More people have their financial needs met than think they do. In our consumeristic society, the baseline of “need” is always revised upward. The items considered “needs” today would have been considered a luxury not that long ago. Most of us have our financial needs met.

2. Minimalism provides greater financial flexibility to those who choose it. When we remove ourselves from the constant pursuit and accumulation of material possessions, we soon experience and easily recognize greater financial flexibility.

Based on those two assumptions, I want to talk about how to increase our overall happiness and well-being with our money.

I want to answer the question, “how can we spend our money in ways that improve our subjective well-being?”

Not based on conjecture, but on science.

There is a fascinating study recently published in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* by researchers from Harvard, the University of British Columbia, and Simon Fraser University. In the study, “Prosocial Spending and Buying Time: Money as a Tool for Increasing Subjective Well-Being,” the researchers discuss four possible uses of our money.

Three of the uses result in an increase in subjective well-being, while one does not.

After our immediate needs are met, purchasing additional personal possessions doesn't contribute, in the long-run, to increased



Buying yourself something might feel nice in the moment, but for a real boost in happiness, buy for someone else.

happiness. But there are choices we can make with our financial resources that do increase our overall life satisfaction.

When determining the best use of our money, this research is valuable. Their findings are summarized below.

3 Areas to Spend for Greater Happiness

1. Purchasing Experiences Whether going to the zoo, the ballgame, or Europe for two weeks, spending money on experiences shared with others brings more lasting happiness than physical possessions, wrote the researchers.

“The earliest and most well-developed line of research treating money as a resource to be intentionally utilized shows that, on average, people experience

greater happiness when using money to purchase experiences, as opposed to material goods,” the study found.

Based on their findings, spending money on experiences rather than material goods results in more positive feelings before consumption, during consumption, and after consumption.

2. Prosocial Spending Spending money on others—whether supporting a charity, treating a friend to dinner, or buying a gift for another—brings more lasting happiness than owning physical possessions, wrote the researchers.

“When we entered personal spending and prosocial spending into a regression predicting happiness, we found that people who spent more money on oth-

ers reported greater happiness; in contrast, the amount of money they spent on themselves was unrelated to happiness,” the researchers wrote.

“By conducting tests of universality, we have been able to demonstrate that the joy of giving is not merely a quirky feature of North American college students, but rather a fundamental component of human nature, detectable from the first years of life across a wide range of contexts.”

Based on their findings, spending money on others enhances social connection, provides opportunity to make a meaningful impact, and promotes well-being and autonomy. And in each regard, this spending delivers these results in more measurable and lasting ways than does buying material possessions.

3. Buying Time

Whether paying someone to take your leaves, clean your house, deliver your groceries, or buying a smaller house to reduce your commute, research indicates there is happiness to be found in not just purchasing positive experiences (as discussed above), but also purchasing the removal of negative experiences.

“People who regularly buy time report greater life satisfaction,” they wrote.

The researchers admit this finding requires more deeper analysis and study.

“Although experimental manipulations are necessary to enable clear causal conclusions, this longitudinal study provides the strongest evidence to date that the broad proclivity to prioritize time over money predicts subsequent well-being,” they wrote.

But based on their findings already, buying time provides more opportunity for people to choose relationships, reduce daily stress, and help navigate major life decisions. These results were found even across socioeconomic variables.

Your specific financial circumstance varies from the person next to you because nobody is exactly alike in this regard. However, the studies above do indicate some consistencies among us as human beings.

If you want to direct your financial resources toward pursuits that pay off in the long run, choose to purchase experiences, prosocial giving, or time. Based on the studies, spending your money in those three things is the best way to increase happiness.

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

A Key to Healing Our Divide

What we think we know could block us from having compassion for those who think differently

LEO BABAUTA

The country I live in has a pretty bitter divide between many of its people, and I'll admit that it often feels hopeless to me.

I'm sure those from other countries can see a similar divide there as well: People judging each other, angry and fearful, feeling very little understanding and compassion.

We're all doing it and blaming the other side.

We might disagree with someone instantly, but what value does our judgment hold if we don't entertain the idea we're wrong?

So what can we do to heal this divide?

For me, the answer lies in compassion. Compassion for others in our country, and in the world, who are suffering. Compassion for our neighbors, for people who have different views, for people who are afraid and who just want a good life. Compassion for ourselves as we try to make our way through a difficult situation.

But compassion is difficult

to cultivate right now, so just telling people to have compassion doesn't work. The problem is that our views about who is right and wrong are getting in the way of compassion and healing the divide.

So the real key to this is in setting aside our views and setting aside being right. To do this, we need to let go of what we think we know.

It's only when we let go of what we think we know that we can be curious about the other side. Try to understand why they do what they do, why they feel the way they feel. Try to step into their world, and get them.

When we let go of our knowing and step into not knowing, we can really see their side and feel com-

passion for them.

Once we do that, the compassion can come and the healing can begin.

Set aside what we think we know.

Be open to not knowing how things should be. Open to curiosity about their side.

Open to feeling compassion for what they're going through.

Let's connect with each other, and come together.

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





Shen Yun Dancer

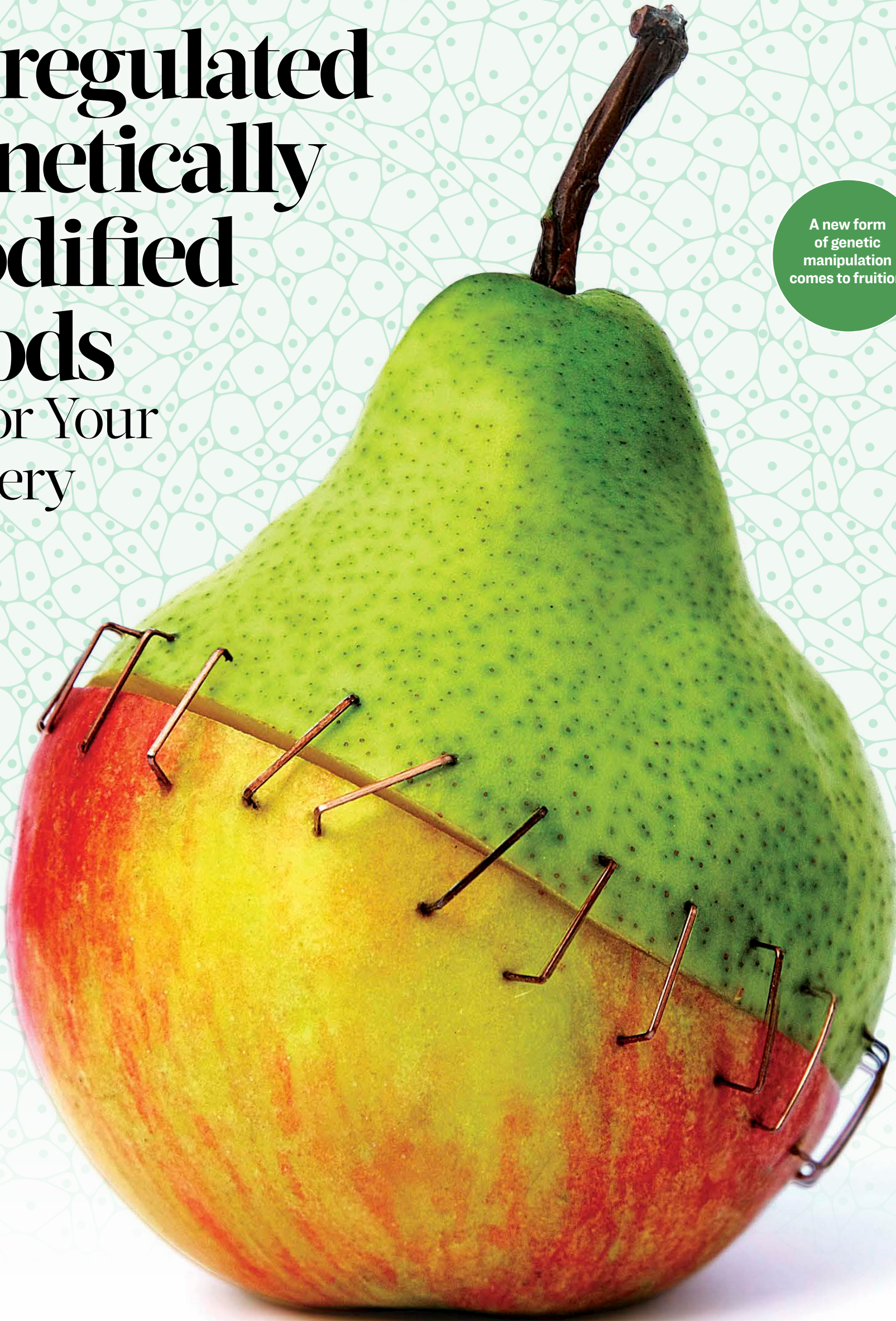
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Unregulated Genetically Modified Foods Set for Your Grocery Aisle

A new form of genetic manipulation comes to fruition.



