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We ignore our scientifically proven (and once acknowledged) link with nature at our own peril

CONAN MILNER

t's called vitamin D, but it really isn't a vitamin at all. Today, researchers see it as more of a hormone than a nutrient. A major source of this so-called vitamin is unique: Unlike other vitamins, we get far more vitamin D from sun exposure than from food. This compound is made in your skin, activated by your liver and kidneys, and fueled by the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays.

When scientists first discovered vitamin D, they saw it as a cure for a disfiguring childhood bone disease called rickets. The connection earned vitamin D a reputation for bone health, but researchers have since found many more health benefits linked to the sunshine vitamin, such as improved immune function and metabolism, as well as acting as an anti-inflammatory agent.

The most recent connection to vitamin D's virtues may be as a treatment for COVID-19. Several observational studies conducted over the past year have revealed a striking correlation between vitamin D deficiency and COVID-19 severity. As a result, some doctors who treat COVID-19 patients often include it in their protocol.

To anyone familiar with vitamin D, the news comes as little surprise. Low vitamin D levels have previously been associated with

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On Living and Dying

Advice from a doctor who deals with terminally ill patients

PAMELA PRINCE PYLE

The COVID-19 pandemic may finally be slowing, but it has shone a stark light on one human problem that we'll never escape. One day, books analyzing the pandemic will fill whole rows in libraries, but no analysis can dim the glaring human condition that we must face the fact that we're all going to die.

A patient dying from ALS said it best, "No one makes it out alive." Many of us have thought more



Being proactive about end-of-life discussions can make the difference between emotional upheaval and peace between loved ones when a health crisis arrives.

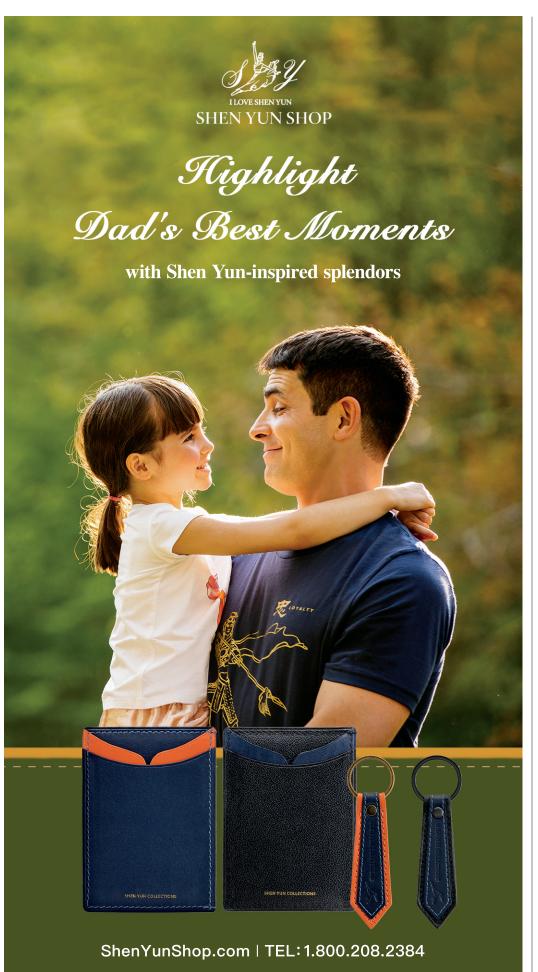
about death this past year than ever before. Psychologist Ronnie Janoff-Bulman says, "Once you know that catastrophe dwells next door and can strike anyone at any time, you interpret reality differently." As we reinterpret the reality of today in light of our future death, let us take a hard look at just exactly how we're going to let loose of this earth.

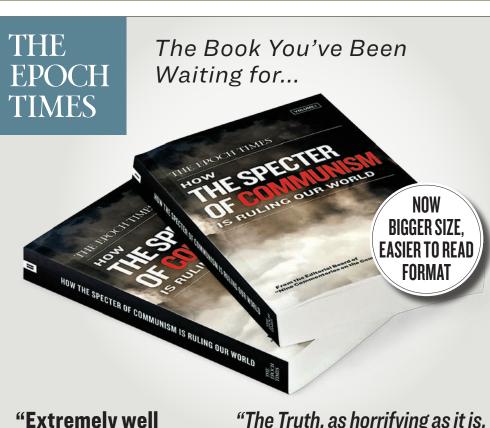
As a doctor who deals with terminally ill patients, I know four things are true:

1. Most of us assume we are going to live to a ripe old age.

However, no one is guaranteed tomorrow. There is no time like the present for making preparations, regardless of age or health status. It can provide a surprising comfort to think through and write out your final wishes. Many online resources

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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."

