

THE EPOCH TIMES

MIND &

BODY

ANNIE SPRATT/UNSPLASH



Children feel better when they reach out to help others.

MINDSET MATTERS

New Program Helps Pediatricians Prescribe Kindness

Innovative program shows that pediatricians can contribute to healthy child development by encouraging kindness

JILL SUTTIE

When parents take their children to a pediatrician for a wellness check, they expect to get reports on their children's healthy development—if they're growing properly, eating and sleeping well, or in need of vaccines.

They probably don't expect to get a prescription for kindness.

But at Senders Pediatrics, a private practice in Cleveland and one of the Greater Good Science Center's 16 Parenting Initiative grantees, this is exactly what parents

Kindness is a moral virtue that can lead to more trusting, cooperative societies.

are getting. The clinic's parent education coordinator, Joan Morgenstern, has developed a program to produce events, lessons, and tools promoting kindness. Based on evidence that practicing kindness and purpose benefits children, the program helps kids care for others and flourish themselves.

While the program is in its infancy, it's a model that is popular with parents and kids, and has helped the staff at Senders Pediatrics—particularly during this difficult time of COVID. Shelly Senders, the clinic's founding pediatrician, hopes

their focus on kindness and developing the "whole child" is a model that can be replicated more widely.

"My goal in all of this is to get the American Academy of Pediatrics to endorse the concept of teaching kindness in every pediatric practice," he says.

How and Why to Encourage Kids to Help Others

There are many reasons to encourage kids to be kind. For one, it helps build positive

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Reflux: Too Much or Not Enough Stomach Acid?

BRANDON LAGRECA

It used to be common knowledge that indigestion or heartburn was a sign of dietary indiscretion. Taking an antacid was the typical means of treatment. If the heartburn sufferer was ahead of the game, he or she would avoid suspect foods or take a natural remedy to improve digestive function.

Now, a pharmaceutical drug is prescribed to treat a full-blown disorder.

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is a disorder of chronic heartburn. GERD

may also be a silent cause of breathing issues if ascending stomach acid irritates the bronchioles. It's thought to be caused by an overproduction of stomach acid that gets pushed up into the esophagus. Holistic medicine posits an opposing view of the underlying cause, with reflux occurring due to an impairment of proper digestive function.

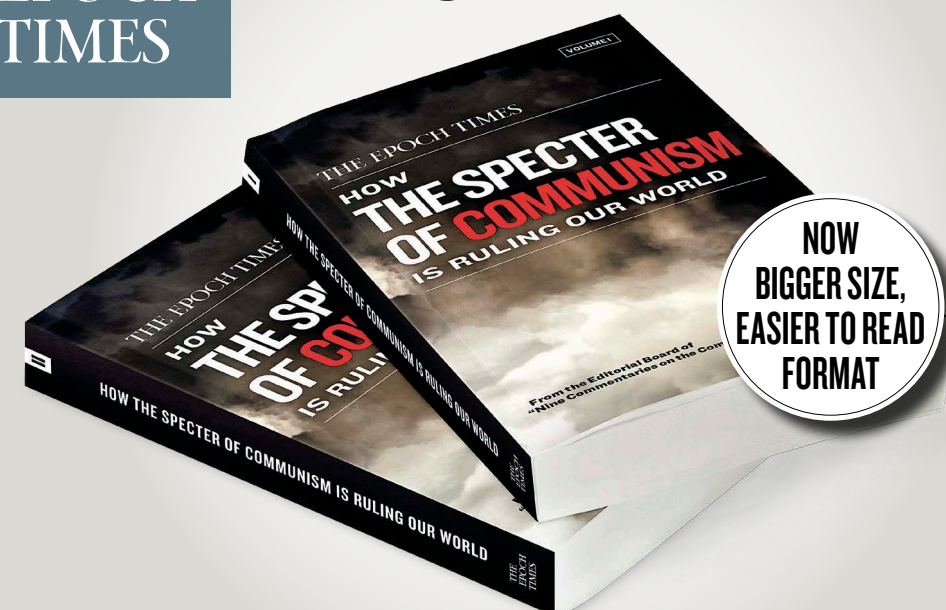
Modern proton pump inhibitor drugs are designed to treat a limited presentation of patients with reflux—those who

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BRETT HONDOW/SHUTTERSTOCK



Many people with acid reflux issues mistakenly reach for antacids.

THE
EPOCH
TIMESThe Book You've Been
Waiting for...“Extremely well
researched and true.”“The Truth, as horrifying as it is,
shall set us free. This should be
on this country's academia's
list of required reading.”

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Turmeric is one the most thoroughly researched plants in the world and a possible cause of sleepless nights for some pharmaceutical company executives.

Science Confirms Turmeric Is as Effective as 14 Drugs

Over 12,000 studies reveal wide-ranging effects of a potent compound found in this bright spice

SAYER JI

If ever there were an herb that puts existential fear into the bottom line of pharmaceutical companies, it's turmeric.

Turmeric is one the most thoroughly researched plants in existence today. Its medicinal properties and components (primarily curcumin) have been the subject of over 12,000 peer-reviewed and published biomedical studies. In fact, our five-year-long research project on this sacred plant has revealed over 800 potential preventive and therapeutic applications, as well as 250 distinct beneficial physiological effects.

Given the sheer density of research performed on this remarkable spice, it's no wonder that a growing number of studies have concluded that it compares favorably to a variety of conventional medications.

Lipitor/Atorvastatin (cholesterol medication)

A 2008 study published in the journal *Drugs in R & D* found that a standardized preparation of curcuminoids from turmeric compared favorably to the drug atorvastatin (trade name Lipitor) on endothelial dysfunction, the underlying pathology of the blood vessels that drives atherosclerosis, in association with reductions in inflammation and oxidative stress in Type 2 diabetic patients.

Corticosteroids (steroid medications)

A 1999 study published in the journal *Phytotherapy Research* found that the primary polyphenol in turmeric, the saffron-colored pigment known as curcumin, compared favorably to steroids in the management of chronic anterior uveitis, an inflammatory eye disease. A 2008 study published in *Critical Care Medicine* found that curcumin compared favorably to the corticosteroid drug dexamethasone in the animal model as an alternative therapy for protecting lung transplantation-associated injury by down-regulating inflammatory genes. An earlier 2003 study published in *Cancer Letters* found the same drug also compared favorably to dexamethasone in a lung ischemia-reperfusion injury model.

Prozac/Fluoxetine & Imipramine (antidepressants)

A 2011 study published in the journal *Acta Poloniae Pharmaceutica* found that curcumin compared favorably to both drugs in reducing depressive behavior in an animal model.

Aspirin (blood thinner)

A 1986 in vitro and ex vivo study published in the journal *Arzneimittelforschung* found that curcumin has antiplatelet and prostacyclin modulating effects compared to aspirin, indicating it may have value in patients prone to vascular thrombosis and requiring anti-arthritides therapy.

Anti-Inflammatory Drugs

A 2004 study published in the journal *Oncogene* found that curcumin (as well as resveratrol) were effective alternatives to the drugs aspirin, ibuprofen,

sulindac, phenylbutazone, naproxen, indomethacin, diclofenac, dexamethasone, celecoxib, and tamoxifen in exerting anti-inflammatory and antiproliferative activity against tumor cells.

Oxaliplatin (chemotherapy drug)
A 2007 study published in the *International Journal of Cancer* found that curcumin compares favorably with oxaliplatin as an antiproliferative agent in colorectal cell lines.

Metformin (diabetes drug)

A 2009 study published in the journal *Biochemistry and Biophysical Research Community* explored how curcumin might be valuable in treating diabetes, finding that it activates AMPK (which increases glucose uptake) and suppresses gluconeogenic gene expression (which suppresses glucose production in the liver) in hepatoma cells. Interestingly, they found curcumin to be 500 times to 100,000 times (in the form known as tetrahydrocurcuminoids (THC)) more potent than metformin in activating AMPK and its downstream target acetyl-CoA carboxylase (ACC).

Another way in which turmeric and its components reveal their remarkable therapeutic properties is in research on drug-resistant and multi-drug-resistant cancers. We have two sections on our site dedicated to researching natural and integrative therapies on these topics, and while there are dozens of substances with demonstrable efficacy against these chemotherapy- and radiation-resistant cancers, curcumin tops both in research on drug-resistant and multi-drug-resistant cancers. We have two sections on our site dedicated to researching natural and integrative therapies on these topics, and while there are dozens of substances with demonstrable efficacy against these chemotherapy- and radiation-resistant cancers, curcumin tops both in research on drug-resistant and multi-drug-resistant cancers. We have two sections on our site dedicated to researching natural and integrative therapies on these topics, and while there are dozens of substances with demonstrable efficacy against these chemotherapy- and radiation-resistant cancers, curcumin tops both in research on drug-resistant and multi-drug-resistant cancers.

We have identified 28 studies on curcumin's ability to either induce cell death or sensitize multi-drug resistant cancer cell lines to conventional treatment.

Considering how strong a track record that turmeric (curcumin) has, having been used as both food and medicine in a wide range of cultures, for thousands of years, a strong argument can be made for using curcumin as a drug alternative or adjuvant in cancer treatment.

Or, better yet, use certified organic (non-irradiated) turmeric in lower culinary doses on a daily basis so that heroic doses won't be necessary later in life after a serious disease sets in. Nourishing yourself, rather than self-medicating with "nutraceuticals," should be the goal of a healthy diet.

This entire database of 2,666 NCBI-hyperlinked turmeric abstracts can be purchased and downloaded as a PDF at the downloadable turmeric document page on GreenMedInfo.com.

*Sayer Ji is the founder of GreenMedInfo.com, a reviewer at the *International Journal of Human Nutrition and Functional Medicine*, co-founder and CEO of *Systome Biomed*, and adviser to the *National Health Federation*. This article was originally published on GreenMedInfo.com*

Lockdowns Put Kids at Risk of Allergies, Asthma, Autoimmune Diseases

A year of COVID restrictions has left children without microbial exposures crucial to their developing immune systems

BYRAM W. BRIDLE

"Eat dirt!" is a phrase I remember well. It was in the title of an article published by Harvard University environmental health professor, Dr. Scott T. Weiss, and it captured my attention while I was learning about an immunological concept known as the "hygiene hypothesis."

The core of the idea is that we live in a microbial world: an environment full of bacteria, parasites, viruses, and fungi. And that our interactions with these microbes after birth are extremely important to educate our immune systems to function properly. When we are born, our immune systems are still maturing. I like the way researchers led by microbiologist Sally F. Bloomfield expressed it in their study:

"The immune system is a learning device, and at birth it resembles a computer with hardware and software but little data. Additional data must be supplied during the first years of life, through contact with micro-organisms from other humans and the natural environment."

The immune system has many potent mechanisms for killing pathogens. It needs to be carefully regulated to ensure it can eliminate dangerous microbes from the body without causing excessive harm to our own tissues. The interactions we have with our environment early in life are essential for our immune systems to learn to differentiate between safe and dangerous disease-causing microbes.

Our bodies are covered inside and out with micro-organisms that, under normal circumstances, happily cohabit with us and promote a healthy immune system. If infants, toddlers, and young children aren't sufficiently exposed to the microbial world around them, their ability to properly regulate their own immune systems can be compromised.

To return to the computer analogy, the data that gets uploaded into the software is incomplete. This lack of data can cause the immune system to struggle to differentiate between what is truly dangerous and should be eliminated, and what isn't dangerous and shouldn't be responded to. In plain terms, this scenario can promote allergies, asthma, and autoimmune diseases.

Now think about government-led responses to COVID-19, which was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020. The lockdown and restriction policies that have been enacted to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 contradict the recommendations to ensure proper immunological development in children.

Data suggest that SARS-CoV-2 doesn't represent a greater danger to children than the annual flu. Yet social interactions of children have been severely limited, including removing them from schools. Most of their extracurricular activities have been canceled and they have been discouraged from leaving their homes. Even the air they breathe

mune diseases.

Concrete Jungles

Scientists are moving away from using the term "hygiene hypothesis" because it could be misinterpreted as meaning that hygiene isn't good for a developing immune system. This isn't true, nor should anybody advocate for actually eating dirt to gain exposure to microbes. Moderation and targeted hygiene would be best.

Societies have also adopted behaviors that limit exposure to microbes. The overuse of antibiotics exacerbates the problem by non-discriminately eliminating good microbes along with bad ones. Specifically, we need to practice proper hygiene in the context of trying to prevent infectious diseases but still allow our immune systems to interact with safe and essential microbes. Many middle-income countries have seen an epidemic of allergic diseases over the past several decades. This is, in part, due to increased urbanization which is akin to living in "concrete jungles" with reduced exposure to the natural environment.

Bloomfield and her team of microbiology researchers provide some suggestions for how to deal with the rise in allergies.

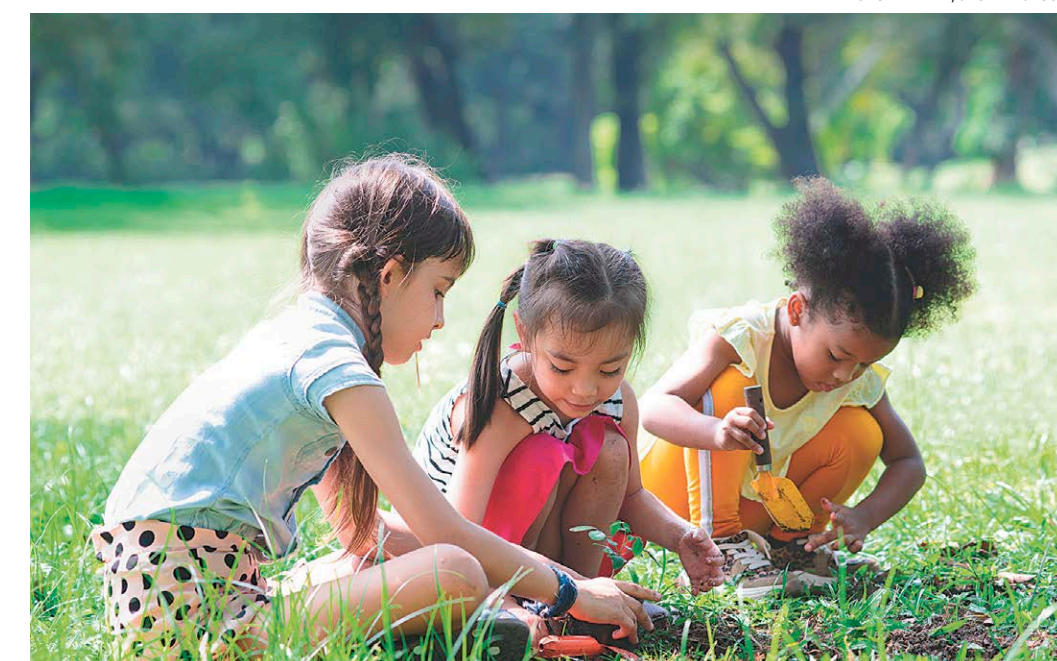
"Evidence suggests a combination of strategies, including natural child-birth, breast-feeding, increased social exposure through sport, other outdoor activities, less time spent indoors, diet and appropriate antibiotic use, may help restore the microbiome and perhaps reduce risks of allergic disease," they advise. "Preventive efforts must focus on early life."