JOSEPH MERCOLA

It seems gene editing is going to eliminate all disease,” said HBO’s John Oliver, “Or kill every last one of us.” He’s referring to gene-editing tools such as CRISPR (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeat), and TALEN (Transcription Activator-Like Effector Nuclease), which are being used for everything from disease treatment to agriculture. Unbeknownst to many, CRISPR technology has already been used to tinker with crops and animals. In addition to altering the taste of foods, CRISPR is being used to extend shelf life and create foods that resist certain bacteria and viruses. Even chicken—a staple food in diets around the world—has been eyed for gene editing due to avian leucosis virus. That means a “CRISPR” chicken may be coming to your dinner plate soon—

unless you actively avoid it.

Avian Leukosis Virus Widespread in CAFO Poultry Avian leukosis virus (ALV) has been plaguing the CAFO (concentrated animal feeding operation) poultry industry since it was first identified in 1991. The disease causes tumors to develop in the birds, along with symptoms such as weakness, loss of appetite, diarrhea, and depression.

The last major ALV outbreak occurred in 2018 in China, leading to high mortality rates among infected chickens. However, the virus is present in CAFO chickens worldwide, leading to an estimated millions of pounds of losses annually. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) once required that chickens that showed signs of ALV or “lesions” (tumors) be removed from processing so they didn’t enter the food chain. However, the National

Gene editing, for all of its intended precision, isn’t an exact science.

Chicken Council petitioned the USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) in March 2019 to “treat lesions that could be suspected as being caused by avian leukosis as a trimmable condition and not a condition that requires whole bird condemnation.”

On July 16, 2020, the FSIS accepted the petition, stating, “We have determined that current scientific evidence supports treating avian leukosis as a trimmable condition and that the actions requested in your petition would reduce regulatory burdens on the industry.”

Despite the significant regulatory change—which means chickens riddled with tumors may still end up in the food supply as long as they’re “trimmed”—researchers have been looking toward gene editing as another way to eradicate ALV from CAFO poultry flocks.

Continued on Page 11



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MADE TO MOVE

Tips for Weight Loss on a Busy Schedule

You're never too busy to take care of your basic well-being—especially when all it takes is smarter choices

JOEY SHULMAN

When discussing weight loss techniques in seminars or in private practice, one of the most frequent excuses I hear from people is that they're too busy or it's too difficult to eat healthier. Time may be short for most of us, yes. But throughout my years of teaching and dealing with weight-loss clients, I have gathered some very helpful nutritional "tricks" to help even the busiest of people lose weight permanently.

1. Learn to Shop
It takes just as long to go to the grocery store for a bag of chips as it does for an apple. You have to grocery shop anyway, so why not learn the basics of nutrition and fill up a healthier cart?

- Healthy food basics to stock up on:**
1. Fresh fruits: fresh or frozen berries, apples, oranges, kiwi
 2. Vegetables: broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, tomatoes (go for color!)
 3. Omega 3 rich foods: wild salmon, omega-3 eggs, walnuts
 4. Good fats: olive oil, avocados
 5. Lean meats: chicken, turkey, ham slices (look for low-sodium, nitrate-free)
 6. Low-fat dairy options: light cottage cheese, yogurt, milk, and low-fat cheese
 7. Nuts, seeds—raw, unsalted varieties are best
 8. Healthy spreads: hummus, light cream cheese, organic nut butters
 9. Whole-grain breads and pastas: kamut, spelt, rye, oats, flax, and multi-grain
 10. A small amount of dark chocolate (70 percent) for a treat
 11. Protein powder—free of aspartame and sucralose
 12. Healthy snack bars—low-sugar and made from real food ingredients

Sometimes you just have to eat fast food. Fortunately, there are more and more healthy fast food options.

- Foods to keep out of your grocery cart:**
- Hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated foods (aka trans-fatty acids): certain salad dressings, crackers, chips, margarine (Check your labels!)
 - Refined, white flour products: white bread, pasta, muffins, cookies, crackers
 - Soda or sugary fruit juices
 - Candy
 - Overly processed and packaged goods
- 2. Pack a Lunch**
A balanced meal includes the proper amount of protein, carbohydrates, and fat. Save time, money, and calories with a proper lunch. Here's an example:
- A whole-wheat sandwich wrap with

- lean turkey, lettuce, tomato, avocado, mustard, and organic cheese
- A small container of organic yogurt (organic soy is an option), that's low in sugar and fat
- A dark chocolate square to enjoy for dessert

3. Know Your Healthy Fast-Food Options
Too busy to pack a lunch? Luckily, there are more healthy fast-food options now available, such as salads, wraps, or sandwiches. What's more, many of these outlets have posted the fat/calorie/sodium content of their menus online. Use your smarts when choosing healthier options by avoiding foods likely to have chemical additives, unhealthy fats, refined carbs, and added sugars. Bottom line, if you're going for something 'fast,' you can do your best to make it healthy, too.

4. Keep Weight-Loss Protein Staples on Hand
The problem with weight loss is typically due to an overconsumption of carbohydrates, not enough fruits and vegetables, and too little protein in the diet.

Protein staples that won't land on your waistline:

- Organic cheese cubes or cottage cheese
- Protein powder (keep a container at work and home)
- Lean slices of meat (chicken, turkey)
- Egg whites can be added to any shake, recipe, or made as an omelet (hard-boiled eggs are great to keep in the fridge, too)

5. Make Dinner Your Smallest Meal
This is often the most difficult habit to break, but it can be done. For starters, get into the habit of eating a larger breakfast and a mid-sized lunch with a healthy snack or two in between. This way, you won't be overly ravenous come dinner time.

Some dinner 'tricks' to try:

- Use a smaller-sized plate to automatically reduce your portion sizes
- Make two-thirds of the plate a colorful salad or steamed veggies
- Include a portion of lean protein that's about the size of a deck of cards
- Enjoy low-glycemic, high-fiber carbs such as wild rice
- Add flavor without calories with cracked pepper or hot sauce

Suffering from cravings at nighttime? Try drinking watered-down juice, herbal tea, or chewable vitamin C. If you need to munch, go for veggies.

6. Find an Activity That You Enjoy
Let's face it, hitting the gym nightly isn't realistic for most busy people. Luckily, there are many home options now available to fit into your lifestyle. Elastic bands, home weights, videos, and a yoga mat can fit into any budget. For morning types, set the alarm a bit earlier, lay your shoes out the night-before, rise, and go. And if none of that appeals to you, join a sport, take up biking, or volunteer to walk your elderly neighbor's dog. Find something physical you enjoy—and do it.

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Unregulated Genetically Modified Foods Set for Your Grocery Aisle

Continued from Page 9

Scientists Use CRISPR to Tackle Avian Leukosis
In 2018, researchers with the Czech Academy of Sciences determined that, because ALVs use specific receptor proteins to gain entry into cells, such receptors would make good targets for "biotechnological manipulation" in order to create poultry resistant to the virus. They attempted to do this using CRISPR-Cas9. CRISPR gene-editing technology brought science fiction to life with its ability to cut and paste DNA fragments and potentially eliminate serious inherited diseases. CRISPR-Cas9, in particular, has gotten scientists excited because, by modifying an enzyme called Cas9, the gene-editing capabilities are significantly improved.

In addition to altering the taste of foods, CRISPR is being used to extend shelf life and create foods that resist certain bacteria and viruses.