HOW THE SPECTER OF COMMUNISM IS RULING OUR WORLD

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We ignore our scientifically proven (and once acknowledged) link with nature at our own peril

Our minds

and bodies

suffer when we

cut ourselves

off from

Continued from Page 1

increases in inflammatory cytokines, viral upper respiratory tract infections, and blood clots—some of COVID-19's key characteristics.

Even Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases—who's known more for his promotion of masks and vaccines than supplements—made one positive public nod toward vitamin D. In an Instagram Live interview with Jennifer Garner in September 2020, Fauci highlighted the need for this vitamin, particularly during a pandemic.

"If you're deficient in vitamin D, that does have an impact on your susceptibility to infection," Fauci said. "I would not mind recommending—and I do it myself—taking vitamin D supplements."

Still, health officials have been very cautious regarding any claims suggesting that vitamin D can treat COVID-19. Dr. Joseph Mercola is blamed for pushing claims too far. He's the lead author of a meta-analysis of studies correlating vitamin D levels and COVID-19 cases, and the mechanisms that may drive the protective process. The study was published in an October 2020 edition of the journal Nutrients, but

study from his website. The issue is said to be Mercola's peddling of an unproven remedy to treat a deadly disease. In February, the FDA sent a letter to Mercola, accusing him of selling supplements—particularly vitamin D—that are "unapproved and unauthorized products" for the mitigation, prevention, treatment, diagnosis, or cure of COVID-19."

Mercola was recently forced to remove the

But Mercola insists that marketing isn't his mission. He's more interested in getting people outside.

"I encourage people not to even take the supplements, just to go out in a bathing suit. I haven't taken vitamin D in 12 or 13 years and have great vitamin D levels.

It's free if you go out in the sun. But most people can't do that, so they have to resort to taking the supplement. It's not my first recommendation, but you've got to give them options," he said.

In a pandemic characterized by lockdowns, Zoom meetings, and strict stayat-home orders, there was often less opportunity for people to soak up any share of the sunshine vitamin. And even before COVID-19, it was clear that many people already didn't get enough of it. Fortified milk and fatty fish provide some dietary sources, but some experts say the underlying problem is that we spend our days

How much vitamin D we need is a matter of debate, but it's clear that levels are often lower than they should be. Some experts contend that our body's need for the vitamin far exceeds official recommendations, and nearly half of the planet already falls short of those suggested levels.

A 2012 study found that vitamin D insufficiency affects almost 50 percent of the population worldwide, and an estimated 1 billion people suffer from a full-blown deficiency of the vitamin. Researchers say this "pandemic of hypovitaminosis D" is mainly attributed to lifestyle. Unlike our ancestors, we spend almost all of our time indoors. And when we do go out, environmental pollution dilutes our exposure to the amount of sunlight that was once available.

A life spent primarily indoors may hardly ers say that low vitamin D levels pose a legitimate public health concern, because deficiency in this compound is "an independent risk factor for total mortality in the general population."

Nature's Role in Medicine

Vitamins were first discovered in the early 20th century. But long before doctors ever fathomed such a thing as vitamin D, there was an understanding that fresh air and sunshine had a positive, life-giving effect

Modern medicine often regards a sick body like a machine that needs new parts or fluids.

on the body. For doctors of both the ancient and not-so-distant past, spending time outdoors was considered to be right up there with the other obvious tenants of good health: a balanced diet, exercise, and getting enough rest.

But doctors today have become far less likely to prescribe the great outdoors. In fact, many physicians now warn patients to avoid sun exposure to prevent skin cancer. More recently, health officials have urged the public to stay at home to avoid the spread of COVID-19.

Such advice is made with good intentions, but does it also leave us more vulnerable? For example, in 2017, researchers at Georgetown University discovered that time in the sun can rev up the immune system by activating infection-fighting Tcells. People who lack vitamin D also get sick more often. They also tend to have more back pain, depression, and fatigue.