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Children are being denied experiences that aren't just fun—they are strengthening.



We live in a microbial world and our immune system learns how to deal with endless varieties of bacteria, fungi, and viruses by encountering them when we are young.

is often filtered by masks and there is prevalent use of hand sanitizer.

Compromised Immunological Development

In short, most COVID-19 policies have maximized the potential for children to develop dysregulated immune systems. As a viral immunologist, I wasn't overly concerned about this in the early stages of the pandemic when "temporary" measures were put in place to "flatten the curve."

We need to practice proper hygiene in the context of trying to prevent infectious diseases but still allow our immune systems to interact with safe and essential microbes.

However, there is cause for concern one year later, after many places in Canada and other countries have spent months in lockdowns or with very limited social contact and activities to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The youngest among us have had their immunological development compromised for one year and growing. The more immature the immune system is, the more prone it will be to becoming dysregulated during the pandemic.

For example, the problem would likely

be more prevalent in infants than toddlers. Although the human immune system is largely mature by approximately age six, some important components are still developing into adolescence. As such, the only people who can be certain that current isolation policies will have no negative impact on their immune system's ability to self-regulate are adults.

An unfortunate and under-appreciated long-term legacy of this pandemic will likely be a cluster of "pandemic youth" who grow up to suffer higher-than-average rates of allergies, asthma, and autoimmune diseases. This will hold true for children in all countries that enacted isolation policies.

Interestingly, it has been noted that the new messenger RNA-based COVID-19 vaccines that are packaged inside liposome nanoparticles might be contraindicated for some individuals with a propensity toward severe allergic responses. Ironically, we may be setting up many of our youth to develop hypersensitivities to this vaccine technology when they are older.

Raising children during the pandemic has largely occurred in isolated and sanitized environments that are unprecedented in extent and duration. These kids are at greater risk of developing hypersensitivities and autoimmune diseases than anyone before them. The immune systems of children aren't designed to develop in isolation from the microbial world, so let's consider letting children be children again.

Byram W. Bridle is an associate professor of viral immunology at the department of pathology at the University of Guelph in Canada. This article was first published on [The Conversation](http://TheConversation.com).

Risk Factors for Type 2 Diabetes Lowered if You Start Eating before 8:30 AM

SARAH COWNLEY

Researchers may have found a new way to reduce risk factors for Type 2 diabetes. According to a study recently presented by the Northwestern University in Chicago, people who start eating before 8:30 a.m. had lower blood sugar levels and less insulin resistance. These are two risk factors that could help to reduce the incidence of Type 2 diabetes.

The study's conclusion suggests meal timing is strongly associated with metabolic measures.

When the body doesn't respond well to the insulin that the pancreas is producing, insulin resistance can occur, and glucose is less able to enter the cells. People who

experience this may be at higher risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.

Insulin resistance and high blood sugar levels affect metabolism, which breaks down the food into proteins, carbohydrates, and fats. When these normal processes become disrupted, metabolic disorders such as diabetes can occur.

Lead researcher Dr. Marriam Ali said, "With a rise in metabolic disorders such as diabetes, we wanted to expand our understanding of nutritional strategies to aid in addressing this growing concern."

Time-Restricted Eating

Previous research has found that time-restricted eating has consistently demonstrated improvement in metabolic health. Ali and the team set out to test whether the time of day of eating affected metabolic measures.

For the study, researchers analyzed data from 10,575 adults who participated in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. Participants were divided into three groups depending on the total duration of food intake. This included less

than 10 hours, 10 to 13 hours, and more than 13 hours per day. Six subgroups were also created based on eating duration start time—before or after 8:30 a.m.

Researchers found that fasting blood sugar levels didn't differ significantly among eating interval groups. Insulin resistance was higher with shorter eating interval duration but lower across all groups with an eating start time before 8:30 a.m.

The study's conclusion suggests that timing is strongly associated with metabolic measures. Researchers support early eating strategies for the risk reduction of Type 2 diabetes and believe physicians should discuss these techniques with at-risk patients.

*Sarah Cownley earned a diploma in nutritional therapy from Health Sciences Academy in London, and she enjoys helping others by teaching healthy lifestyle changes through her personal consultations and with her regular contributions to the *Doctors Health Press*. This article was originally published on BelMarraHealth.com.*



New research suggests an early breakfast may be an important way some people can avoid Type 2 diabetes.



If the fresh produce doesn't look good, opt for frozen fruits and vegetables: they're flash-frozen right after picking so often they are more fresh than the 'fresh' produce, depending on where you live.

◀ Focus your food shopping on the periphery of the grocery store to avoid processed foods.

ter to gain the nutrients of produce, organic or not, than to go without.

4. Consider Frozen

Frozen foods get a bit of a bad reputation, but many companies have stepped up their game and you can find a variety of nutritious options in the frozen section.

If the fresh produce doesn't look good, opt for frozen fruits and vegetables: they're flash-frozen right after picking so often they are more fresh than the "fresh" produce, depending on where you live.

5. Try to Stick to 'Whole' Ingredients

An easy way to eat cleanly is to eat simply. Shopping the perimeter of the store will already introduce you to many unprocessed foods, but the interior aisles have options, too. Flour, nuts, dried fruits, beans, and rice are all examples of whole foods.

The biggest thing? Check the ingredients list. The simpler the ingredients, the better. If you don't recognize or can hardly read the ingredients, do without.

A Few More Tips:

- Go in with a list. Studies have shown that entering the store with a set list of items to purchase reduces impulse purchases—most of which happen in the candy, cookies, and chips section.
- Bring reusable bags. Clean grocery shopping isn't only what you buy, but also what you carry your groceries home in. Single-use plastic bags are unsustainable and end up littering our environment and clogging waterways. Many European countries have banned them, with some U.S. cities and states beginning to follow suit. If you don't already, bring bags from home. It's an easy transition to reduce your waste (and those reusable bags carry so much more!)
- Online grocery shopping continues to grow in popularity as the pandemic drags on. You can follow these same steps while shopping online. Products should be clearly labeled and many stores even have filters that allow you to narrow down your search to only organic products.
- Reduce consumption of canned goods. While many canned goods, especially fruits and vegetables, don't contain many ingredients, they contain a harmful by-product from their packaging: BPA, a plastic additive that mimics hormones and disrupts our biochemistry.
- If possible, buy in bulk. Bulk purchases often save you money in terms of price per ounce and reduce packaging waste. Be smart about what you bulk-buy—make sure that the item won't go bad before you get around to using it, and that you have room for the bulk items back at home.

The Bottom Line

The food we eat is a huge indicator of our health. Eating cleanly and simply, exposing your body to as few toxic pollutants as possible, will benefit your well-being. Be flexible; sometimes the only option may be non-organic or in the frozen section. Pick and choose what works for you and your budget, and know that every step toward eating cleanly is a step in the right direction.

Environmental Health News is a publication of Environmental Health Sciences, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to driving science into public discussion and policy on environmental health issues.

Tips to Bring Fewer Chemicals Home From the Groceries Store

How to shop for foods low in pesticides, additives, preservatives and packaging by-products

A grocery store is a wonderful place: thousands of ingredients and products at your fingertips available to combine, cook, and eat. However, that choice can be overwhelming: While shoppers in the 1970s chose from a mere 9,000 products, shoppers today choose from more than 47,000.

Selecting food that is clean and healthy for you and your family can be daunting, so we've put together 10 tips for cleaner grocery shopping that will help to navigate your options.

We're defining clean here as products devoid of pesticides, additives, or preservatives, and packaging by-products.

1. Rule of Thumb: Buy From the Perimeter

Most stores line the walls with the simplest of products: produce, the butcher,

the bakery, dairy, etc. Aisles in the middle contain most of the processed foods that generally have additives and preservatives that you are better to avoid.

Now, there are caveats to this rule. For example, the bakery often also has items such as highly-refined cakes and cookies that are by no means beneficial to your health, and the dairy section provides a hearty supply of artificially flavored and sweetened creamers. You can find unhealthy products in every department, but the departments around the perimeter of the store contain the most simple and wholesome ingredients.

2. Buy Local

First and foremost, buy local. This can be anything from the weekly farmer's market to a local bakery to local ingredients sourced by your grocery store. Smaller businesses are more likely to use safer practices when cultivating their goods.

Buying local also reduces your carbon footprint. Imported ingredients contribute to fuel consumption and air pollution as they're flown in from overseas or driven across the country in a semi-truck. Local produce is fresher, often cleaner, and requires less waste to get to you.

3. Buy Organic

Purchase organic food when possible, as it's grown without pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, etc. Particularly pay attention to the Environmental Working Group's "Dirty Dozen." This is the produce with the most pesticide residue. This year's list includes strawberries, spinach, kale, nectarines, apples, grapes, peaches, cherries, pears, tomatoes, celery, and potatoes.

If your budget doesn't allow for all things organic, don't sweat it: it's bet-

COVID-19 Is Evolving but so Are Our Antibodies

While viruses mutate randomly, our immune system has a more targeted process of improvement

SARAH L CADDY & MENG WANG

The emergence of "variants of concern" has raised questions about our long-term immunity to COVID-19. Will the antibodies we make after being infected with or vaccinated against the dominant lineage, called D614G, protect us against future viral variants?

To answer this question, scientists have been examining how our antibody responses to this coronavirus develop over time. Several studies have recently compared the difference between antibodies produced straight after a COVID-19 infection and those that can be detected six months later. The findings have been both impressive and reassuring.

Although there are fewer coronavirus-specific antibodies detectable in the blood six months after infection, the antibodies that remain have undergone significant changes. Researchers have tested their ability to bind to proteins from the new COVID-19 variants and found that 83 percent of the "mature" antibodies were better at recognizing the variants. A recent preprint (a study that is yet to undergo peer review) also found that some antibodies present six months after infection were starting to be able to recognize related, but entirely distinct viruses, such as the coronavirus that causes SARS.

How is this possible? Quite simply because the B cells that make antibodies evolve after they are first activated. While it is well known that viruses can mutate over time, our own B cells can also take advantage of mutations to make superior antibodies.

Within the lymph nodes, the B cells that can make better antibodies after somatic hypermutation are given positive signals to make them replicate faster. Other B cells fall by the wayside and die. This process is called affinity maturation; the strength or "affinity" with which antibodies bind to their target matures and improves over time. After this rigorous selection,

Somatic Hypermutation

A key difference between the mutation of antibodies and viruses is that mutations

in antibodies are not entirely random.

They are, in fact, directly caused by an enzyme that is only found in B cells, known as Aid (activation-induced deaminase). This enzyme deliberately causes mutations in the DNA responsible for making the part of the antibody that can recognise the virus. This mutation mechanism was first understood by pioneering researchers at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, UK, almost 20 years ago.

AID activity leads to a much higher rate of mutation in B cells than in any other cell in the body. This phenomenon is called "somatic hypermutation."

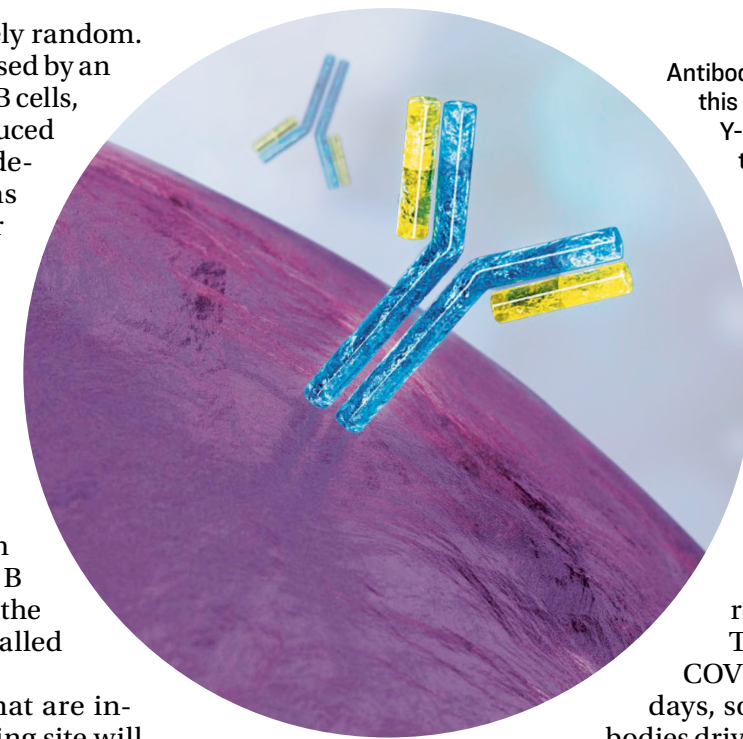
Some of the mutations that are induced in the antibody binding site will improve the binding of that antibody to the target virus. But some mutations will have no effect, and others will actually decrease the antibody's ability to latch onto the target virus. This means there needs to be a system whereby B cells making the best antibodies will be selected.

B cells congregate in small glands called lymph nodes while they are developing. Lymph nodes are found all around the body and often get bigger if you are fighting an infection.

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Coronaviruses, like all viruses, mutate in a haphazard fashion.

is called affinity maturation; the strength or "affinity" with which antibodies bind to their target matures and improves over time. After this rigorous selection,



Antibodies, as shown by this illustration, are large Y-shaped proteins the immune system uses to identify and neutralize foreign objects such as pathogenic bacteria and viruses.

USA28777777/SHUTTERSTOCK

the newly emerged B cell will now mass produce its improved antibody, leading to a more effective immune response.

The course of a typical COVID infection is ten to 14 days, so the first wave of antibodies driving out the virus doesn't

have long enough to evolve because affinity maturation normally takes place over weeks. But research from the United States has shown that small non-infectious bits of SARS-CoV-2 remain in the body after an infection is cleared, so B cells can keep being reminded of what the virus looks like. This allows antibody evolution to continue for months after an infection has been resolved.