In their 2018 study, published in the journal *Viruses*, the scientists noted that "CRISPR/Cas9-mediated knock-out or the fine editing of ALV receptor genes might be the first step in the development of virus-resistant chickens." In a separate study published in *PNAS* in January 2020, the researchers demonstrated that CRISPR-Cas9 was effective in rendering chickens resistant to the J subgroup of ALV.

The researchers stated: "We introduced a single amino acid deletion into the gene encoding the receptor that is required for avian leukosis virus subgroup J to infect chicken cells. Here, we demonstrate that this mutation confers the resistance of chickens to avian leukosis virus subgroup J, an important pathogen in poultry. In addition, we present highly efficient genome-editing technology in chicken." They added that no visible side effects were apparent after the process, which involved deleting tryptophan residue number 38 of chNHE1 (W38), a critical amino acid for virus entry. The word "visible" is key, however, as many unexpected changes may still occur that aren't immediately recognizable, and it's possible for those changes to be transferred to other organisms or generations.

In an interview with *Yale Insights*, Dr. Greg Licholai, a biotech entrepreneur and a lecturer at Yale, said this could even lead to problems that are worse than the "cure," such as antibiotic resistance or incurable diseases.

"That's probably the biggest fear of CRISPR—Humans manipulating the genetic code, and those manipulations get passed on generation to generation to generation," he said.

"We think we know what we're doing, we think we're measuring exactly what changes we're doing to the genes, but there's always the possibility that either we miss something or our technology can't pick up on other changes that have been made that haven't been directed by us. "And the fear then is that those changes lead to antibiotic resistance or other mutations that go out into the population and would be very difficult to control. Basically creating incurable diseases or other potential mutations that we wouldn't really have control over."

Gene-Edited Chickens Also Exist That Resist Flu
Influenza spreads rapidly among CAFO birds and has the potential to be transmitted to humans. The simplest way to stop the widespread transmission of bird flu would be to change the way chickens are raised, putting them outdoors on pasture as opposed to crowded in disease-ridden CAFOs.

Scientists, however, turned to biotechnology instead, using CRISPR to target part of the ANP32 gene, which codes for a protein that flu viruses depend on, in order to create flu-resistant chickens. Flu- and ALV-resistant chickens are just two examples of gene-editing technology at work. Researchers have also snipped



Scientists are gene editing chickens to better survive the often disease-ridden conditions in concentrated animal feeding operations.

“Those [genetic] manipulations get passed on generation to generation to generation.”

Dr. Greg Licholai, a biotech entrepreneur and a lecturer at Yale

out a section of pig DNA, intending to prevent porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS)—a common and often fatal ailment among CAFO pigs. Such edits are permanent and passed down to subsequent generations.

In another project, this one funded by the USDA, researchers have added the SRY gene to cattle, which results in female cows that turn into males, complete with larger muscles, a penis and testicles, but no ability to make sperm. Male (or male-like) cattle are more valuable to the beef industry because they get bigger faster, allowing companies to make greater profits in less time.

Other biotech companies have taken to targeting genes intended to ease animal suffering, which they believe may soften regulators and consumers who are wary of the technology. One company snipped out the genes responsible for growing horns in dairy cows, for instance, which means they wouldn't be subjected to the inhumane ways the horns are currently removed (with no pain relief).

As for gene-edited animals, the FDA proposed to classify animals with edited or engineered DNA as drugs, prompting backlash from the biotech industry, which doesn't even want such foods labeled. This isn't the case for gene-edited plants, however, which have largely escaped regulation.

Gene-Edited Mushrooms and Lax Regulations
A number of gene-edited plant foods have also been developed or proposed, including non-browning mushrooms, which were created by Yinong Yang, a plant pathologist at Pennsylvania State University, in 2016 using CRISPR-Cas9. Although the "frankenfungi," as it's been called, has never before existed in nature, it would require no USDA approval because it does not contain foreign DNA.

"Our genome-edited mushroom has small deletions in a specific gene but contains no foreign DNA integration in its genome," Yang said in *Penn State's Ag Science Magazine*. "Therefore, we believed that there was no scientifically valid basis to conclude that the CRISPR-edited mushroom is a regulated article based on the definition described in the regulations."

Weeks after the USDA notified Yang that the gene-edited non-browning mushrooms wouldn't require approval, it also ruled that DuPont Pioneer's CRISPR-Cas9-edited corn would also be able to bypass regulatory approval.

The rule, known as the "Sustainable, Ecological, Consistent, Uniform, Responsible, Efficient" (SECURE) rule, was finalized in May 2020, and it maintained the status that crops edited using CRISPR-Cas9 and other similar technologies would be non-regulated.

Are You Already Eating Gene-Edited Soybean Oil?
A gene-edited soybean oil created by biotech company Calyxt was picked up by its first user—a Midwest company with both restaurant and food service locations, which is using it for frying as well

as in dressings and sauces—in 2019. Calyxt's soybean oil, Calyno, contains two inactivated genes, resulting in an oil with no trans fats, increased heart-healthy oleic acid and a longer shelf life.

As of February 2019, more than 100 farmers in the Midwest were reportedly growing Calyxt's high-oleic soybeans on more than 34,000 acres. In an update released on Feb. 7, Calyxt stated it had contracted 100,000 soybean acres in the U.S. for 2020, which represented 178 percent growth from the year prior.

It also received its first purchase order from a customer targeting four of its primary markets (food service, food ingredients, animal nutrition and industrial,) and is now offering one-gallon jugs of its Calyno cooking oil directly to consumers.

Calyxt has also developed a high-fiber wheat, which has been declared a non-regulated article and may launch as early as 2020 or 2021. In short, gene-edited foods are already on the market and expanding with fervor, while the health and environmental risks remain completely unknown.

Unexpected Consequences, Risks Uncovered
Gene-editing, for all of its intended precision, isn't an exact science. In animals, gene editing has led to unexpected side effects, including enlarged tongues and extra vertebrae.

Further, when researchers at the UK's Wellcome Sanger Institute systematically studied mutations from CRISPR-Cas9 in mouse and human cells, large genetic rearrangements were observed, including DNA deletions and insertions, near the target site. The DNA deletions could end up activating genes that should stay "off," such as cancer-causing genes, as well as silencing those that should be "on."

Gene-edited foods are already on the market and expanding with fervor.

Without a label requirement, there's no way for consumers to know whether they're eating gene edited soybean oil—or one of the many future gene-edited products likely to hit the market, like "CRISPR chicken." For now, however, gene-edited foods can't be labeled organic, which is one more reason why seeking out organic and, even better, biodynamic foods, is so important.