Of course, it's unfair to lay the blame exclusively on the medical establishment. Over the past few decades, we've become a culture far more interested in inhabiting cyberspace than taking a walk in the woods. Most of us make a living in climatecontrolled environments, not in fields or

But even before modern technology took hold, modern medicine began distancing itself from nature. According to Cassi Viet-

As the name suggests, small intestinal bac-

terial overgrowth, or SIBO, occurs when

there is an increase in the amount or the types of bacteria found in the small intes-

tine. In SIBO, bacteria normally found in

the large intestine, most of which is made

up of the colon, finds its way to the relatively

sterile small intestine, where few bacteria

normally reside. Usually, SIBO isn't caused

by just one type of bacteria, but an assort-

ment of bacterial strains that would usually

be found in the colon. The cause of SIBO

is often a complex combination of issues

such as decreased intestinal motility, low

stomach acid, poor immune function, and

Once the food you consume is broken

down, nutrients and minerals are ab-

sorbed in the small intestine and waste

products are formed and eliminated

through the large intestine and colon. In

a healthy digestive system, there is a high

concentration of many bacterial strains in

Sometimes, that bacteria migrates back-

ward because of a malfunction in the ileo-

dysfunction in the ileocecal valve.

the large intestine.

What Is SIBO?

clinical psychology, science began distancing itself from the influences of the natural world as far back as 400 years ago, when it made a decisive split from the church.

"The medical system became very mechanistic. They looked at the body like a clock or a car. When something breaks, you look under the hood and have to fix it. It has nothing to do with the environment or how the person thinks or feels, believes, or imagines. And we just know that's not true," Vieten said.

The modern medical model has certainly made some incredible strides in treating devastating diseases, but Vieten pointed out that a solely mechanical focus can also be detrimental to people. She noted that even at top-rated mental health institutions, patients aren't allowed to go outside, much less go into nature.

"That's completely insane. They believe this very mechanistic brain model, where they decide that something is wrong in the brain that they're going to fix with pills, transcranial stimulation, or implants," she said. "We're not against those things. But not to round it out with fresh air, sunshine, beauty, meaning, hope, love, joy, exercise,



Vieten is the executive director of the John W. Brick Foundation, an organization that promotes evidence for lifestyle approaches to mental health. The foundation recently published a report examining the relationship between exercise and mental health. Researchers looked at studies published from 1990 and 2020, and examined a wide variety of activities, from team sports to yoga.

Exercise in general was found to provide a significant improvement to mental health. But the report found that the best type of exercise for improving mental health outcomes are activities that are either done outside or as part of a group. One study in particular showed that

cycling reduced the number of poor mental health days a person experiences per month more than any other type of

"They think that's true not only because of the cycling, but also the sunshine and fresh air," Vieten said.

The other activity found to have a big impact on mental health is team sports, which combine exercise with sunshine, fresh air, and group support.

> Our activities us away from nature—and

warmer months, baring as much skin as you can for a small period of time. "Get a little tan, get a little pink, but don't get sunburned. People with light-colored skin may only be able to tolerate two minutes. Listen to your body and never get sunburned," Mercola said. "It will give you vitamin D for free, but it also has a variety of other metabolic benefits for your health,

> mation, and a lot of other great things." For mental health, Vieten recommends something as simple as a leisurely walk in a quiet place. She also urges that people seek a wide natural vista, such as a field, lake, meadow, or ocean. It may give you a sense of perspective that your smartphone

> such as nitric oxide, decreases in inflam-

We get far more vitamin D from the sun than from food. This hormone is essential to our immune system.

"It's the perfect antidepres-

sant, if you can get yourself outside to do it. That's the thing," Vieten said

Science is just beginning to tap into the psychological and biological effects the outdoors can have on our minds and bod-

ies. For example, some studies show that just being on, in, or even near a body of water can make us happier and healthier. Other research shows that the amount of light that hits your retina results in a

In the past few years, science has also

discovered that just being in the woods can lower stress hormones, pulse rate, and blood pressure. In Japan in particular, the

study of forest medicine is being used as an evidence-based strategy for preventive

So how do we avail ourselves of the

mental and physical health benefits the

If vitamin D is your goal, Mercola recom-

mends getting outside on days during the

outdoors have to offer?

Outdoor Health Benefits

better mood.