Overall, antibody evolution means that if a person is infected with coronavirus for a second time, antibodies with far superior binding ability will be ready and waiting. Antibody evolution will begin after the first vaccination or infection so that much-improved antibodies will be present if the virus is encountered at a later date. Hopefully, it is comforting to know that it is not just the virus that is mutating, our own antibodies are keeping pace.

Sarah L Caddy is a clinical research fellow in viral immunology and veterinary surgeon at the University of Cambridge in the UK. Meng Wang is a cancer research UK clinician scientist fellow at the University of Cambridge. This article was first published on The Conversation.

Reflux: Too Much or Not Enough Stomach Acid?

Misdiagnosed digestive issues can be treated—but not with commonly prescribed drugs

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overproduce gastric acid. However, the majority of patients with reflux don't produce too much stomach acid, but not enough. Let's review the physiology of digestion:

Chewing and tasting food allows the tongue to signal the brain to prepare the stomach for digestion. The gut and brain together decide how much gastric acid is needed to further breakdown food. Parietal cells secrete gastric acid until the pH of the stomach gets to be a 1 or 2 (very acidic), liquifying the stomach contents. When this occurs, the sphincter surrounding the duodenum opens up to allow the liquified contents to pass through to the small intestine. If this system works adequately, a moderate-sized meal should exit the stomach within two hours.

Reflux on an empty stomach may be a sign of an overproduction of stomach acid.

A pathology of the parietal cells can result in excess secretion of gastric acid. Stopping the hypersecretion of stomach acids is the rationale behind the development of proton pump inhibitor drugs such as Prilosec, Prevacid, and Nexium, all of which inhibit the release of stomach acid. Experiencing reflux on an empty stomach may be a sign of an overproduction of stomach acid.

More common is reflux after a meal, especially when laying down. This is typical

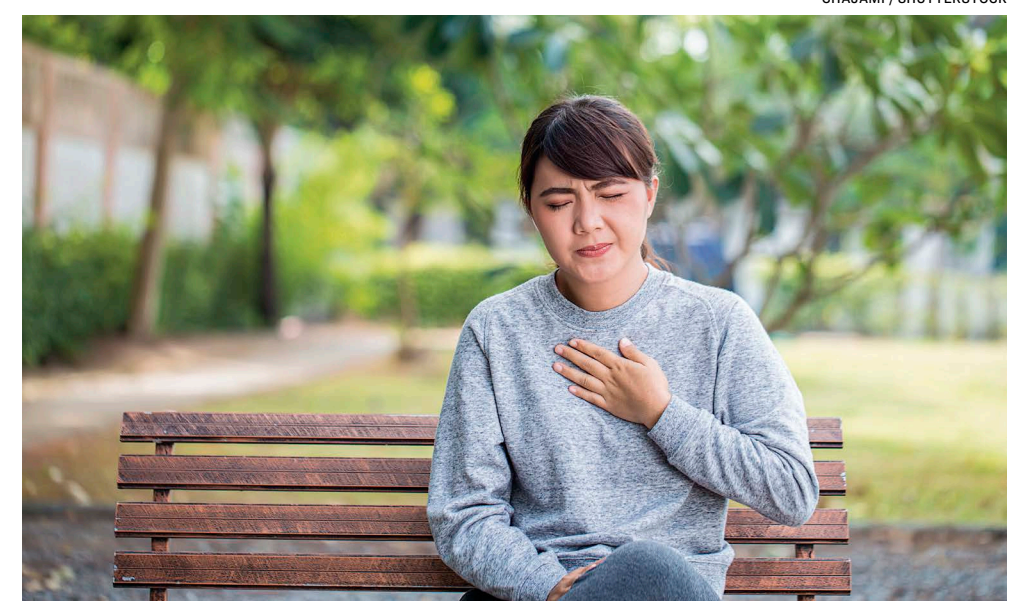
of insufficient stomach acid slowing the digestive process and preventing the stomach from emptying in a timely fashion, known as gastroparesis. With less acid in the stomach, the signal to tightly close the hiatal sphincter is weak and the esophageal opening is compromised. Picture the stomach churning, trying to do more work with less acid.

This combination results in the pushing of stomach acid up the esophagus, causing reflux.

Here, the solution is to utilize remedies that improve digestive function and ensure proper stomach emptying. Taking a reflux drug will give symptomatic relief but it further blunts digestion. In turn, larger and larger food particles of poorly digested food pass into the small intestine. If enzymes, bile, and intestinal flora cannot complete the job started by the stomach, these larger food particles can act as irritants, trigger an immune response, and promote inflammation.

Another problem associated with decreasing stomach acid production is malnutrition. The parietal cells that produce gastric acid also release a compound called intrinsic factor into the stomach. This compound is necessary for the absorption of vitamin B12. Impairing the function of these cells can lead to a B12 deficiency, especially in susceptible populations such as the elderly.

If reflux occurs after a meal, it's possible the problem is gastroparesis due to insufficient gastric acid. You can test it yourself by seeing if a digestive aid improves the problem. Taking 1-2 tablespoons of raw, organic apple cider vinegar in a little water prior to a meal will likely improve reflux of this type by supplementing the gastric acid. Another traditional remedy is Swed-



Taking a reflux drug will give symptomatic relief but it further blunts digestion.

ish bitters, taken after a meal to encourage the parietal cells to excrete stomach acid by stimulating bitter receptors in the lining of the stomach. If either is helpful but reflux persists, betaine hydrochloride pills are a stronger option.

Healing from reflux also requires eliminating irritating foods. Processed and refined foods, sugar, spicy foods, and alcohol can all contribute to reflux. Eating too large a meal or drinking too much water with a meal (diluting stomach acid) can also weaken digestion. Consuming raw, fermented foods with meals, such as homemade sauerkraut, also strongly enhances digestion.

If you are suffering from reflux, don't settle for a "band-aid" solution and get to the root of the problem. Proton pump inhibitor drugs are appropriate for those who genuinely overproduce gastric acid, but these drugs are meant for short-term use only. Taking them for years further degrades digestive vigor for someone not producing enough stomach acid. Clean up your diet and try one or more of these natural remedies to reclaim your digestive health and live free of the symptoms of reflux.

Brandon LaGreca is the founder and director of East Troy Acupuncture, an integrative medical clinic serving south-east Wisconsin, where he specializes in whole-food nutrition, ancestral health, and environmental medicine.

◀ The discomfort of reflux can send us seeking a prescription, but many people would be better off first ensuring that their reflux comes from too much acid rather than too little.

MINDSET MATTERS

New Program Helps Pediatricians Prescribe Kindness

Innovative program shows that pediatricians can contribute to healthy child development by encouraging kindness

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relationships, which are important for developmental growth and success in life. More broadly, kindness is a moral virtue that can lead to more trusting, cooperative societies. And embracing kindness as a value from a young age can have positive effects later in life.

When kids are kind, they are happier and less likely to have social or behavioral problems. Kids who do nice things for others may have a greater sense of agency and purpose, too—meaning, they see that their actions can have a positive impact in the world and feel more capable of changing things for the better.

Given the benefits to mental health, it's not too surprising that kids who practice kindness could be physically healthier, too. At least one study found that adolescents randomly assigned to volunteer had significantly better cardiovascular function than those waiting to volunteer.

To kick off Senders Pediatrics's kindness program, Morgenstern organized a Community Kindness Day in 2019 that gathered hundreds of families at a local community center. Researcher Stephen Post presented data showing that kindness improves physical and mental health, and booths were set up where kids could showcase their philanthropic work in the community and inspire other kids to get involved and find purpose by doing good.

"We really focused on our Cleveland community that had already taken the initiative to get involved in community activism, social service, and serving others," she said. "The fact that we were having kids lead was probably one of the most impactful parts of the program."

According to Maurice Elias, a Rutgers University researcher who has been an adviser to Morgenstern and her program, the event was a success on multiple levels. It gave parents a reason to want to instill kindness in kids, legitimized the importance of social-emotional skills, and allowed kids to take charge.

"When kids engage in these kinds of public acts, it builds their skills, self-esteem, and confidence; it gives them an incentive to learn how to communicate better," he says.

The Ways Senders Pediatrics Encourages Kindness

Morgenstern comes from an education background, where the virtues of encouraging children's social and emotional growth have been understood for years. But to see this idea promoted in a pediatric clinic was novel for her.

"I thought, 'Wouldn't it be remarkable if doctors were spouting this message about social and emotional learning?' Because doctors exude a sense of authority (for some people, at least), that means people will pay more attention to the message," she says.

Her overall concept was to create opportunities for kids to acquire a habit of kindness that could be integrated into their lives, while also stressing the importance of health. After Kindness Day, she developed worksheets, activity cards, kits, monthly newsletters, and more—all aimed at promoting these important values while not stressing the busy pediatric staff.

Senders was particularly enthused about Morgenstern's kindness cards, which had ideas for practicing kindness at nearly any age and could be handed out at well checks.

"You can start at age three, four, or five, and integrate kindness into your regular well-child care visit," he says.

Unfortunately, some of Morgenstern's ideas had to be jettisoned when COVID hit, including the second annual Kindness Day. But she got creative and sent out card-making materials around Valentine's Day, encouraging kids to send valentines to people in the community who could use a boost—like first responders or elderly folks in nursing homes. In December, she asked kids to perform a good deed for someone



FIZES/SHUTTERSTOCK

else, providing kids with a "kindness kit" with more ideas of how to be kind.

According to Elias, these types of activities are successful because they expand a child's idea of how kindness matters more broadly in the world and reveals the intrinsic rewards of being kind.

"Kids begin to understand that many people need kindness," he says. "Once they start to think about these folks, and they do something kind and get a reply, that is incredibly reinforcing."

Senders believes that the kindness initiative not only helps children develop moral character, it also makes them less afraid to go to the doctor.

Morgenstern wasn't just interested in helping children, though. She also wanted to consider how parents were struggling during the pandemic. Many of them were having a hard time getting their kids to wear masks, so Morgenstern began writing children's books, such as one called "The Task of the Mask," which made salient to kids the reasons why mask-wearing is an act of kindness.

"Something like this is of tremendous value to parents, because it deals with the issues that parents are experiencing," says Elias. "It's something that's feasible that's not going to take much time but is engaging to kids."

Why Senders May Be On to Something

While it's unclear how much Senders's program can change the culture of a whole community, it has been well-received by parents who kids have participated.

After attending Kindness Day, a 7-year-old patient at Senders Pediatrics, Garrett, was encouraged to apply for a "B.E.E. Kind" grant the clinic designed, which paid for the creation of a "Kindness Corner" at his school. He and his mom, Shelly Hyland, purchased books on kindness, put Post-it notes in the school library where kids could leave kindness messages for each other, and created a snack cart for those who couldn't afford school snacks.

"I was able to teach my son about writing grants to get money and materials needed to support ideas and causes that he is passionate about," says Hyland. "He learned that he could make a difference with a simple idea, even though he was only 7 years old!"

Has it made a difference in her son's life? Hyland thinks so.

"I believe focusing on kindness has allowed my child to read others' emotions and have empathy," she says. "His idea and execution of the Kindness Corner drew support from the school and community, all of which had a positive impact on others."

Another parent, Chrishawndra Matthews, found that her son Derrick's interest in building literacy among boys in his community was encouraged by participating in Kindness Day, where he staffed a booth. Not only was his work honored, but he was also able to get his message across to others.

"He was talking about the importance of reading and sharing with children how they can become stronger readers," says Matthews.

"I loved that, with the Kindness Day, it wasn't just about suburban folks; other communities were invited, and there was diversity," says Matthews, founder of Literacy in the Hood, which provides books for underserved communities.

Matthews was particularly happy that Senders Pediatrics drew participants from the low-income neighborhood where she

Pediatricians have a unique opportunity to help children understand the benefits of kindness.

and her son live, recognizing that they are the experts in how to best help their community. And, she adds, it's important for kindness initiatives to empower people who may feel disenfranchised.

These individual stories are not only heartening, but reflect how kindness can be contagious and good for all. Senders hopes that the program will be studied by researchers to validate what they are seeing anecdotally.

Matthew Lee, a Harvard researcher who co-authored a study on the physical health benefits of being a volunteer (in adults) and directs research at the Human Flourishing Program, is interested in doing just that. He appreciates the Senders Pediatrics approach to whole-child wellness.

"When a child goes to see the doctor, it shouldn't just be about taking your vital signs in a narrow, biophysical sense," he says. "Doctors should talk about how kindness relates to overall health, which includes physical well-being, sure, but also your mental well-being and your full flourishing."

Senders believes that the kindness initiative not only helps children develop moral character, it also makes them less afraid to go to the doctor—something that makes the staff's job easier. Before COVID hit, the clinic had a jungle gym set up in their waiting room available for kids to play on, which created a happy, welcoming environment for children. Now, they have a kindness program, which does much the same thing.

"It started out as something small, but it has become an integral part of how we operate in our office," says Senders. "It really has changed how we practice medicine."

Jill Suttie, Psy.D., is Greater Good's former book review editor and now serves as a staff writer and contributing editor for the magazine. She received her doctorate of psychology from the University of San Francisco in 1998 and was a psychologist in private practice before coming to Great



Children who understand the value of kindness are better able to act on it—and prosper.

BECOMING MINIMALIST

Things You Can Do Today to Live More Like a Minimalist

Want to try out the minimalist lifestyle? Here are 10 ways you can find more time, money, and joy

JOSHUA BECKER

Minimalism is the intentional promotion of the things we most value and the removal of anything that distracts us from it. It is about focus, intentionality, and making the most of the one life we have been given. It is also a growing movement around the world.

But there are many who still misinterpret the term. They think it is about barren walls, cold environments, or empty cupboards. But they are incorrect. Minimalism isn't about owning less than you need, it's about owning exactly what you need.

Correctly applied, minimalism results in more money, more time, more focus, and less stress. It also results in a life of greater joy, greater meaning, and greater significance.

If you are drawn to the benefits of minimalism, but still apprehensive, here are ten things you can do today to test out the lifestyle and live more like a minimalist.

1. Remove one box of clutter from your home. Minimalists own fewer possessions. As a result, their homes feel more peaceful, more calm, more spacious, and less stressful. You may not be able to declutter your entire home in one day (it took us nine months), but you can make a little bit of progress.

Try to remove one entire box of clutter from one room in your home. And then, notice the difference it makes.

2. Clear one surface. Every physical possession in our field of vision results in visual clutter. Our eyes naturally gravitate to the things around us as we subconsciously scan our surroundings on a constant basis.

Find one surface in your home that you can clear entirely (a bathroom counter, a coffee table, a shelf, or a nightstand) and remove everything from it. Notice the clear surface. Now, imagine that feeling throughout your entire home.