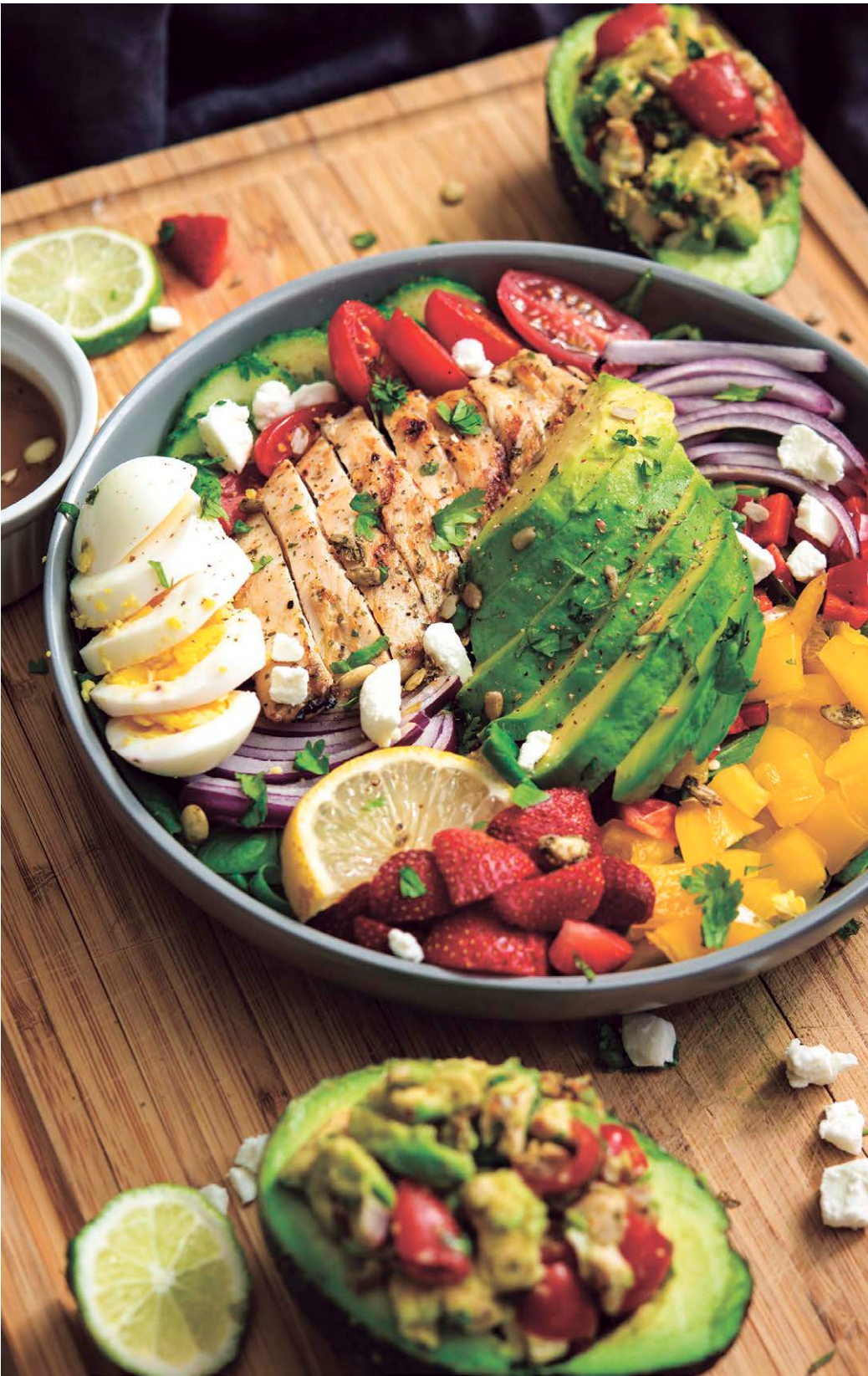
Dr. Joseph Mercola is the founder of *Mercola.com*. An osteopathic physician, best-selling author, and recipient of multiple awards in the field of natural health, his primary vision is to change the modern health paradigm by providing people with a valuable resource to help them take control of their health. This article was originally published on *Mercola.com*



Like many drugs, gene editing can have unexpected side effects on the target.

A ‘Balanced Diet’ Is an Important but Murky Concept

Dietary guidelines emphasize food variety, but if you’re not careful, this can lead to overeating



It's important to eat a wide variety of healthy foods to make sure your nutritional needs are met.

ROCHELLE EMBLING, AIMEE PINK, LAURA WILKINSON & MENNA PRICE

It's well known that a healthy diet can help reduce disease risks that are related to overweight or obesity—such as some cancers, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. As part of a healthy diet, experts around the world advise people to consume a variety of foods. In the United Kingdom for example, the NHS's Eatwell Guide divides foods into food groups (starchy carbohydrates, fruit and veg, dairy or dairy alternatives, proteins, and fats). To get a “balanced diet,” the guide advises people to aim to eat a certain amount of food from each food group.

One reason food variety is included in recommendations is that different foods have different nutrients. Eating a varied diet can benefit our health by reducing risks associated with malnutrition, which happens when we don't get the right amount of nutrients from our diet. Malnutrition can cause weak muscles, decrease mobility, increase illness, and lead to breathing problems, among other symptoms.

But what's defined as “variety” by dietary guidelines can often be confusing and too simplistic—and vastly different from what the general public may define as variety. Research has shown that in addition to having variety as part of the whole diet, we can measure variety within meals (for example, having multiple courses, or foods from different food groups on our plate) as well as across meals (such as having different foods for lunch each day).

Importantly, research has also found that variety can refer to foods that differ in their characteristics (such as their appearance, flavor, texture, or smell), as well as the nutrients found in them. By this definition, eating a chocolate cake and strawberry cake would be a form of variety, as they differ in flavor, despite having a very similar nutritional profile and belonging to the same food group. It also means that single foods and dishes with mixed ingredients (such as pizzas or sandwiches) can have variety.

At the moment, dietary guidelines rely on people using their own discretion to achieve an overall balance of different foods in their diet. But is it easy for consumers to identify variety?

In our recent study, we wanted to find out if people living in the United Kingdom recognize food variety—and how they define it. To do this we asked participants to comment on a range of photographs that showed different types of food as part of an online survey. For example, they were shown supermarket aisles displaying different food brands, meals that consisted of multiple foods from different food groups, and mixed dishes and foods that contained different flavors, colors, and textures—such as salads with a mix of vegetables, or pizzas with different toppings.

Though participants often identified and discussed different types of variety, they tended to only define variety as eating foods from different food groups as part of the whole diet, a definition that is consistent with the use of variety in dietary guidelines. These results suggest that, when trying to follow dietary guidelines and eat a healthy diet, people may place less importance on variety within meals. For example, if we just need to achieve an

overall balance, then they may believe it doesn't matter if we have less or more variety within a meal as long as we make up the difference in the next meal.

Thinking about variety within meals is important because research shows that people eat more when meals and foods differ in appearance, taste, and texture within the same dish. Each new food characteristic that we experience keeps us interested in a meal for longer, subsequently delaying the feeling of fullness that would normally prompt us to stop eating.

In other words, variety in these characteristics disrupts the process known as “sensory specific satiety.” This effect can increase the risk of overeating. For this reason, eating a variety of foods from within food groups (with the exception of fruits and vegetables) has been related to having a higher body weight. This type of variety could then potentially increase disease risks linked to overweight or obesity.

Thinking about variety within meals is important because research shows that people eat more when meals and foods differ in appearance, taste, and texture within the same dish.

Variety and Health

As variety encourages us to eat more, variety within meals may be most helpful when eating fruits and vegetables. This is not only because they are less caloric than other food groups, but more nutritious (they contain important vitamins and minerals)—so eating a greater variety of fruits and vegetables can benefit our health. But it can be less helpful when eating high-calorie foods when the risk of overeating is higher.

For example, we could make sure that we have two or more servings of different vegetables on our plate at dinner time to increase the number of vegetables we eat. When eating high-calorie foods, we could choose options that in and of themselves have less variety, such as plain chocolate instead of those with flavored fillings.

For dietary guidelines to be useful, they need to be more specific about what variety means, and how we can monitor variety in our diet. While eating food from different food groups helps us achieve a diet rich in different nutrients, we should also be mindful of the effects of variety on how much food we eat during meals. To get the right balance, variety should be encouraged within some food groups such as fruits and vegetables—but not others.

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EBERHARD GROSSGASTEIGER/UNSPLASH



Our bones need activity to stay strong, along with enough vitamin D and calcium. Unfortunately those needs take extra effort to meet in the winter months.

The Winter Calcium Challenge

As sunlight and outdoor activity decrease, the risk to your bones rises

MOHAN GARIKIPARITHI

The winter isn't a great time for your bones. Add that to the fact that you may not enjoy or even tolerate dairy, and you could fall short on calcium.

Thankfully, there are plenty of ways to get calcium without having to force down milk or yogurt.

You are likely manufacturing far less vitamin D this time of year, a situation likely to continue for the next five or six months as temperatures and sun exposure drop. Vitamin D is essential for absorbing calcium.

Aside from limited sunlight exposure, you're probably not getting outdoors as much either. And when you are, you're likely covered up. Not only does that impair vitamin D intake, but inactivity can promote weaker bones.

Dietary restrictions, low vitamin D, and inactivity can all put bone health at risk.

A lack of vitamin D and activity are straightforward problems. Do your best to get up as frequently as possible

throughout the day and dedicate at least 30 minutes per day to load-bearing exercise. Supplementing with up to 1,000 IU of vitamin D per day can also help.

But getting 1,000–1,200 milligrams (mg) of calcium per day may present a greater challenge. You don't necessarily want to be supplementing heavily with calcium. Doing so may increase the risk of acid reflux, kidney disease, cardiovascular disease, prostate trouble, and hypercalcemia (high blood levels of calcium).