3. Don't buy anything and put \$49 into savings. The average American spends about \$18,000 a year on nonessentials. If you want to take one small step toward

Minimalism isn't about owning less than you need, it's about owning exactly what you need.



Removing one box of clutter from a room will give you a taste of what minimalism can offer. SQUISHYDOOM/SHUTTERSTOCK



ANDREA PIACQUADIO/PEXELS

Minimalists reduce obligations so they have more time for things they love to do.

living more like a minimalist today, don't buy a single nonessential item. Then, put that \$49 into a savings account. Tomorrow, do the same thing. You'll be surprised how quickly your savings account will fill up when you stop buying stuff you don't need.

4. Go for a long walk. Walking is good for the soul and the body. It provides opportunity to think and reflect on life. If you want to live more like a minimalist, go for a nice long walk today.

Notice how wonderful it feels to have some extra time in your day to breathe and relax. And while you walk, consider the direction of your life and if you're living to your fullest potential. Would removing some distractions allow you to focus more on things that matter?

5. Turn off the notifications on your phone. Minimalists work to remove distractions from their day—whether it be unnecessary possessions, unnecessary appointments, or unnecessary notifications like email or social media (or even texts).

For the rest of the day, turn off all notifications on your phone except for phone calls (even text messaging). See how it changes the feel of your entire day. Tomorrow morning, turn on just the notifications you actually missed.

6. Eliminate one obligation. Minimalism extends beyond physical possessions. It sparks intentionality in all areas—relationships, habits, and your schedule.

Today, eliminate one obligation from your life that you do not enjoy or does not further your greatest passions and pursuits. Make the phone call, send the email, cancel the reservation ... whatever you need to do. Reclaim your time to live the life you desire to live.

7. Make up one game with your kids. Studies show us over and over again that fewer toys are beneficial to our children. Advertisements may tell us the newest toy will result in a better childhood for your kids, but that's simply not true. Fewer toys consistently provide opportunity for deeper play and imagination to develop in your family.

So grab a few toys and make up a new game (such as an obstacle course) with your kids tonight. You'll see the value of less, and have a great time too.

8. Wear your favorite outfit. It's true, most minimalists own fewer clothes than other people. But not because owning fewer clothes is a sacrifice. Just the opposite in fact. Owning fewer clothes means everything hanging in my closet is my favorite. There's nothing I'd rather wear than my favorite outfit every day.

Today, wear your favorite outfit. Notice what you like about it. And then, imagine a world where you get to wear that every day.

9. Turn off your television one hour earlier than normal. Because minimalists have embraced a more intentional approach to life, they remove unhealthy habits. For me, removing television was one of the most important. And while I still sit down to watch sports with my son or an occasional series on Netflix, television is no longer a major focus. It no longer robs me of life and potential.

Tonight, turn off the television one hour earlier than normal. Use the free time to talk with your spouse, write in a journal, go for that walk, or go to bed an hour earlier. Almost anything you choose will be more worthwhile.

10. Do one thing you love. The greatest thing about minimalism is that it frees money, time, and energy for your greatest passions. This is the greatest benefit—a life lived focused on the pursuits that result in true happiness, joy, meaning, and fulfillment.

So today, do one thing you love. And then, imagine yourself doing more of that every single day from here on out. And you'll get a small picture of why people continue to flock to the message of minimalism.

Minimalism isn't about living a boring life detached from reality. It is about reflecting society's version of reality and living a focused, intentional life on your own terms.

Try out just one or two of these small steps today—and begin experiencing what the rest of your life can look like. You'll love minimalism and you'll love owning less.

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

WISE HABITS

Allowing Ourselves to Feel Joy

With attention and practice, we can bring ourselves to wonderment

LEO BABAUTA

I've come to realize that most of us don't allow ourselves to feel joy most days. Think about your past week: Did you experience anything joyful and wondrous? Or was your week marked by routine, busyness, and the stress of doing doing?

If you felt joy and wonder daily, you're likely the exception. Most people don't seem to feel joy regularly, or even realize that that's the case.

Let's change that.

Joy and wonder are two emotions we lose for so many reasons: We're worried about ourselves, we're stressed, the world seems anything but joyful. But wouldn't we like to live a life that has joy every day? Wouldn't we like to marvel at this incredible world and the wonder of humanity?

We can still get stuff done and function

in society with a greater degree of joy and wonder. It isn't as if these two emotions would knock us out of step with our fellow people. In fact, I'd argue that the people around us will appreciate our uplifting demeanor and this emotional uptick will come through in our work as well.

So how do we bring joy and wonder into our lives? It starts by simply recognizing that we want this. That it's allowed. We can give ourselves permission to feel alive and joyous.

Here are some practices you might try:

1. Go outside and pause to truly see the world around you. Feel yourself, your breath, the breeze on your skin, the sunshine on your face. Look at the world as it rests there, stretching out around you. You are the middle of a universe, a singular reality that only you will ever know.

Whatever you see and hear now is a formulation of atomic particles coursing through your sensory organs and getting assembled in your brain. Take a moment to just acknowledge where you are.

2. Use your body. Run around, dance, evoke joy in your kinetic presence in the world. Skip around like a kid. Shake off the dreary dust of daily life. See the open and vibrant nature of the universe. Climb a tree, do handstands, or dance. When you see other people, delight in their humanity.

3. Every day, ask yourself a simple question: "Where did I see God today?" If



PAUL SZEWZYK/UNSPLASH

you don't believe in God, you can take that to mean, "Where did I see the divine or sacred today?" or "Where did I see the wonder in the world?" It could be in nature, in the humble kindness of a co-worker, or the uplifting spirit of classical music.

Joy and wonder are easily lost in the muck of modern life. Don't let them slip away. Take a moment and just pretend you are full of joy. You might be surprised at what you open up.

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

Say Farewell to Sunk Costs

Your past has brought you many gifts, but your present life may not want them

JAY HARRINGTON

I can't tell you how many hours I spent laboring over the decision of whether or not to leave the practice of law, but it had to be in the hundreds. And most of that time was wasted.

Don't get me wrong, there were some important issues I had to work through in order to make an informed, smart decision. For example, I needed to understand whether I could support our family and be sure my new career choice would provide more of what I was missing as a lawyer. But those factors consumed far less of my time and mental energy than other wasteful musings, namely:

Was it wise to walk away from the law degree I worked so hard for?

Should I leave the prestigious law firm I was employed by?

Was it a mistake to toss overboard the goodwill I had built up as a practicing lawyer?

Ultimately, I decided that making the leap was worth it. And in retrospect, I came to realize how unproductive it was to labor over so many things that didn't matter. I fell victim to the "sunk cost fallacy."

Sunk cost is any past cost of money, time, or effort that cannot be recovered.

The sunk cost fallacy is a common cause of poor decision-making, including decisions about work and careers, but the fallacy extends far beyond those domains. A sunk cost is any past cost of money, time, or effort that cannot be recovered. The investment has been made and there is no getting it back.

This fallacy arises in many different ways. Ever start a book, get bored halfway through, but plow on to the end nonetheless? The two hours you spent reading shouldn't influence your decision about investing even more time in something that's not worthwhile, but it often does. The more energy or resources we devote to something, the harder it is to abandon it.

If it's difficult to put down a bad book, you can see why sunk costs influenced my decision to stick with the practice of law despite wanting, deep down, to pur-



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When we cling to sunk costs, we often end up wasting more time and money.



Don't wait for fortune to favor you, make the change you need to live the life you want.

sue something else. And I'm sure you can relate, as almost everyone has struggled to make a change due to an aversion to suffering a perceived loss of a past investment of time or resources.

Why We Struggle with Sunk Costs

One of the main reasons we fall victim to the sunk cost fallacy is that the status quo, no matter how dissatisfactory, is often the path of least resistance—it involves no effort, risk, or transformation.

Another reason is our tendency toward short-term thinking. While we all prefer big rewards over smaller ones, most of us have an even stronger preference for present rewards over future ones—even when the future ones are much more valuable.

This phenomenon, a type of cognitive bias, is called "hyperbolic discounting." It stands for the proposition that the further away a reward is in the future, the less of an immediate motivation there is to put the work in to realize it. Therefore, the tendency to value short-term rewards can lead us to double-down on past investments because the promise of bigger long-term rewards seem less concrete.

In short, we focus on sunk costs because it feels risky not to. But given the fact that sunk costs can't, by definition, be recovered, doesn't that mean we need to rethink risk? After all, making future decisions based on past sunk costs guarantees we get mired in our current circumstances. And if those circumstances don't align with our future objectives, stagnation is a risky proposition.

Knowing when it's smart to stick and when it's time to quit is not an easy decision. Persistence is a worthy attribute, but blindly persisting in pursuit of the wrong objectives leads to nothing but discontent. As Warren Buffet once said, "The most important thing to do if you find yourself in a hole is to stop digging."

Do you want something else, something new, something different? Your gut instinct

might be urging you to move in a different direction, but sunk costs may be keeping you anchored to the present.

Moving forward requires us to move past sunk costs. Here's how Seth Godin puts it:

"Everything you own, all the clothing in your closet, your academic achievements and beyond is simply a gift. It is a gift that your past self is giving to your present self, and it's up to you to decide whether you want that gift today. It is as simple as that—you owe your past self nothing, other than the consideration of whether these gifts are helpful in the here and now."

Sunk costs are a gift. You can part with them if you want. And if you want change, then say farewell.

Jay Harrington is an author and lawyer-turned-entrepreneur who runs a northern Michigan-inspired lifestyle brand called *Life and Whim*. He lives with his wife and three young girls in a small town and writes about living a purposeful, outdoor-oriented life.



We may feel badly about wasted time, but those feelings won't get us our time back.

Sometimes we need to recognize that the money and time we've already spent were wasted and just move on.

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What We Can Learn From the African Hadza Tribe

This traditional people live a lifestyle rooted in a deep connection to the natural world

JOSEPH MERCOLA

In this interview, Dr. Paul Saladino, author of "The Carnivore Code"—a book on nose-to-tail animal-based eating—reviews what it means to be healthy at the most foundational level and shares his findings from a recent trip to Africa where he visited the Hadza tribe, who are among the best still-living representations of the way humans have lived for tens of thousands of years.

Like the !Kung tribe in Botswana, the Hadza live a hunter-gatherer life amidst the encroachment of modernized society.

"I see the Hadza as a time machine. They're like a time capsule," Saladino says. "They do not suffer chronic disease like we do in Western society, and that alone makes them infinitely fascinating. They do not suffer cancers like we suffer cancers."

"They do not suffer autoimmune disease, which is a huge spectrum of disease, and they do not suffer depression, mental illness, skin issues. They do not suffer dementia anywhere near the rates that we do. They age with grace. This is called squaring of the morbidity curve.

"If you look at a graph of their vitality across the lifespan, it is essentially flat and then drops off very quickly at the end. It's like a square. They lose their vitality within the last few weeks of life, but until they're 70 or 80 years old, they are vital individuals."

If we look at Western society, the morbidity curve has a very different look. It's like a ramp that steadily declines. In the Western world, people lose vitality consistently throughout life. This doesn't happen in native hunter-gatherer societies, primarily because they don't suffer from the debilitation of chronic disease.

The Hadza Diet

Saladino primarily wanted to find out how the Hadza eat, what foods they prioritize, and how it affects their health. Other investigators have analyzed the Hadza diet, but he wanted to confirm it



The Hadza fill their days with things they need—and love—to do.

for himself. For example, one 2009 study found the Hadza ate a lot of meat, tubers, berries, and fruit and honey from the baobab tree. According to this paper, the Hadza don't eat vegetables.

The study in question also asked the Hadza to rank how much they liked each food. Honey was ranked the highest, followed by meat (primarily the eland—a very large type of antelope—baboon, and bush pig), baobab fruit, and berries. Tubers were their least favorite food. Saladino's investigation supported these basic preferences as well.

The Hadza Lifestyle

When asked why they choose to maintain their hunter-gatherer lifestyle, being well aware of modern civilization all around them and other tribes that have chosen to farm and keep herds of cattle and goats, the Hadzi replied: "We want to be free. We like to eat meat. We want to be able to hunt and we like this lifestyle." Another question that arose was what makes the Hadza happy? Interestingly, this is more or less a non-issue. "Happiness" is their default state of mind.

"That is their default mode when they are in nature doing what humans have always done," Saladino says. "This is so interesting to me. Here's this group of hunter-gatherers. They live in the bush.

Continued on Page 11



Honey collected from a bee colony inside a baobab tree is a favorite food.

In the Western world, people lose vitality throughout life. This doesn't happen in native hunter-gatherer societies where chronic disease is non-existent.

MINDSET MATTERS

How to Quiet the Voice in Your Head

Reclaim your mind from your inner narrator and experience life directly

NANCY COLIER

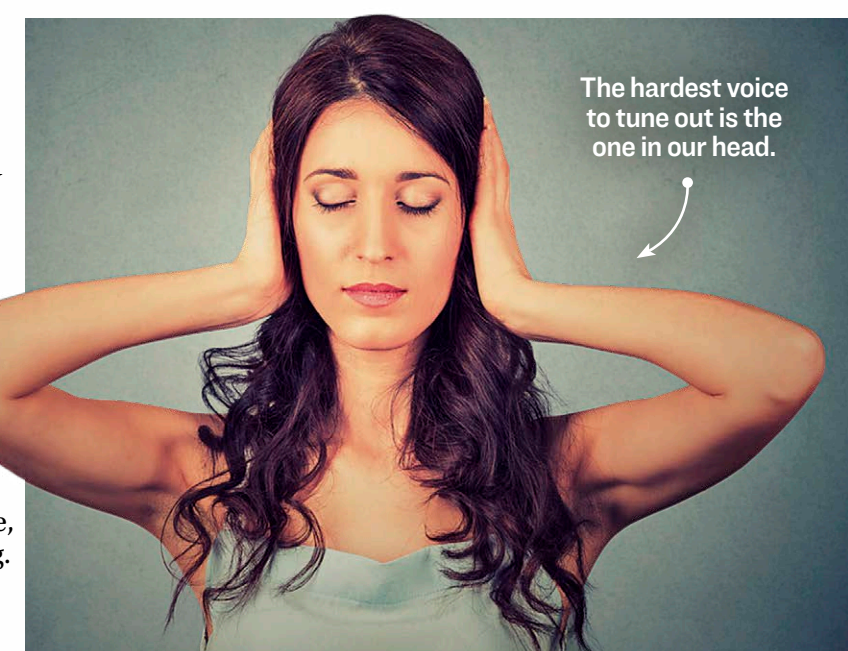
Do you have a little voice inside your head that's constantly running a play-by-play of your life? Does it unceasingly package your life, verbally preparing your experience for transmission to another unidentified listener?

I just went on an eight-day silent retreat, and apparently, my inner narrator didn't get the memo

that it was time to be silent. For the first five days, the voice didn't stop talking, not even to catch its imaginary breath. With obsessive precision, it explained to me what I was doing, how I had transformed, and what spiritual lessons I had learned. Over and over, my inner narrator repeated my experience to me, prepared it for sharing, and made sure I had everything mentally wrapped up.

It's an odd thing: As we're having an experience, the voice in our head is simultaneously describing, explaining, and commenting on it. Usually, it even provides a summary of the event and what came before, during, and after its unfolding.

Continued on Page 15



The hardest voice to tune out is the one in our head.


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Things You Can Do to Protect Your Vision

These 7 tips can help you keep your eyes healthy and working well

LYNN JAFFEE

Your eyes work really hard. They stare at screens most of the day, keep you focused on the highway when you're driving, and make out what's on the menu in a darkened restaurant. While you may not think about it often, good vision and eye health contribute to the quality of your life.

The reality is that when it comes to your eyesight, there are things that you just can't control. For example, as you age, the fine print gets blurrier and the magnification on your cheaters gets larger. That said, there are also a number of habits that you can cultivate to support the health of your eyes and help to prevent or slow the progression of eye diseases. Here are some of the ways that you can help keep your eyes as healthy as possible:

1. Cultivate habits that are kind to your eyes. Long hours of reading or in front of a screen can cause fatigue and weaken your vision. When you're reading for long periods, take frequent breaks every hour or so. Also, make sure you have enough light to avoid eye strain, especially when you're reading.

2. Protect your eyes. Exposure to strong lights, sunlight, and UV rays can damage your eyes over time. Use sunglasses that block the sun's UV rays, wear eye protection when you're engaged in sports, and use protective goggles when you're doing home projects or working with power tools. If you spend most of your days in front of a screen, you can get computer glasses that block blue light. They help cut the glare, increase visual contrast, and enhance the images on the screen. Many computer screens also have an option to turn down the blue light, which can also help you sleep better.

3. Get regular eye exams. If you're under 40, your eyes should be checked every two to four years; over 40, every two years. If you have an eye condition or are noticing vision changes, have your eyes examined yearly. Frequent exams translate into detecting problems early.

4. Eat to nourish your eyes. Scientists have found that leafy greens and yellow vegetables can improve the health of your eyes and decrease your risk for macular degeneration and cataracts. These vegetables are high in lutein, a vitamin related to vitamin A. Other foods that are good for your eyes include nuts, beans, citrus fruit, oily fish, and eggs. If you

don't think you're getting enough of these foods, you can also supplement with vitamins formulated specifically for eye health.

5. Use reading glasses if you need them. Age-related loss of reading vision is called presbyopia and is extremely common in people over age 40. Reading glasses (lovingly called cheaters) can help for close-up work because they magnify the fine print. If you need reading glasses, make sure you have the right level for your eyes. Going up to a stronger level doesn't make your eyes any weaker, but not using a strong enough magnification can contribute to eye strain.

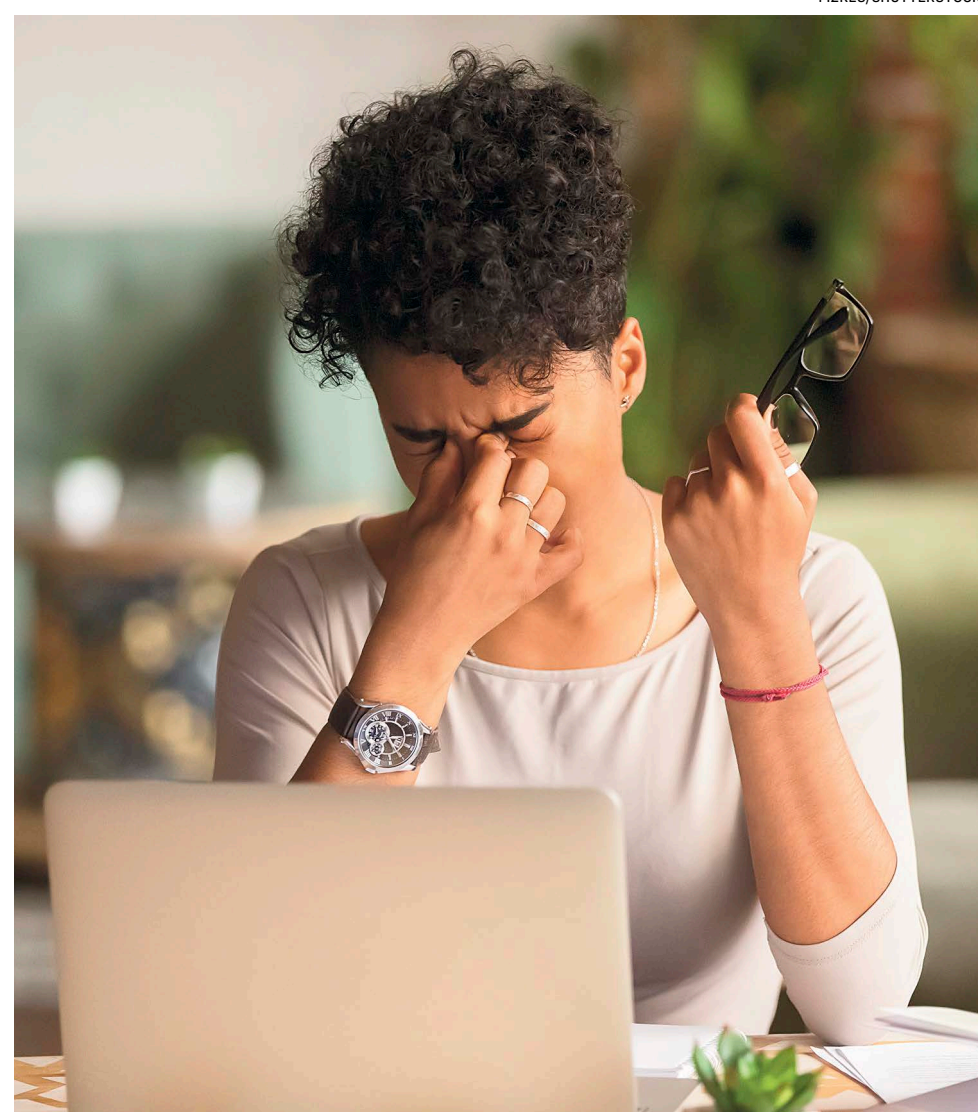
Managing your stress not only improves your health, but also supports the health of your eyes.

6. Keep your stress in check. Scientists have found that unmanaged stress weakens your immune system and accelerates aging. Furthermore, high levels of stress can raise your blood pressure, all of which put an additional strain on your eyes. The bottom line is that doing whatever it takes—meditation, yoga, or gardening—to relieve your stress not only improves your health, but also supports the health of your eyes.

7. Make sure you're getting enough sleep. Your body heals and regenerates itself when you sleep, and your eyes are no exception. There's nothing worse than that gritty, burning feeling in your eyes when you haven't gotten enough rest.

Typically, your vision isn't on your radar unless you begin to have problems with your eyes. A little preventative care, however, can go a long way in keeping eye issues at bay. By taking these few steps, you can safeguard your vision and keep your eyes healthy for years to come.

Lynn Jaffee is a licensed acupuncturist and the author of "Simple Steps: The Chinese Way to Better Health." This article was originally published on AcupunctureTwinCities.com



Screens can be hard on our eyes but you can get some protection by using computer glasses that block blue light, cut the glare, and increase visual contrast.

What We Can Learn From the African Hadza Tribe

This traditional people live a lifestyle rooted in a deep connection to the natural world

Continued from Page 9

They do not sleep on beds. They sleep on the ground in these thatched huts that they build in a day. They're nomadic.

"They have little camps. ... The camp that we went to was about 40 to 50 men and women with children, and they moved the camp three or four times a year. They have three or four camps that they've established, and they know spots in the Lake Eyasi region. Some of them are better for the rainy season, some of them are better for the dry season, and so the whole camp will move throughout the year at different times.

"They have fires for men and fires for the women. They live under rock shelters. They sleep in the auspices of rocks and they are profoundly healthy individuals. They love their life because every day they get to go play. For them, play and fun is hunting. The next day, we got to see this because we went on a hunt with them. It was incredible. It was so joyous and so simple."

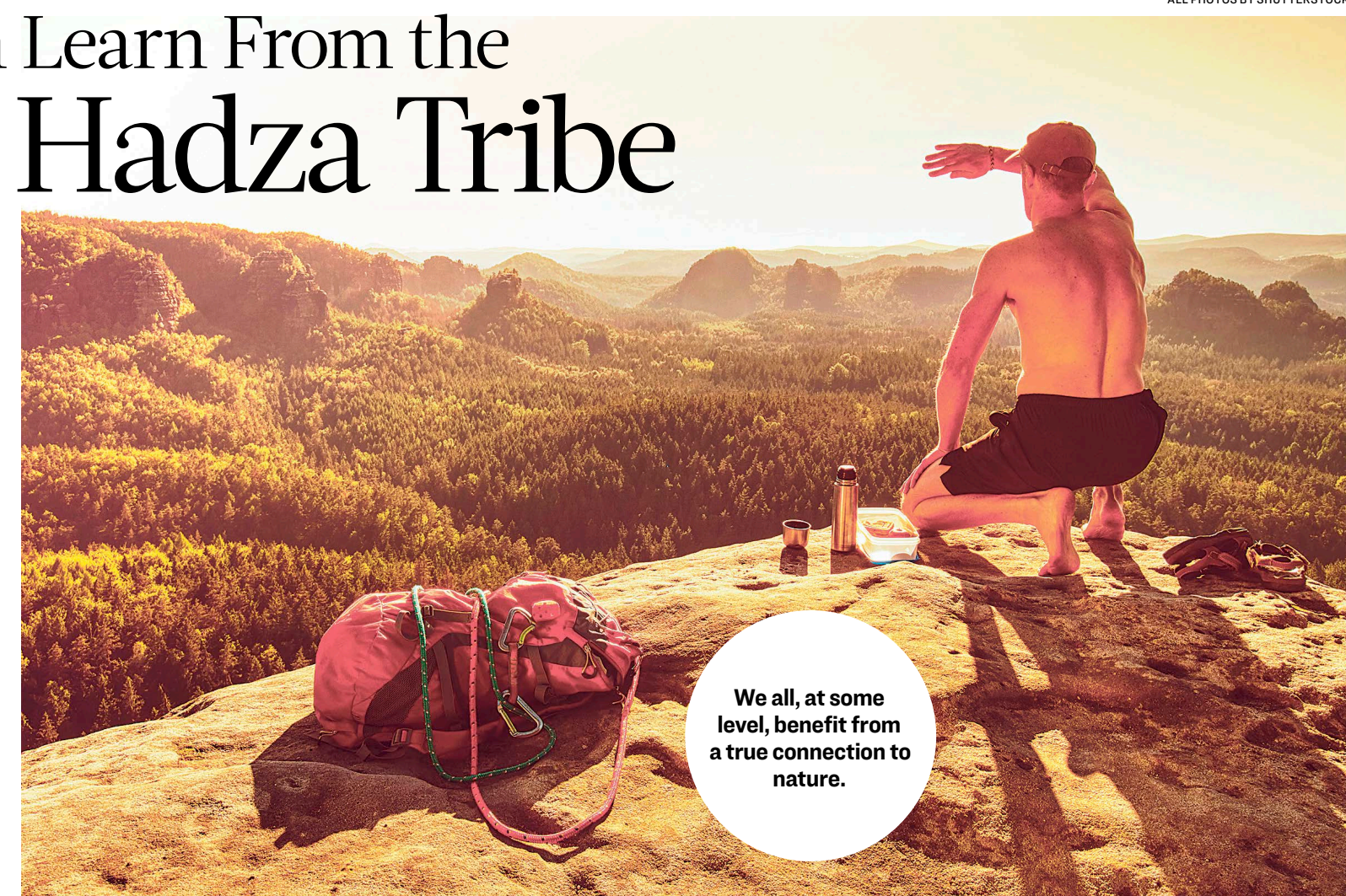
The Importance of Organ Meats Saladino recounts the hunt, noting how the organ meats were consumed in the field. After hunting down a baboon, the men created a fire to burn off the hair, after which the animal was gutted. Intestines were given to the hunting dogs, while all the other organs—heart, liver, lungs, spleen, kidneys, and pancreas—were cooked on the open fire and shared among the hunting party. Nothing is wasted, not even the bones, which are broken to extract the marrow.

"They also eat the connective tissue, which is high in collagen, and the skin. The internal organs, which are the most highly prized, are called epeme, and according to the local lore, the epeme must be shared among all the men of the tribe. If a hunter chooses not to, bad things will happen to them. The hunter responsible for the kill is rewarded with the most valuable organs, however, such as the brain, which Saladino says was "delicious."

While they might not understand individual nutrients, they clearly know that if you eat these organs, you will be more vital. "That's why I think it's so important for humans to get back to eating nose to tail, to eating those organs," Saladino says. Interestingly, while the Hadza diet has been described as high in fiber, Saladino disagrees.

"The tubers they collect are extremely fibrous. So much so, you can't actually swallow them. You have to chew them and spit out the fibers, so in reality, their diet is low to moderate (at best) in fiber. "The other thing I want to mention about eating the tubers was that there was no bathroom to wash my hands in. Nor did I want to because I'm very interested in soil-based organisms and the interaction of our microbiome with our environment. Everyone believes that the Hadza have a healthy, diverse microbiome because they eat a high-fiber diet. "Well, No. 1, they don't eat a high-fiber diet. No. 2, they probably have a healthy, diverse microbiome because they live in nature and they are inevitably taking inputs, information from nature, in the form of dirt and soil-based organisms. "This is something that I've always expected and it's a complete paradigm shift."

Saladino says eating fiber doesn't increase the diversity of the microbiome. What does, however, is eating dirt. "There was definitely dirt on my hands and my fingers, and dirt on this tuber as I'm holding it in my mouth. The Hadza



We all, at some level, benefit from a true connection to nature.

are not a dirty people though.

"They do not smell. They don't use deodorant. They don't have bad breath. I was really close to them a lot of the time in the bush hunting. They don't have body odor. Yet they don't bathe that regularly. We were there for a week and they didn't bathe."

Their microbiome is most likely the reason for their lack of body odor, as malodorous armpits are due to specific axillary bacteria. The Hadza microbiome has previously been studied in some detail, showing they have higher levels of microbial richness and biodiversity than Western urban controls.