Finding suitable food options, in this case, is ideal. Some good non-dairy sources of calcium include:

- Chia seeds (can be mixed into yogurt or oats)
- Soy milk
- Almonds
- Dried figs
- White beans
- Sunflower seeds
- Broccoli

There are other nutritional options, including seasonal items such as but-

ternut squash and sweet potatoes. All of these sources feature relatively small amounts of calcium, but together they can provide a sufficient amount.

Eating calcium-fortified foods and supplementing with small doses (like what you'd get in a standard multivitamin) can help you top off daily totals.

If you can't eat dairy, these are the foods that should be on your radar. Nature is working against your bones this season, so making sure you're getting enough calcium, as well as vitamin D and exercise, can help keep bones healthy through the winter.

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Spicing Up Life Could Extend It

Research finds people who eat chili peppers have better heart health and longer lives

DEVON ANDRE

Most people don't think about more than their tastebuds when eating their favorite curry or chili. But guess what? Those spicy delights could help extend your life or serve as a valuable anti-aging tool. So if you were looking for an excuse to eat a hot bowl of chili a little more often this fall, you might have found it.

New research is showing chili peppers could help reduce the risk of death from heart disease and several other causes. Researchers from the Cleveland Clinic reviewed health and dietary records from more than 500,000 participants in four extensive studies that took place in the United States, Italy, China, and Iran.

They learned that people who ate chili peppers were healthier than those who didn't.

How did chili pepper intake influence health? Those who ate the most experienced a 26 percent reduction in death from heart-related death and a 25 percent reduction in overall mortality over the study period.

Frankly, chili eaters were found to live longer than those who ate them rarely or never.

Other studies have found similar effects. What makes this study particularly unique is that trends were consistent across the continents despite dietary and cultural differences.

While association doesn't equate to causation, there could be a biochemical explanation. Chili's benefits could come from a bioactive compound called capsaicin. Capsaicin causes the peppers' spiciness, and it may possess antioxidant and anti-inflammatory capabilities.

The peppers are also a good source of heart-healthy nutrients such as potassium, fiber, vitamin A, vitamin B6, and vitamin E. They may also help heart health by serving as a flavorful alternative to salt in a number of recipes.

Of course, how you eat chili can play a role. If you're using it to add flavor to a bread or chip dip, it might lose some of its benefits. Instead, use it to enhance the flavor of already healthy meals.

So, what might some healthy chili-pepper meals look like? It really varies. The good thing is no matter what kind of food you like, chili can fit in easily. Some great dishes include:

- Pineapple chicken curry (Thai)
- Chicken mole (Mexican)
- Chili (North American)
- Beef vindaloo (Indian)
- Gnocchi in spicy arrabbiata sauce (Italian)

Devon Andre holds a bachelor's degree in forensic science from the University of Windsor in Canada and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Pittsburgh. Andre is a journalist for BelMarraHealth, which first published this article.

CALUM LEWIS/UNSPLASH



Chilis get their spiciness from a bioactive compound called capsaicin that may possess anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory capabilities.



Researchers found significant improvements in grip strength—a low score is a strong predictor of physical disability in senior years—among the exercise group.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Exercise and Whey Protein Slow Age-Related Bone and Muscle Loss

Researchers in Germany found this simple, low-cost intervention could significantly reduce loss of skeletal muscle mass

Do you worry about loss of bone and muscle as you age? Science shows that basic lifestyle interventions can reverse this trend and may even help stop it before it starts.

As the human body ages, it's normal to experience some loss of bone density and muscle mass, contributing to the gradual “shrinking” effect that can be observed in many individuals over the age of 60. Fortunately, research suggests lifestyle factors such as exercise and diet may slow some of these undesirable effects. When bone loss is significant and accompanied by decreased muscle mass, strength, and function, a person may be diagnosed with osteosarcopenia.

Osteosarcopenia is the combined diagnosis of sarcopenia, the gradual loss of skeletal muscle mass and function, and osteoporosis, a condition marked by porous, brittle bones and loss of bone density. Individuals suffering from osteosarcopenia are often frail, with an increased risk of falls, bone fractures, and early death.

Medical researchers are focusing more on treatments for the various contributors to osteosarcopenia, including an increased presence of fatty deposits in muscle and porous bone. Fat infiltration is a phenomenon that is more prevalent and severe in patients with age-related bone and muscle loss, resulting from altered crosstalk between muscle, bone, and fat cells.

This combination of diminishing lean muscle and bone mixed with increased fatty deposits is being called “an emerging geriatric giant,” which poses a significant public health threat to aging populations.

Can Diet and Exercise Stop Osteosarcopenia?

Researchers in internal and geriatric medicine at the Osteoporosis Research Center at Friedrich-Alexander University in Erlangen, Germany, conducted a study exploring the effects of exercise and dietary supplementation on disease markers in osteosarcopenic men.

Published in the peer-reviewed journal Clinical Interventions in Aging, the study aimed to determine whether high-intensity resistance training (HI-RT), a time- and cost-efficient fitness modality, and whey protein supplementation (WPS), a common, inexpensive protein source, had a combined positive effect on bone mineral density (BMD) and muscle loss in older men diagnosed with osteosarcopenia.

The FROST study, short for Franco-nian Osteopenia and Sarcopenia Trial, was an 18-month randomized controlled exercise study with a balanced parallel two-group design, conducted between June 2018 and December 2019. A group of 177 men, aged 72 years and older, were initially enrolled from a group-living community. After exclusion criteria were applied, a final cohort of 43 subjects were randomly assigned to either HI-RT or control groups.

Resistance Training Builds Muscle and Strength

Participants were asked to maintain and not change their physical activ-

Regime Improves Bone and Muscle Mass

Changes in sarcopenia criteria were assessed based on the sarcopenia Z-score measured at baseline (start of study) and at the six-month point. Sarcopenia Z-score criteria included SMI (skeletal muscle mass index), habitual gait velocity, and handgrip strength. Both the initial and follow-up assessments were conducted in the same setting and at the same time of day.

BMD was assessed using a combination of soft lean body mass and body fat percentages. Soft lean body mass was defined as bone and fat-free body mass, with body fat percentage referring to the amount of fat in the whole body. Upon final analysis, researchers observed significantly positive effects on sarcopenia Z-scores in the HI-RT group and significantly worsened scores in the control group, creating an overall significant difference in outcomes between the groups. Effect sizes for skeletal muscle mass changes were very pronounced, while effects for functional sarcopenia parameters were moderate or low.

Specifically, significant increases in skeletal mass index were also observed in the HI-RT group, with slight decreases to SMI in the control group (CG). Habitual gait velocity did not change in the CG, whereas it slightly increased in the HI-RT group. Handgrip strength maintained in the HI-RT group and significantly decreased in the CG. The differences between the groups was significant for these measures.

Regarding adverse effects, one participant experienced temporary worsening of existing joint pain. Otherwise, no HI-RT adverse effects or injuries were reported. Researchers concluded that HI-RT supported by whey protein supplementation is a safe and highly effective option in the fight against osteosarcopenia in older men.

Protein Supplementation: Fuel for Growing Muscle Mass

Study methods included the addition of whey protein powder shakes corresponding to a total protein intake of 1.5 grams per kilogram of body mass in the HI-RT group, and a corresponding intake of 1.2 grams per kilogram of body weight in the control group.

The protein supplement used in the study contained approximately 80 grams (g) of protein, 5 g of carbohydrates, and 1.8 g of fat resulting in a caloric value of 362 kcal per 100 g of protein powder. A portion (300 milligrams (mg)) of calcium was further added to the protein powder.

Participants were advised to mix the protein powder with low-fat milk when possible, in order to realize a calcium intake of about 1,000 mg per day in all participants, and to split protein doses higher than 30 g per day.

Participants with low vitamin D levels were also supplemented with between 5,000 and 10,000 IE per week, depending on individual levels. Compliance with these guidelines was maintained through ongoing query during the exercise sessions.

Health conscious adults know the power of good nutrition when it comes to disease prevention, as well as the longevity-producing effects of vigorous exercise.

Fight Bone Disease With Diet and Exercise

Bone disease can affect both men and women and is increasingly common among aging populations. Health conscious adults know the power of good nutrition when it comes to disease prevention, as well as the longevity-producing effects of vigorous exercise.

To learn more about osteoprotective substances and how diet and exercise can prevent bone loss, consult GreenMedInfo.com, one of the world's most widely referenced, evidence-based natural medical resource with more than 10,000 natural health topics on how to live a longer and more vital life, naturally.

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ELIZABETH SVOBODA

In the late 1990s, Najah Bazy, a nurse in Dearborn, Michigan, made a house call to an Iraqi refugee family to check on their premature baby. When she arrived, she was shocked by how barren their home looked. The family had almost nothing: no stove, no fridge. The adults slept on the carpet. The baby—who'd gone home on a ventilator—was in a laundry basket, wrapped up in a towel.

Viscerally feeling the family's hardship, Bazy swung into action. She collected her relatives' extra appliances and household goods and dropped them off that same day. But the impact of her house call lingered much longer. As Bazy reflected on the widespread poverty in her city, she promised herself she'd work to spare other families the pain she'd witnessed.

We tend to think about empathy as an automatic response, like a parachute that deploys when we see someone in distress. But a new study suggests that while most of us have the capacity to feel other people's pain, we are more inclined to exercise that capacity when we have the desire to do so, as Bazy did.

That means focusing on this desire—our motivation to understand other people's emotions and perspectives—could be an important way to awaken our own empathy and promote a more empathic society.

The Empathy Reflex

Empathy sometimes feels as instinctive and immediate as pulling your hand back from a hot stove. "When we see a stroke aimed and just ready to fall on the leg or arm of another person," philosopher Adam Smith wrote in 1790, "we naturally shrink back our own leg or our own arm." This can seem like a very primal phenomenon. After all, when a child starts crying, others as young as 1 or 2 may join in.

But while empathy can activate in hair-trigger fashion, this activation is by no means guaranteed. Your response to a hungry person crouched on the sidewalk, or to a struggling refugee family, depends on a number of factors. What is your own past history? What does the person in need look like? Who else is with you, and how are they reacting to what they see?

In attempting to help people grow their empathy, past empathy training programs have tended to gloss over such situational factors. Instead, they've focused on strengthening people's emotional acumen by teaching skills such as "perspective taking"—training students to see things from someone else's point of view—or how to pick up on others' emotions. However, follow-up studies of these programs sometimes show that their impact fades over time.

"The idea that all empathy interventions need to bolster skills is an oversight," says Harvard University psychologist Erika Weisz. "Most people already have those skills."

But she's noticed that people choose not to use them in certain situations. A Boston Red Sox fan might be capable of empathizing with a New York Yankees jersey-wearer, but in the midst of a three-run Red Sox streak, the Bostonian might not feel inclined to share in the New Yorker's anguish.

In their new study, Weisz and her colleagues focused on instilling empathy by boosting people's motivation to iden-

tify with others. The results were striking: When researchers fueled students' desire to empathize, the students were more accurate at pinpointing what others were feeling two months later. Some of them also reported making more close friends.

Amping Up Motivation

Weisz and her team, including Stanford University psychologist Jamil Zaki, recruited college freshmen, who naturally have their antennae perked to the social nuances of their environment. "When students get to campus, they have this huge spike in openness to experience," Weisz says. "We were in a good position to see how motivation works in the wild."

The team tested three different ways to increase students' motivation to empathize with others. In one study, participants read a letter that was allegedly from a freshman having a hard time adjusting to high school. They were then advised to write back and tell the freshman that they could work on building up their empathy—and that doing so would help them connect with their classmates.

This setup encouraged letter-writers to embrace the concept that empathy can be strengthened, Weisz explains. "When we ask a participant to endorse a statement to another person, they tend to endorse those beliefs themselves." That, in turn, could boost their motivation to brush up on their empathy, because they believe their efforts will pay off.

In another study, the researchers gave students reading material that promoted empathy as a social norm, including testimonials from other students about the importance of empathy in their lives. Participants then wrote letters to high school freshmen that stressed how empathy was normal, promoted, and expected in their community. A third group of students, the "combined" group, took part in an activity that blended elements of the first two exercises, and a control group simply wrote letters addressing students' academic challenges.

The results supported Weisz's hunch that ratcheting up people's motivation would strengthen their empathy. Participants in each study showed higher accuracy when asked to describe what people who spoke in a video were feeling, compared to the control group. These effects were "sticky," as Weisz puts it, lasting for at least eight weeks after the studies ended.

Members of the combined group also reported making more close friends at college, possibly due to their empathic savvy—something Weisz says may set them up for success later in life. "Having that level of social integration is really important. It predicts all sorts of outcomes for well-being," she says.

How Desire Drives Empathy

Getting motivated to feel someone's pain doesn't necessarily involve thinking to yourself, "My friends understand what this person is feeling, so I'll try to do so," or "I can strengthen my own empathy, so I definitely should." Like other kinds of influence, motivation often operates on an unconscious level, shaping our priorities in profound ways over time.

Bazy's life trajectory illustrates how this can work. Her hometown of Dearborn, near Detroit, was rich with refugees from

different countries who were always ready to help one another. "Neighbors sat on the front porch and they shared food. Children would go from house to house," Bazy told CNN's Kathleen Toner. "And just the amount of care that people had for each other—this is where I learned to love my neighbor."

Like the people in Weisz's study, Bazy absorbed social norms that put a high value on empathy, motivating her to do the same. Other research suggests that social influences, especially early ones, can seamlessly promote this kind of value structure. In a seminal study of Holocaust rescuers, those who saved people from the Nazis often had compassionate role models within their families, which helped awaken their desire to serve others.

When the time was right, that deep-rooted motivation inspired Bazy to serve her community on a larger scale. Helping the struggling refugee family and their premature baby reminded Bazy of just how many people were in similar straits, and in 2004, she formally established a non-profit called Zaman International to serve families in poverty all over metro Detroit. To date, Zaman has delivered essentials such as furniture, food, and job training to more than 250,000 people.

How to Inspire Empathy

Having demonstrated that motivation can influence empathy, Weisz, Zaki, and their colleagues are thinking about how this finding could improve empathy training programs. One of the keys, Weisz says, will be for program designers to take participants' unique needs and desires into account. An effective workplace empathy course will probably look quite different from one designed for college students; what works will depend on what drives people's motivations in each case.

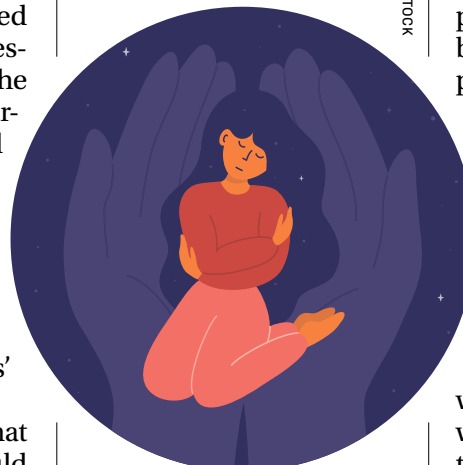
If young employees at a startup are anxious to please their bosses, those bosses could focus on sending the clear message—through actions as well as words—that they value empathy in the workers they oversee. If a group of doctors pride themselves on being the best at what they do, facilitators could point out that patients with empathic doctors have better health, which reflects well on the doctors. And because middle schoolers are so attuned to their friends' choices, Weisz has experimented with showing seventh-graders videos of their peers talking about the benefits of empathy.

"This approach holds promise to complement skill-building and create a menu of empathy-enhancing options that are tailored to people's needs," says Zaki.

Weisz's study results also lend insight into how we can motivate our own empathy in various contexts, from volunteering to rescuing someone in dire straits. When you surround yourself with others who consider empathy a cardinal virtue, that social norm will likely start to rub off on you, as it did on the students in Weisz's trials. And when you believe you can hone your empathic savvy through effort—a "growth mindset" approach to empathy—you'll be more inclined to do it.

"People are excited and invested to increase their empathy if they think they can," Weisz says. "A lot of people think of empathy as a static trait. Targeting motivations imparts lasting changes."

Elizabeth Svoboda is a writer in San Jose, Calif, and a regular contributor to Greater Good. She is the author of "What Makes a Hero?: The Surprising Science of Selflessness." Her newest book, for kids, is "The Life Heroic." This article was originally published on Greater Good online magazine.