The Hadza are also unique in that they have an absence of Bifidobacterium, a bacteria that takes an important place in the microbiome of most people. Differences in microbial composition between the sexes have also been found, which is probably a reflection of the division of labor between the sexes.

Fiber Isn't a Cure-All

Saladino also believes the Hadza diet challenges the importance of eating fiber. He cites two recent research papers, one of which compared Tanzanian urbanites with more rural dwellers, finding that urbanites had higher rates of inflammation. In the second, companion paper, the authors blamed the higher inflammation in urbanites on a fiber-poor Western diet. Saladino disagrees with these conclusions, saying:

"What they're trying to say is that the urban people in Tanzania are eating more saturated fat and less fiber and that is what fuels their inflammatory phenotype. What I observed was completely different than that. In fact, when you go into a grocery store in urban Tanzania, there are two aisles, there's two sort of shelves of oil. "One of them is a huge shelf of vegetable oil. They call it flower oil and safflower oil, and many of the vegetable oils that we saw were actually expired and they're in plastic. Right next to that is a whole shelf of beef fat, beef tallow. "The beef tallow is actually cheaper than the vegetable oil, but what do people buy in the cities? They buy seed oils. So, my observation is that in the urban cities, people are probably eating more seed oils and less saturated fat than the rural settings."

Surprising Health Benefits of Raw Honey Saladino also recounts how the Hadza collect honey made by stingless bees that burrow into the baobab tree. It's a common belief that honey is no different than sugar, but Saladino is starting to reconsider this notion. That is primarily because of the presence of nitric oxide metabolites in raw honey. These metabolites help the body create nitric oxide, a molecule critical to our cardiovascular system. It regulates blood pressure and keeps blood vessels healthy. Among its many jobs, it helps

blood vessels relax and widen.

Saladino cites a 2003 paper, "The Identification of Nitric Oxide Metabolites in Various Honeys," in which they did an intravenous injection of diluted honey into sheep, showing it increased plasma and urinary nitric oxide metabolite concentrations.

Honey has also been shown to increase nitric oxide and total nitrite concentrations in humans, Saladino says. Heating decreases the nitric oxide metabolites in the honey, though, so for this benefit, you wouldn't want to add it to boiling liquids. "Honey is often thought to be the same as sucrose because honey does contain glucose and fructose," he said. But the body doesn't treat honey the way it treats those sugars.

"It's fascinating to me that these whole foods are an informational package that our body perceives differently than a processed sucrose/high fructose corn syrup. Actually, in these studies, honey performed differently than sucrose. Honey performed differently than dextrose." Saladino found a research paper that suggested darker honey had more nitric oxide, and that connected back to his experience with the Hadza people.

"I can tell you the honey I ate in Tanzania was some of the most iridescent, dark, richly colored honey I've ever had in my life.

"I just want to make this point that reductionist thinking in nutrition doesn't serve us, and I would posit that honey is nothing like sucrose."

The take-home message here is that, provided you're metabolically healthy, you can safely include honey in your diet. It's important to realize, though, that if you are insulin resistant or have diabetes, all forms of sugar need to be cut back until you've successfully reversed these conditions.

Health and Happiness Are Within Your Reach

But the health and happiness of the Hadza people aren't primarily about diet, but rather lifestyle, notes Saladino.

"I spent a week with the Hadza. I got to hunt for berries with them and dig tubers with the women and we drank the water out of the baobab tree. I got to see all of these parts of their life. They are always in nature, they're always in the sun. They're always having low-level activity with spurts of sprinting.

"They follow the circadian rhythms of the sun, which was one of the most joyous things."

"This is what humans need. As I said, the Hadza's default state is happiness." The key message is that there's intrinsic



There is almost nothing Hadza men enjoy more or prefer doing than hunting.

happiness that results spontaneously from engaging in certain types of behaviors, and topping that list is the regular immersion in the natural world.

"I fear that in Western society, humans have been placed into a little bit of a zoo," Saladino says. "We've been given these hamster wheels to run on, which essentially are treadmills at gym and we've been given this processed, synthetic food, these rat pellets that are dropped into our cage every once in a while. It's no wonder that we're just not happy."

"You know, I'm not a zoologist, but I have heard that when animals are placed in cages in the zoo, they become fat and unhealthy and they develop chronic diseases that they don't get in the wild. I've always found that to be a fascinating parallel with humans because I think we're exactly the same."

There's intrinsic happiness that results spontaneously from engaging in certain behaviors, and topping that list is regular immersion in the natural world.

"The difference for us is that the door to the cage is open. We have only to open the latch and walk through. We can get back to these things. You can get more sunlight. You can avoid blue light devices. You can avoid EMFs. You can eat the diet your ancestors ate and walk out of the zoo and find a richer life. Remember, the door is open. You've just got to walk through it."

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

MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about Saladino and his work, check out his website, HeartAndSoil.co (not .com). There, you will find his blog, podcast, social media links, and much more.

What People Are Saying



I read The Epoch Times daily. I still like hard papers [...] and I still like to grab that paper in my hand, but I get more printed versions of stories than ever before. You guys have done an amazing job, and really—I think there's such a void in media, especially newspapers. They slant so solidly one way that there are very few papers that I can really feel that I can rely on, and The Epoch Times is one.

SEAN HANNITY
Talk show host



The Epoch Times is a great place where you can understand traditional values in a way and in a tone and through content that is accessible. It's smart.

CARRIE SHEFFIELD
Columnist and broadcaster



I congratulate you and The Epoch Times for the work you are doing, especially with regard to keeping the menace of the communist threat in front of us.

DR. SEBASTIAN GORKA
Military and intelligence analyst and former deputy assistant to the president



I rely on The Epoch Times newspaper for factual and unbiased news coverage.

LARRY ELDER
Best-selling author, attorney, and talk show host



It's our favorite paper. It's the first one we read. Thank you so much for your reporting of the news.

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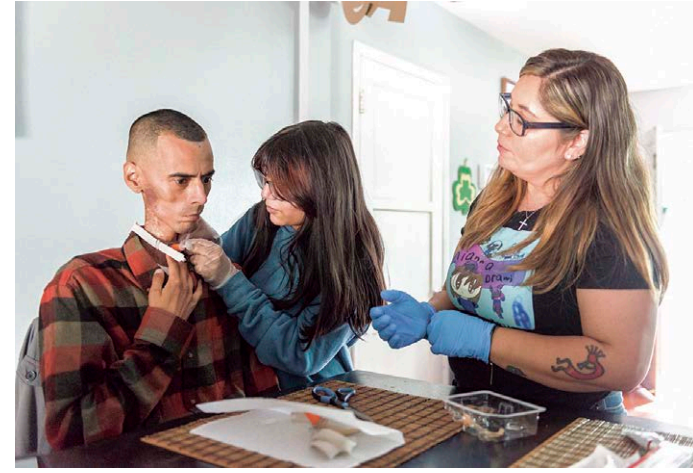
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TRUTH AND TRADITION



RUSLAN HUIZAU/SHUTTERSTOCK



HEIDI DE MARCO/CALIFORNIA HEALTHLINE

Rocio Alvarado watches over daughter Rhianna to make sure she takes the correct steps to change her father's trach tube, which must be done once a month.



Brian can barely speak since his tracheostomy. "When it's just me and Rhianna, I have to ask Rhianna to be my voice," Brian said.

Role Reversal: COVID Increases Ranks of Child Caregivers

Children are being tasked with adult responsibilities as pandemic measures change family life

HEIDI DE MARCO

On a recent Thursday afternoon, Rhianna Alvarado struggled to don her protective gloves, which were too big for her petite hands.

With her mom coaching her every move, she edged close to her father and gently removed the plastic tube from his throat that allows him to breathe. She then cautiously inserted a new one.

"What's next?" asked her mom, Rocio Alvarado, 43.

"I know, I know," replied Rhianna, her eyes constantly searching for her mom's approval.

Rhianna is only 13. When she finished the delicate task of changing her father's tracheostomy tube, usually performed only by adults, she went back into her room to doodle on her sketch pad and play with her cat.

Rhianna's father, Brian Alvarado, is an Iraq War veteran and a neck and throat cancer survivor.

Like most kids, Rhianna has been stuck at home during the COVID-19 pandemic and attends school online. But unlike most other eighth-graders, Rhianna is a caregiver, tending to her dad between her virtual classes.

Rhianna is among more than 3 million children and teens who help an ill or disabled family member, according to Caregiving in the U.S. 2020, a national survey published by the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP. The survey also found that Hispanic and African American children are twice as likely to be youth caregivers as non-Hispanic white children.

Carol Levine, a senior fellow at the United Hospital Fund, a nonprofit that focuses on improving health care in New York, said the pandemic, combined with the worsening opioid epidemic, has increased the number of youth caregivers because more children are homebound and must care for

ill or addicted parents.

The pandemic has also made caregiving harder for them, since many can no longer escape to school during the day.

"In school, they have their peers, they have activities," Levine said. "Because of the contagion, they aren't allowed to do the things they might normally do, so of course there is additional stress."

Levine was an author of a national survey in 2005 that found there were about 400,000 youth caregivers between ages 8 and 11. The survey hasn't been updated, she said, but that number has likely grown.

Kaylin Jean-Louis was 10 when she started doing little things to care for her grandmother and great-grandmother, who have Alzheimer's disease and live with Kaylin and her mother in Tallahassee, Florida.

Now 15, Kaylin has assumed a larger caregiving role. Every afternoon after her online classes end, the high school sophomore gives the women their medicine, and helps them use the bathroom, dress, and take showers.

"Sometimes, they can act out and it can be challenging," she said. The hardest thing, she said, is that her grandmother can no longer remember Kaylin's name. COVID has added another level of stress to an already complex situation, Kaylin said, because she can't decompress outside the house.

"Being around them so much, there has been a little tension," Kaylin acknowledged. She uses art to cope. "I like to paint," she said. "I find it very relaxing and calming."

Kaylin's mother, Priscilla Jean-Louis, got COVID last month and had to rely on Kaylin to care for the elder woman while she recovered.

"She isn't forced to do it, but she helps me a great deal," Priscilla said. "If there are

moments when I'm a little frustrated, she may pick up on it and be like 'Mommy, let me handle this.'"

Rhianna's dad, Brian, 40, never smoked and was healthy before joining the Marine Corps. He believes he got sick from inhaling smoke from burn pits during the Iraq War.

He was diagnosed with squamous cell carcinoma of the neck and throat in 2007. He also has an inflammatory disease that causes muscle weakness and a rash, PTSD, and hyperthyroidism from chemotherapy and radiation.

Rhianna's mom is Brian's primary caregiver, but Rhianna helps her change her dad's trach tube and feed him through a feeding tube in his abdomen.

"I'm still learning how to do it," Rhianna said. "I get nervous, though."

The two look after him on and off all day. "Our care for him doesn't end," Rocio said.

Rhianna is quiet and reserved. She has autism, struggles with communication, and has trouble sleeping. She has been talking to a therapist once a week.

The trach has had the biggest impact on Rhianna, because Brian doesn't join them for meals anymore.

"I feel sad that he can't eat anything," she said.

Despite the growing number of youth caregivers, they have little support.

"If you look at all state and national caregiving programs and respite funding, they all begin at the age of 18," said Melinda Kavanaugh, an associate professor of social work at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Kavanaugh is researching Alzheimer's and caregiving in Latino and African American communities in Milwaukee.

"We had a number of kids who were much more stressed out because they had

no outlet," she said. "Now they're suddenly [providing] 24/7 care and there was absolutely no break."

Adult and youth caregivers often suffer from anxiety, depression, and isolation, but there is little data on how caregiving affects young people over the long-term, Kavanaugh said.

Kaylin Jean-Louis was 10 when she started doing little things to care for her grandmother and great-grandmother, who have Alzheimer's disease.

Connie Siskowski, founder of the American Association of Caregiving Youth, helped care for her grandfather as a child. "I was not prepared," she said. "It was traumatic."

Her Florida-based group connects young caregivers and their families with health care, education, and community resources. The goal is to identify problems such as stress or isolation among the children, and address these issues so they won't harm the children as adults, Siskowski said.

But long-term care experts said caregiving can also enrich a young person's life.

"It can help kids develop a sense of responsibility, empathy, and confidence," Levine said. "The problem comes when their schoolwork, their friendships, their lives as a child are so affected by caregiving that they can't develop in those other important ways."

Heidi de Marco is a reporter and producer for California Healthline. This article was produced by Kaiser Health News, which publishes California Healthline, a service of the California Health Care Foundation.

Feeling Tired? It Might Not Be What You Think

MAT LECOMPTÉ

It's easy to feel tired these days. Between the pandemic and getting a bit older, it might be hard to get up and go the way you used to.

But there can be a fine line between fatigue and depression.

Sleep shortens with age. Research also suggests the pandemic has made it harder to sleep. Sleep loss to the pandemic, however, may be a result of anxiety.

Depression can be more common as people age, yet it may be less recognizable. Many older adults believe symptoms are related to something else, or "natural" aging,

or fail to believe that it is mental health bogging them down.

Those who do acknowledge their depression are more likely to believe they will just "snap out of it."

But things can spiral rather quickly as those feelings become normalized. Without action, depression can pose threats to both physical and mental health.

How can you recognize if you're experiencing depression and not just regular fatigue from a lack of sleep? Here are some of the signs:

- You no longer get enjoyment from your favorite activities
- Persistent sadness, or an "empty"

Depression can be more common as people age, yet it may be less recognizable.

mood

- Increased boredom/apathy
- Lost energy
- Regular fatigue
- Irritability
- Trouble concentrating
- Unintentional weight gain/loss

You may be able to manage or do away with symptoms on your own. Some individuals can make small changes to their lives—like creating a schedule, reaching out to friends or family, adopting a hobby, or getting involved in a group—and notice symptoms disappear.

Each of the above can give life meaning and joy.

Other things you can try are mindfulness meditation or talking to an online psychotherapist.

There are a variety of resources to help you get through this and restore hope and energy to your life.

It's also particularly important to listen to the people who know you best because they might be able to recognize changes in your behavior. If they suggest you seem off, take a look at your mental health.

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

The Exercise Pill

How exercise keeps your brain healthy and protects it against depression and anxiety

ARASH JAVANBAKHT

As with many other physicians, recommending physical activity to patients was just a doctor chore for me—until a few years ago. That's because I myself was not very active. Over the years, as I picked up boxing and became more active, I got firsthand experience of the positive impacts on my mind. I also started researching the effects of dance and movement therapies on trauma and anxiety in refugee children, and learned a lot more about the neurobiology of exercise.

I am a psychiatrist and neuroscientist researching the neurobiology of anxiety and how our treatment interventions change the brain. I've begun to think of prescribing exercise as telling patients to take their "exercise pills." Now knowing the importance of exercising, almost all my patients commit to some level of exercise, and I have seen how it benefits several areas of their life and livelihood.

We all have heard details on how exercise improves musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, metabolic, and other aspects of health. What you may not know is how this happens within the brain.

Brain Biology and Growth

Working out regularly really does change the brain biology, and it is not just "go walk and you will just feel better." Regular exercise, especially cardio, does change the brain. Contrary to what some may think, the brain is a very plastic organ. Not only are new neuronal connections formed every day, but also new cells are generated in important areas of the brain. One key area is the hippocampus, which is involved in learning and memory and regulating negative emotions.

A molecule called brain-derived neurotrophic factor helps the brain produce neurons, or brain cells. A variety of aerobic and high-intensity interval training exercises significantly increase BDNF levels. There's evidence from animal research that these changes are at epigenetic level, which means these behaviors affect how genes are expressed, leading to changes in the neuronal connections and function.

Moderate exercise also seems to have anti-inflammatory effects, regulating the immune system and excessive inflammation. This is important given the new insight neuroscience is gaining into the potential role of inflammation in anxiety and depression.

Finally, there's evidence for the positive effects of exercise on neurotransmitters—brain chemicals that send signals between neurons—dopamine and endorphins.

Exercise Improves Clinical Symptoms of Anxiety and Depression

Researchers have also examined the effects of exercise on measurable brain function and symptoms of depression and anxiety. Exercise improves memory function, cognitive performance, and academic achievement. Studies also suggest that regular exercise has a moderate effect on depressive symptoms comparable to psychotherapy. For anxiety disorders, this effect is mild to moderate in reducing anxiety symptoms. In a study I conducted with others among refugee children, we found a reduction in symptoms of anxiety and PTSD among children who attended eight to 12 weeks of dance and movement therapies.

Exercise could even potentially desensitize people to physical symptoms of anxiety. That is because of the similarity between bodily effects of exercise, specifically high-intensity exercise, and those of anxiety, including shortness of breath, heart palpitation, and chest tightness. Also, by reducing baseline heart rate, exercise might lead to signaling of a calmer internal physical environment to the brain.

It's important to note that the majority of studies examined the effects of exercise in isolation and not in combination with other effective treatments of clinical anxiety and depression, such as psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, and medication. For the same reason, I am not suggesting exercise as a replacement for necessary mental health care of depression or anxiety, but as part of it, and for prevention.



ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Going out for a walk or bike ride offers exercise with the additional bonus of sunlight, fresh air, and nature.

There are other perks besides the neurobiological impacts of exercise. When going out for a walk, one gets more exposure to sunlight, fresh air, and nature. One of my patients befriended a neighbor during her regular walks, leading to regular taco Tuesdays with that new friend. I have made some great friends at my boxing gym, who are not only my motivators but also a great supporting social network. One might pick a dog as a running mate, and another might meet a new date, or enjoy the high energy at the gym. Exercise can also function as a mindfulness practice and a respite from common daily stressors, and from our electronic devices and TV.

By increasing energy and fitness levels, exercise can also improve self-image and self-esteem.

Practical Ways for a Busy Life

So how can you find time to exercise, especially with all the additional time demands of the pandemic, and the limitations imposed by the pandemic such as limited access to the gym? Here are some suggestions.

Pick something you can love. Not all of us have to run on a treadmill (I actually hate it). What works for one person might not work for another. Try a diverse group of activities and see which one you like more: running, walking, dancing, biking, kayaking, boxing, weights, swimming. You can even rotate between some or make seasonal changes to avoid boredom. It doesn't even have to be called "exercise." Whatever raises your heartbeat or strains your muscles can count, whether it be dancing, playing with the kids, or building a garden shed.

Use positive peer pressure to your advantage. I have created a group message for the boxing gym because at 5:30 p.m., after a busy day at the clinic, I might have trouble finding the motivation to go to the gym or do an online workout. It is easier when friends send a message they are going and motivate you. And even if you don't feel comfortable going to a gym during the pandemic, you can join an online workout together.

Don't see it as all or none. Exercise doesn't have to be a one-hour session at the gym or a 20-mile bike ride vs. staying on the couch. I always say to my patients: "One more step is better than none, and three squats are better than no squats." When less motivated, or just starting out, be nice to yourself. Do as much as possible. Three minutes of dancing with your favorite music still counts.

Merge it with other activities. Walking for 15 minutes while on the phone with a friend, even around the house, is still being active. Helping a friend get some yard work done is an excellent way to socialize and get some exercise.

When hesitant or low on motivation, ask yourself: "When was the last time I regretted doing it?"

Although it can help, exercise is not the ultimate weight loss strategy; diet is. One large brownie might be more calories than an hour of running. Don't give up on exercise if you're not losing weight. It's still providing all the benefits we discussed.

Even if you don't feel anxious or depressed, still take the exercise pills. Use them for protecting your brain.

Arash Javanbakht is an associate professor of psychiatry at Wayne State University. This article was first published on The Conversation.



There's evidence for the positive effects of exercise on neurotransmitters—brain chemicals that send signals between neurons—dopamine and endorphins.

Eating Leafy Green Vegetables Every Day Could Boost Muscle Strength

SARAH COWNLEY

Green, leafy vegetables are good for overall health, but new research shows that they could also boost muscle strength. The study from Edith Cowan University (ECU) found that people who consume a nitrate-rich diet had significantly better muscle function in their lower limbs.

Many older adults suffer from poor muscle function, leading to a greater risk of falls and fractures. It can also be considered a key indicator of general health. With around one in three seniors suffering a fall each year, it's essential to find alternative ways to prevent these events, as they can sometimes have serious consequences.

12-Year Study

Researchers analyzed data from 3,759 Australians who took part in Melbourne's Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute for the study. Over the 12 years of the study, it was found that those with the highest regular nitrate consumption had 11 percent stronger lower limb strength than those with the lowest nitrate intake. It was also found that these participants had up to a 4 percent faster walking speed.

The nitrates recorded to have the most impact on muscle strength came from leafy vegetables. Some of the best sources include lettuce, spinach, kale, and even beetroot. This study builds on previous research that has found a relationship between nitrate and muscle function in older women. Other studies have also found a connection between vegetables and cardiovascular health, including another recent one from ECU that found a relationship between cruciferous vegetables and blood vessel health.

Researchers say the next step will be to explore strategies to increase leafy green vegetable consumption in the general population.

"We are currently recruiting for the MOD-EL Study, which examines how knowledge of disease can be used to prompt people in making long-term improvements to their diet and exercise," said lead researcher Dr. Marc Sim.

Many people often wonder if supplements can be taken instead of consuming leafy vegetables each day, but Dr. Sim explains: "Green leafy vegetables provide a whole range of essential vitamins and minerals critical for health."

Americans should be consuming a variety of vegetables every day, with at least one serving being leafy greens. But vegetables don't just work alone. Regular physical activity is needed to increase bone health. These small steps can help to ensure positive health benefits for the musculoskeletal and cardiovascular systems.

Sarah Cownley earned a diploma in nutritional therapy from Health Sciences Academy in London, and she enjoys helping others by teaching healthy lifestyle changes through her personal consultations and with her regular contributions to the Doctors Health Press. This article was originally published on Bel Marra Health.



MARTY HARRINGTON/UNSPLASH

Some of the most nitrate-rich vegetables are lettuce, spinach, kale, and beetroot.

Life Skills We Want for Our Children Before They Leave Home

As children leave home, it can provide peace of mind to know they have learned some essential life skills

JOSHUA BECKER

“There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One of these is roots, the other wings.”
— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

My son Salem is 18 years old and will graduate high school this year.

It's hard to believe this is the same young man who sat down with me during a snow day 10 years ago to write “An 8-Year Old's Guide to Buying Good Toys.”

But indeed, he has grown into a fine young man and will be heading off to college next year.

At the beginning of his senior year of high school, my wife sat down and wrote out 12 life skills that she wanted to make sure our son knew before leaving home. Some of the skills he had already picked up, but others we decided to intentionally teach over the past year. I thought it might be helpful to share our list with you. So here it is:

There are life skills and worldviews to consider when it comes to personal finance: opportunity cost, why to budget, living below your means, giving, saving, and the life-giving benefits of buying only what you need.

12 Life Skills We Want for Our Kids Before They Leave Home

1. Cooking

It isn't particularly important that our son knows how to properly prepare baked Alaska for his next dinner party (although it is my daughter's favorite dessert). But we did want to make sure he knew how to cook, grill, and even bake some simple meals for himself. Man cannot live on fast food alone.

2. Cleaning

Salem has had plenty of experience vacuuming, dusting, tidying, cleaning mirrors, and emptying trash over the years of growing up. But we also wanted to make sure he knew how to clean other areas of home that are less routine: toilets, stovetops, and ceiling fans, as an example. Knowing that her son knew how to clean a bathroom from top to bottom was of special importance for Kim.

3. Yardwork

Mowing, trimming, planting, pruning. Even making sure he knows to call the utility company hotline before digging.

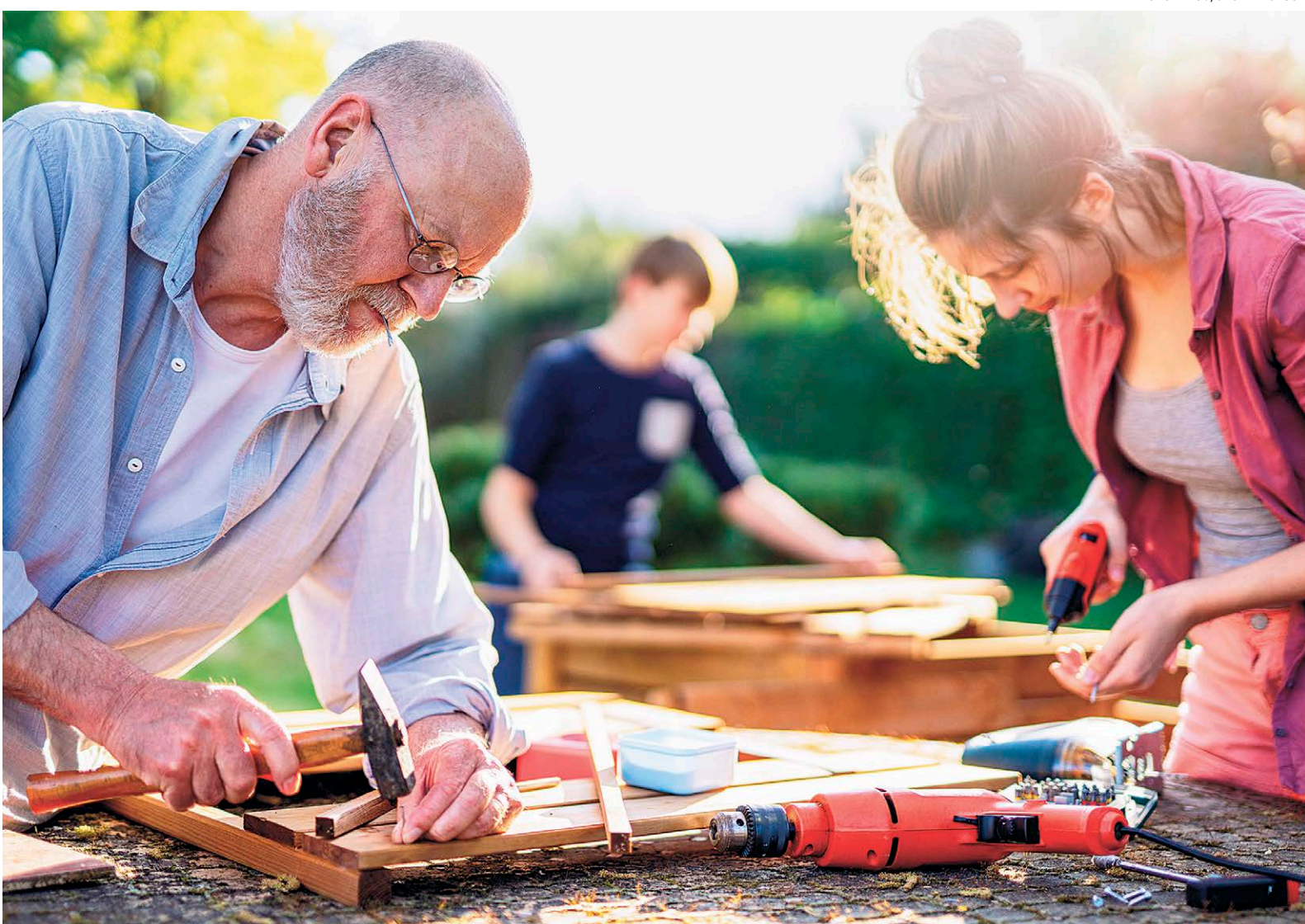
4. Laundry

Kim has always handled the laundry in our home—or at least for as long as I can remember. She's been very intentional, especially this year, about showing Salem how to launder not just his own clothes, but the clothes of anyone in his future home.

We wanted to make sure he knew how to cook, grill, and even bake some simple meals for himself.



SIMONA PILOLLAZ/SHUTTERSTOCK



JACK FROG/SHUTTERSTOCK

Young adults that learn simple home repairs will feel more comfortable venturing toward larger more complex fix-it projects.

If teens learn to cook, they can avoid the discouraging experience of ruining a meal.

5. Iron

Ironing has always been my gig. Someone showed me how to properly iron in college and I've been hooked ever since. So we wanted to show the how (and why) of not living life in wrinkly clothes.

6. Emergency Car Repairs

Mechanics isn't my thing. But emergency car repairs, those things that can happen on the side of the road away from help, are essential to know. How to jumpstart a dead battery, how to change a tire, how to read dashboard warning lights, and what to do in a collision. If we didn't live in Phoenix, I'd also add how to drive in the snow and ice, and what to do if your car gets stuck.

7. Simple Home Repairs

Home repair also isn't a skill in my repertoire—never in my life have I considered removing a wall to open up a room. But there are a few simple home repairs that I believe my son and daughter should be able to accomplish in their future home. This isn't an exhaustive list, but among the specific repairs: how to unclog a drain, replace light fixtures, shut off water, replace a garbage disposal, reset breakers, hang decorations, fix a leaky sink.

8. Painting

There are very few things that refresh a home quicker and less expensively than painting the walls. And it's one of the only home improvements we've made in every new home we've moved into. So we put it on the list to make sure our kids know how to do it well.