The Matrix Is Already Here

Social media promised to connect us, but has left us isolated, scared, and tribal

ARASH JAVANBAKHT

About a year ago, I began to follow my interest in health and fitness on Instagram. Soon, I began to see more and more fitness-related accounts, groups, posts, and ads.

I kept clicking and following, and eventually, my Instagram became all about fit people, fitness and motivational material, and advertisements. Does this sound familiar?

While the algorithms and my brain kept me scrolling on the endless feeds, I was reminded of what digital marketers like to say: "Money is in the list." That is, the more customized your group, people, and page follows, the less time and money is needed to sell you related ideas. Instead, brand ambassadors will do the work, spreading products, ideas, and ideologies with passion and free of charge.

The artificial intelligence that decides what we see in our social media feeds is serving up a mix of our own biases designed to get us engaged and outraged.

I'm a psychiatrist who studies anxiety and stress, and I often write about how our politics and culture are mired in fear and tribalism. My co-author is a digital marketing expert who brings expertise to the technological-psychological aspect of this discussion. With the nation on edge, we believe it's critical to look at how easily our society is being manipulated into tribalism in the age of social media. Even after the exhausting election cycle is over, the division persists, if not widening, and conspiracy theories continue to emerge, grow, and divide on social media.

Based on our knowledge of stress, fear, and social media, we offer you some ways to weather the next few days and protect yourself against the current divisive environment.

The Promise, the Matrix

Those of us old enough to know what life was like before social media may remember how exciting Facebook was at its inception. Imagine, the ability to connect with old friends we hadn't seen for decades! Then, Facebook was a virtual dynamic conversation. This brilliant idea, to connect to others with shared experiences and interests, was strengthened with the advent of Twitter, Insta-

gram, and other apps.

Things didn't remain that simple. These platforms have morphed into Frankenstein's monsters, filled with so-called friends we've never met, slanted news stories, celebrity gossip, self-aggrandizement, and ads.

The artificial intelligence behind these platforms determines what you see based on your social media and web activity, including your engagement with pages and ads. For example, on Twitter, you may follow the politicians you like. Twitter algorithms quickly respond and show you more posts and people related to that political leaning. The more you like, follow, and share, the faster you find yourself moving in that political direction.

There is, however, this nuance: Those algorithms tracking you are often triggered by your negative emotions, typically impulsivity or anger.

As a result, the algorithms amplify the negative and then spread it by sharing it among groups. This might play a role in the widespread anger among those engaged in politics, regardless of their side of the aisle.

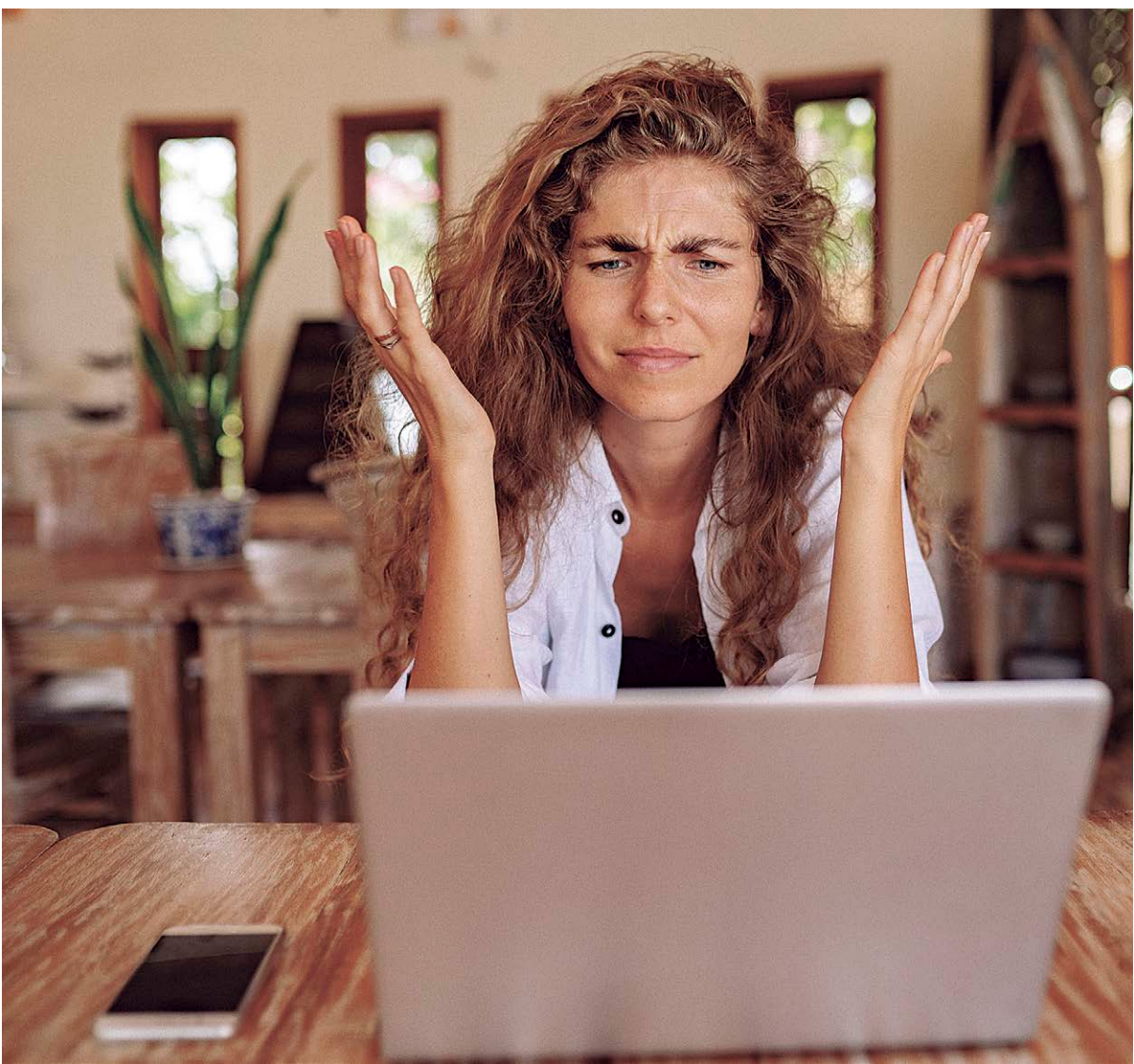
The Digital Tribe

Eventually, the algorithms expose us mostly to the ideology of one "digital tribe"—the same way my Instagram world became only superfit and active people. This is how one's matrix can become the extremes of conservatism, liberalism, different religions, climate-change worriers or deniers, or other ideologies. Members of each tribe keep consuming and feeding one another the same ideology while policing one another against opening up to "the others."

We are inherently tribal creatures anyway; but particularly when we're scared, we regress further into tribalism and tend to trust the information relayed to us by our tribe and not by others. Normally, that's an evolutionary advantage. Trust leads to group cohesion, and it helps us survive.

But now, that same tribalism—along with peer pressure, negative emotions, and short tempers—often leads to ostracizing those who disagree with you. In one study, 61 percent of Americans reported having unfriended, unfollowed, or blocked someone on social media because of their political views or posts.

Higher levels of social media use and exposure to sensationalized news about the pandemic are linked with increased depression and stress. And more time spent on social media correlates with higher anxiety, which can create a negative loop. One example: The Pew Research Center reports 90 percent of Republicans who get their political news only from conservative platforms said the United States has controlled the COVID-19 outbreak as much as possible. Yet less



Social media algorithms amplify the negative and then spread it widely.

Tribalism, peer pressure, and negative emotions often lead to ostracizing those who disagree with you.

than half of Republicans who rely on at least one other major news provider thought so.

The Matrix Does the Thinking Human thinking itself has been transformed. It's now more difficult for us to grasp the "big picture." A book is a long read these days, too much for some people. Scrolling and swiping culture has reduced our attention span. On average people spend 1.7 to 2.5 seconds on a Facebook newsfeed item, for example. It has also deactivated our critical thinking skills.