9. Personal Finance

There are technical skills to teach: how to write a check, how to balance a checkbook, how a credit card works, how compound interest works, etc. But there are also life skills and worldviews to consider when it comes to personal finance: opportunity cost, why to budget, living below your means, giving, saving, and the life-giving benefits of buying only what you need.

10. Shopping

Related to personal finance, how to shop wisely is an essential ingredient. It's important to know not just what to buy, but how to buy. So Kim put this on the life skills list and I'm glad she thought to include it. How to shop for groceries, how to shop for clothes, and how to shop for essentials.



IAKOV FILIMONOV/SHUTTERSTOCK

There is a certain wisdom that grows from the experience of seeing long-term efforts come to fruition.

11. Dating

Thinking primarily of my son as he graduates high school, I want to know I've taught him how to be a gentleman in both courtship and a dating relationship. I also want him to know what relational qualities are important to develop and what qualities to look for in a spouse.

12. Faith

I don't write much about my faith here on this blog, but my Christian faith has and will continue to be important to me. And I want it to be important to my kids. So we were sure to add to our list, not just an understanding of our faith, but also the life skills for them to pursue it on their own.

I don't necessarily publish this list because I think it's the exact list you need for your own family. But I do think it's important that we are intentional as parents—not just in providing a loving home for our children but also in preparing them for life on their own. Our goal is to launch him into adulthood prepared and an asset to society.

This is the list of 12 life skills we've been working off of the past year as our son prepares to leave home next fall. And I encourage you to create your own (or steal ours).

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

MINDSET MATTERS

How to Quiet the Voice in Your Head

Reclaim your mind from your inner narrator and experience life directly

Continued from Page 9

Often, the narration is so integral to the experience itself that we wonder if there even could be an experience without an accompanying report. Without simultaneous inner acknowledgment, thinking, and commentary, did it actually happen?

It's also interesting to notice that our commentator has an identity of its own. It has a certain language, style, and tone, a certain thematic and textural consistency. Like a Hollywood screenwriter, our inner voice tends to work in a particular genre—tragedy, comedy, drama, or film noir, for example.

Did you ever wonder why your mind was telling you what you're doing as if you didn't already know? And why your mind is so adamant about getting the story of your life figured out, written, and packaged?

It's liberating to realize that the narrator's account of what's happening is only in your mind. It's not real in an objective sense.

Presence of Mind

The mind tends to believe that we are made of mind and mind alone—that without its felt presence, we, and all else, would cease to be; that a mind off-duty, an experience without the thinking, is tantamount to nonexistence. The mind creates the story of an “I” as an object in our consciousness. In so doing, it maintains both the experience of a self and the experienter of a self, which it believes are needed to ensure survival.

In relentlessly narrating the story of ourselves (to ourselves), our minds are attempting to make life, and us, into something solid, knowable, and constant. By creating a main character called “me” who's living something called “my life,” the mind attempts to transform the ephemeral, ever-changing nature of being into something that can be understood, managed, and controlled. It takes life, from which we are inseparable, and splits it into two different things: a “me” and a “life.” We then become seemingly distinct and real. We literally think our “self” into existence. And so, this begs the question, is there a

downside to living with this inner narrator? And do we have to live this way? Is it part and parcel of the human condition? The answers are a resounding yes, and no. Yes, there is a downside, and no, we aren't condemned to living this way forever.

The first downside to the inner narrator is that it can be intensely agitating and distracting. There exists constant noise in the background and foreground of your life, like having a mosquito (or buzz saw) in your ear that you can't silence or ignore.

But on a more profound level, the narrator stands in the way of your actually experiencing life first hand, in all its richness. You're relegated to living through your narrator's description, a mental representation of the real thing, like getting a postcard of the Grand Canyon in place of being there. The voice then goes on to offer commentary on the narration, and you are now two layers away from the direct experience of living.

You might also notice that the voice in your head presents its version of your life as a truth. It reports your life story as if it were the actual reality existing in the objective world. It's liberating, however, to realize that the narrator's account of what's happening is only in your mind. It's not real in an objective sense, but rather another story about a story—which begins and ends inside your own consciousness. The good news is that you don't have to live this way, with a middle manager between you and life.

If you've ever been deeply involved in an activity, you might have experienced what's referred to as the flow state. In flow, we're so engaged in what we're doing that we cease to be aware of ourselves. We become absorbed into the experience. All notion of time and a separate “I” disappears. And we discover that even when the mind isn't there self-referencing, we don't disappear, which suggests that we are more than the mind. Awareness remains even when we lose the felt sense of self. And, interestingly, such experiences are the ones that we later describe as wholly satisfying, blissful, and even divine. The experiences in which we are gone are the ones that we most crave.

How to Quiet the Voice

The remedy for the little voice in our head is three-fold. First, we have to become so fed up with the play-by-play that we decide we're not willing to listen or live by it anymore. Once that's happened, we must start noticing our narrator and become aware that its voice is an object appearing in our awareness. And finally, we must set a clear, fierce intention and desire to experience life directly through our senses, and not just receive a report



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Listening to the little voice in your head is a habit—a habit with deep roots.

on it. We commit to diving deeply and directly into the ocean of life.

Listening to the little voice in your head is a habit—granted, a habit with deep roots, survival instincts, and lots of practice time, but a habit nonetheless. With desire, willingness, and intention, any habit can be changed. Each time you catch the voice in your head, try to practice a new habit—the habit of directly experiencing your life. First, pause and celebrate a moment of awareness; the fact that you're hearing the voice means that there's another part of you that's awakening—the real you.

Next, intentionally shift your attention from your head (which is where our energy is usually focused) down into your body. Invite your body to consciously relax. Take and feel a deep breath. From there, run a sense loop: Notice what you're seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, or tasting. Experience each, one at a time. And finally, sense your own physical presence, the feeling of life in your body (not your mind).

With this practice, the little voice in your head will grow quieter and less relentless, and living will become more vivid, satisfying, and ultimately, real.



BEKIR DONMEZ/UNSPLASH

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WISE HABITS

The Fear of Putting Our Work Out There

Sharing our creative efforts can expose us to criticism, but that's a small price to pay



JACK FROG/SHUTTERSTOCK

LEO BABAUTA

One of the most common fears of anyone who is creating something, whether it's online content, art, or a new business or startup, is the fear of putting our work out there in the world.

It's a fear that leads us to procrastinate, research endlessly, check social media, answer emails, buy books on the topic, listen to podcasts and watch Youtube videos, or even clean our kitchen.

None of these things are bad—they're so human! But it's a fear we have to face at some point if we ever want to make an impact on the world.

I'd love to share how I work with this fear—I've been doing it for decades now.

The brief summary:

1. I have a litmus test: If I'm not creating or putting the creation out into the world, there's a good chance I'm procrastinating. (There are exceptions of course.)
2. If I'm avoiding, then I create space to face the fear and create and put it out there.
3. Then I face it. And play with it. And learn to relish it!

Let me describe what this looks like in practice.

The Core of Our Fear

What's so scary about putting our work out there? Well, we don't know how it will be received by other people—it's full of uncertainty, and we don't like that uncertainty.

They might judge us, dismiss our work as having no value, or think we're stupid. We'll then feel embarrassed or rejected. This uncertainty is too much to bear for many people.

And yet, as understandable as that is, this fear will shut down the possibility of having an impact on the world.

Let's just pause and let our hearts be broken by the possibility we could be completely shut down and never bring our gift to the world.

And then let's connect to the impact we'd like to make. Would we like to move people's hearts, change people's lives, open their eyes to something new? How delightful!

Facing the Avoidance

In order to face our fear and what we're avoiding, we have to know we're avoiding. So the first thing I do is ask myself, “Am I creating right now, or putting my work out into the world?” If not, there's a decent chance I'm avoiding out of fear.

There are seeming exceptions of course: collaborating with others in team meetings

(I would argue that's creating), coaching (that's both creating and putting my work out there), research (but keep it to a bare minimum, most people procrastinate by researching more than is needed). We have to do admin work and emails too—but if I haven't created today, then I know I let my day get filled with administrative busy-work instead of focusing on the thing that matters.

So once we see we're avoiding creating and putting it out there, it helps to create structure to face the fear.

If you're avoiding creating: set up a daily session to feel the fear and then create. Not research, but actually create. Do it on a video call with others, if that helps, or get an accountability group.

If you're creating but avoiding putting it out there: commit to doing it in small steps. For example, send it to a group of people you trust. When that gets easy, send it to a larger group. Then put it into other communities.

Work on the muscle of creating, and putting it out there regularly. Every day.

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

MINDSET MATTERS

Narcissism Comes From Insecurity, Not Inflated Sense of Self

JAMES DEVIIT

Narcissism is driven by insecurity, not an inflated sense of self, finds a new study by a team of psychology researchers.

Its research, which offers a more detailed understanding of this long-examined phenomenon, may also explain what motivates the self-focused nature of social media activity.

“For a long time, it was unclear why narcissists engage in unpleasant behaviors, such as self-congratulation, as it actually makes others think less of them,” explains Pascal Wallisch, a clinical associate professor in New York University’s psychology department and the senior author of the paper in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*.

“This has become quite prevalent in the age of social media—a behavior that’s been coined ‘flexing,’” Wallisch said.

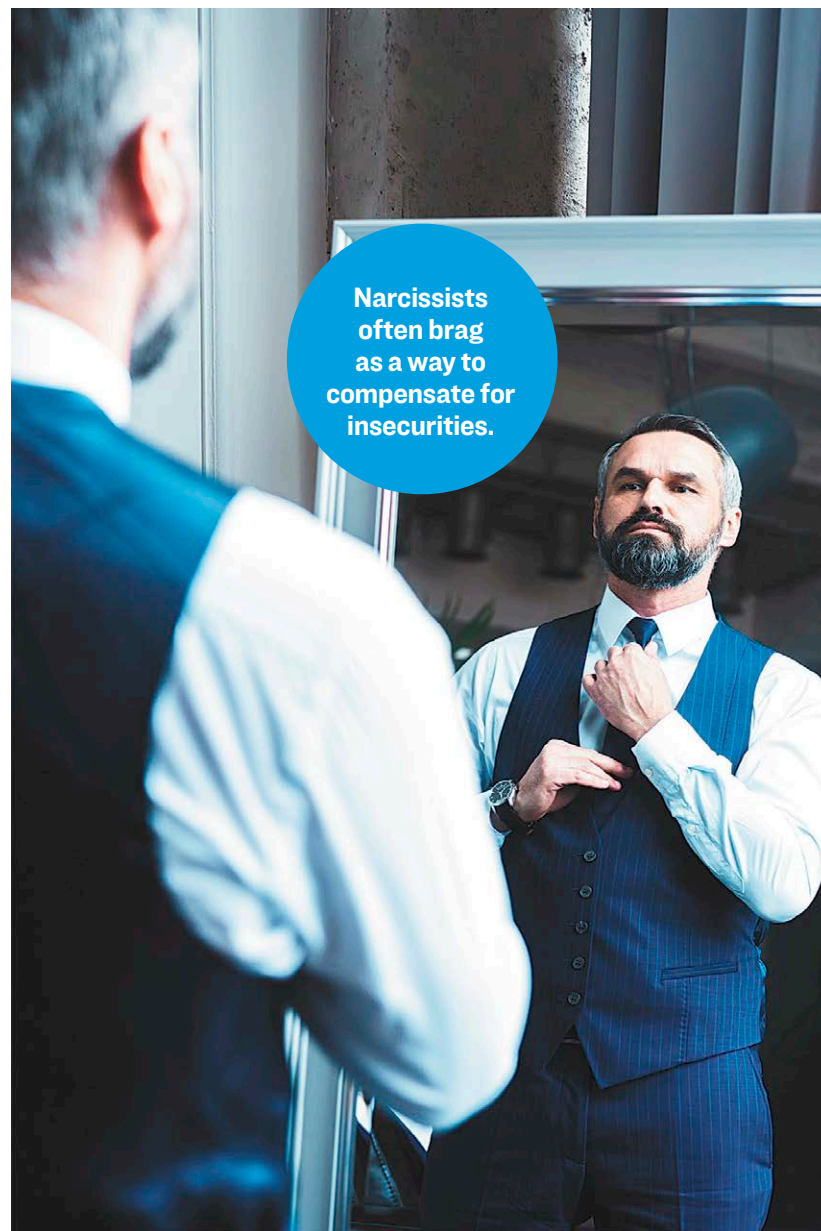
“Our work reveals that these narcissists are not grandiose, but rather insecure, and this is how they seem to cope with their insecurities.”

“More specifically, the results suggest that narcissism is better understood as a compensatory adaptation to overcome and cover up low self-worth,” adds Mary Kowalchuk, the paper’s lead author and an NYU graduate student at the time of the study.

“Narcissists are insecure, and they cope with these insecurities by flexing. This makes others like them less in the long run, thus further aggravating their insecurities, which then leads to a vicious cycle of flexing behaviors.”

The survey’s nearly 300 participants—approximately 60 percent female and 40 percent male—had a median age of 20 and answered 151 questions via computer.

The researchers examined Narcissistic Personality Disorder, conceptualized as excessive self-love and consisting of two subtypes, known as grandiose and vul-



Grandiose narcissism might be better understood as a manifestation of psychopathy.

nerable narcissism. A related affliction, psychopathy, is also characterized by a grandiose sense of self. The researchers sought to refine the understanding of how these conditions relate.

To do so, they designed a new measure, called PRISN (Performative Refinement to soothe Insecurities about Sophistication), which produced FLEX (perFormative seLf-Elevation index). FLEX captures insecurity-driven self-conceptualizations manifested as impression management, leading to self-elevating tendencies.

The PRISN scale includes commonly used measures to investigate social desirability (“No matter who I am talking to I am a good listener”), self-esteem (“On the whole, I am satisfied with myself”), and psychopathy (“I tend to lack remorse”). FLEX was shown to be made up of four components: impression management (“I am likely to show off if I get the chance”), the need for social validation (“It matters that I am seen at important events”), self-elevation (“I have exquisite taste”), and social dominance (“I like knowing more than other people”).

Overall, the results showed high correlations between FLEX and narcissism—but not with psychopathy. For example, the need for social validation (a FLEX metric) correlated with the reported tendency to engage in performative self-elevation (a characteristic of vulnerable narcissism).

By contrast, measures of psychopathy, such as elevated levels of self-esteem, showed low correlation levels with vulnerable narcissism, implying a lack of insecurity.

These findings suggest that genuine narcissists are insecure and are best described by the vulnerable narcissism subtype, whereas grandiose narcissism might be better understood as a manifestation of psychopathy.

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