Even really big news doesn't last on our feeds longer than a few hours; after all, the next blockbuster story is just ahead. The matrix does the thinking; we consume the ideology and are bolstered by the likes of our tribemates. Before all this, our social exposure was mostly to family, friends, relatives, neighbors, classmates, TV, movies, radio, newspapers, magazines, and books. And that was enough. In that, there was diversity and a relatively healthy information diet with a wide variety of nutrients. We always knew people who weren't like-minded, but getting along with them was a normal life, part of the deal.

Now those different voices have become more distant—"the others" we love to hate on social media.

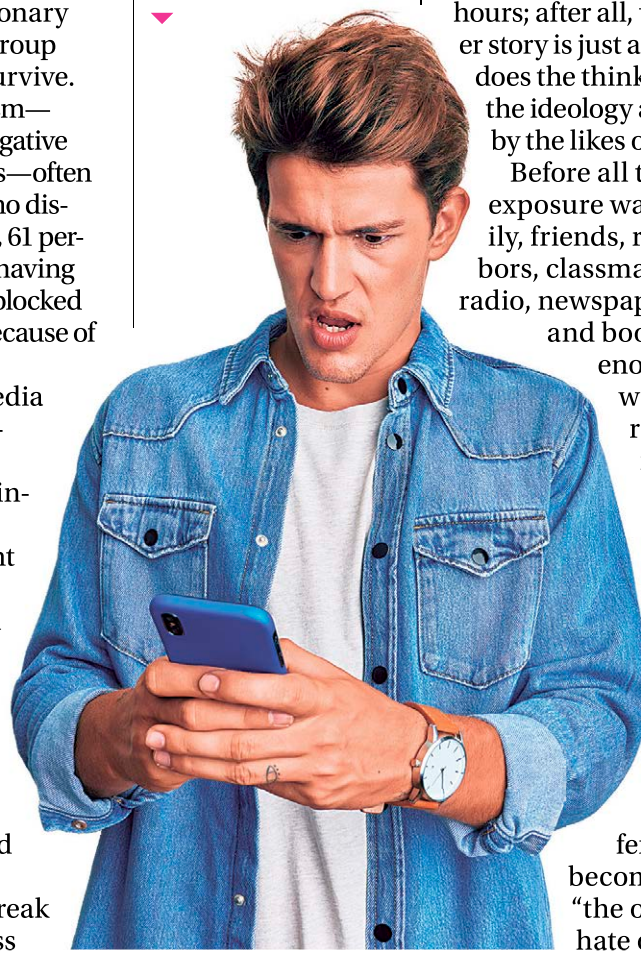
Is There a Red Pill? We need to take back control. Here are seven things we can do to unplug ourselves from the matrix:

- Review and update your ad preferences on social media at least once per year.
- Confuse the AI by flagging all ads and suggestions as "irrelevant."
- Practice being more inclusive. Check other websites, read their news, and don't "unfriend" people who think differently from you.
- Turn off cable news and read instead. Or at least put a disciplined limit on hours of exposure.
- If you think everything your tribe leaders say is absolute truth, think again.
- Go offline and go out (following local pandemic response requirements). Practice smart-phone-free hours.
- Finally, remember that your neighbor who supports the other football team or the other political party isn't your enemy; you can still go for a bike ride together. I did today, and we didn't even have to talk politics.

It's time to take the red pill. Take these seven steps, and you won't give in to the matrix.

This piece was co-authored with Maryna Arakcheieva, who is an expert in digital solutions and marketing.

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WISE HABITS

A Hundred Little Decisions: Training Ourselves at the Decision Point

Our day is decided in tiny increments that add up to meaningful action or comfort and distraction

LEO BABAUTA

"It is in your moments of decision that your destiny is shaped." -Tony Robbins

Over and over, throughout the day, we make a hundred little decisions: to work on this, to check email, to go to this website, to respond to messages, to grab a bite to eat, to meditate or exercise or do yoga, to have tea and watch a video—or to push into deep purpose.

A hundred little decision shape our day. They determine whether we've

It turns out we can train ourselves at the procrastination decision point.

had a day of focus and calm with meaningful work, or a day of distraction and procrastination.

It turns out, we can train ourselves at the decision point. When we have one of the hundred little decisions come up, we can train how we'd like to respond.

Do we want to go to distraction? To response mode? To comfort? To avoidance?

Or do we want to do something connected to our mission and purpose? To something more meaningful than our comfort?

Let's look at how to train at the decision point.

Start With the Motivation

If the motivation for this training is, "because it sounds good" or "so I can get more productive," you probably won't stick to it.

It has to mean more than that. So ask yourself these questions. Journal about them. Take them seriously if you want to get serious about this training.

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WISE HABITS

A Hundred Little Decisions: Training Ourselves at the Decision Point

Our day is decided in tiny increments that add up to meaningful action or comfort and distraction

Continued from **Page 15**

- Who do I care deeply about? Go beyond the obvious answer of your loved ones—who do you want to serve?
- How do I normally respond at one of the hundred little decisions? What’s my normal go-to exit? Where do I seek comfort? What is my habitual pattern? Get clear on this.
- How does this pattern affect me?
- How does it affect the people I care about?
- How powerful would it be for me and for them if I shifted this?

Make this something you care about. Make it more meaningful than the thing you usually go to. Make it about something more than yourself.

Starting the Training

To start the training, we want to make it really simple. We want to get good at recognizing the decision point, and then interrupting our usual pattern, just for a moment.

- So here’s what to do:
1. Put notes to yourself all over the place, where you won’t miss them. Your phone’s lock screen, a note on your computer, reminders that will pop up, notes on your bedside stand and bathroom mirror, and so forth. You want to remember to notice.
 2. Throughout the day, see if you can notice the hundred little decisions you make—when you’re deciding to switch to something new. You’re on one website, and you want to go to another. You’re done with one task, and you’re deciding what to do next. Over and over, notice these decision points.
 3. When you notice a decision point, have some kind of small thing you say to yourself, like, “Aha!” or “Breathe.”



SEVENTYFOUR/SHUTTERSTOCK

Put reminders everywhere, especially the fridge and other comfort retreats, so you notice when you decide to procrastinate.

Whatever feels right. It should call attention to the decision point.
4. At this moment, all you have to do is pause. Take three conscious breaths. Notice your surroundings.

That’s all you have to do. Try it for a week. After you pause and notice, you can go ahead and do whatever you want to do. Maybe it’s watch a video on Youtube, maybe it’s respond to a text. It doesn’t matter. Just notice, pause and breathe. You’re bringing awareness to the decision point, and interrupting your pattern just a little.

Deepen the Training
After a week of this practice, you’ll be better at it than before. You don’t have to be perfect, but better. You’ll get better and better each week as you practice. Give yourself at least a month to see some effects.

- At this point, you want to deepen the practice:
5. At the pause, after you take three conscious breaths, you widen your view. Ask yourself a question: “What am I being called to do right now?”
 6. Open your heart to the people you want to serve, and to your mission and purpose. Connect with your intent to serve something bigger than yourself, whether that be your family, your team, your community, or whatever else it may be.
 7. Now set an intention to serve them through this next task. It can still be an email or responding to a text if it feels connected to your purpose.

Let’s talk about the question, “What am I being called to do right now?” There’s no right answer to this question, but it puts you in a frame of mind where

you drop into your body to feel what feels right to you. This is not what feels comfortable or pleasurable, which is often the unconscious basis of our decision to distract. This is about what feels in service of something bigger.
For me, this simply means breathing, feeling the sensations in my body, and opening my mind to the question. Usually one specific thing comes up—for example, I need to write, or I need to respond to my community, or I need to read with my kids.
Whatever answer comes up, just trust it. Too often we go into indecision mode where we question ourselves and whether we’re doing the right thing. There’s no right thing. Trust what comes up for you and then commit to it. Be all in.

Continuing the Training

As you can see, after a week of this training, you’ll be much more aware of what you’re doing and when you’re deciding. You’ll become much more conscious at the decision point.
After two weeks, you’ll become much better at making more purposeful and conscious decisions. You won’t be as reactive or tied to your habitual patterns of comfort, avoidance, control, and exiting.
Beyond that, you continue to bring awareness until you’re aware of the decision point for 80 of the hundred little decisions. Maybe 85.
You practice bringing more connection to your purpose to each task, so that they feel more meaningful.
This is when the magic begins. But you have to train first. Start today.

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

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