"When people get depressed or anxious, they get tunnel vision—they get very myopic. They can only see what they're worried about and they can become very self focused in a critical manner," Vieten said. "When you look at the ocean, you have to open your peripheral vision to get it all in your eye, because it's so big. This can really broaden your perspective, your interests, your curiosities, and your worldview. I think when people are outside, it affects their perspective on their own problems and their own life. It takes them out of their tunnel vision."

As the world begins to emerge from quarantine, many of us have begun t appreciate the outdoors now more than ever. You don't need a study to know that it feels good to have a gentle breeze in your hair, the warm sun on your skin, and your bare feet in the sand. But Vieten would like to see doctors contributing to the message by routinely prescribing outdoor time.

"Walks, cycling, kayaking, whatever it is. We know these things are great for mental health," Vieten said. "Being in a closed house 24/7 is not good for your biorhythms. It's not good for your mood."

Some experience systemic symptoms

muscle pain, and some skin conditions.

The good news is that even though re-

search on SIBO is ongoing and there's still

much to learn, there are ways to correctly

diagnose and treat the condition. Next

week, we'll look at how and where SIBO

and IBS symptoms overlap, and the vari-

ous tests available to determine whether

If you think you might have SIBO

and want relief from your symp-

toms, please reach out to a skilled

clinician to walk you through the

What Happens Next?

you have SIBO.

including headaches, fatigue, joint and

An Intro to Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth

When bacteria proliferate in the wrong place, instead of aiding digestion, they can disrupt it

ASHLEY TURNER

The human digestive system is a mighty and miraculous yet delicately balanced realm. It doesn't take much to disrupt the gut microbiome and create a tangle of uncomfortable and disruptive symptoms.

Bacteria are a critical component to a healthy gut and small intestine, but when bacteria overgrow in the small intestine, it can lead to a leaky gut and a host of other gastrointestinal symptoms.

Many Americans experience intense or unspecified abdominal pain along with bloating and irregular bowel habits. Quite frequently, the cause of these symptoms is a common but often misunderstood condition that can wreak havoc on your body: SIBO—small intestinal bacterial overgrowth.

The Small Intestine

Before we delve into SIBO, it's important to understand the job of the small intestine. The small intestine has a significant



Too many bacteria in our small intestine can disrupt its work absorbing nutrients from food.

role in helping us digest and absorb nutrients. It's also an important part of the immune system as it houses a complex organization of immune cells called lymphoid cells. Also known as the gutassociated lymphoid tissue (GALT), this component of the immune system helps fight infection and regulate the immune

Because the small intestine has an essential role in overall health and well-being, it's crucial to understand what can go wrong in this part of the digestive tract.

tion—spawns the overgrowth of bacteria. This creates a microbial imbalance in the small intestine and discomfort ensues.

in the small intestine, trouble brews. This

slow movement—often caused by reduced

gastric motility or low gastric acid secre-

People with weakened immune systems are especially susceptible to small intestinal bacterial overgrowth.

In any of these scenarios, bacteria species (whether too much or the wrong types) in the small intestine can contribute to nutritional deficiencies because they hinder digestion and assimilation. In fact, these bacteria inhibit the absorption of nutrients such as vitamin B12, vitamin A, vitamin D, vitamin K, iron, and some amino acids.

cecal valve, a sphincter muscle that separates the small intestine from the large and People with weakened immune systems are controls the flow of digestion between the especially susceptible to SIBO. Chronic conditions such as diabetes (Type 1 and Type two. This malfunction can start a microbial imbalance. When bacterial species shift 2), IBS, celiac disease, Crohn's disease, and or proliferate in the small intestine, it can lupus can also put you at risk for the condiaffect macro and micronutrient absorption tion. Low stomach acid can put someone at as well as spark SIBO symptoms. risk for SIBO as can abdominal scar tissue When what you eat lingers for too long or a blockage in your gastrointestinal tract.

oping SIBO. Heavy alcohol consumption has been associated with SIBO in certain studies. Even a bout of food poisoning can disrupt your system enough to trigger an overgrowth of small intestinal bacteria which is exactly what happened to a few members of my own family in the past. What Are the Signs and Symptoms?

Medications such as antibiotics, proton

pump inhibitors, antacids, and narcotics

can also increase your chances of devel-

Symptoms of SIBO can be mild or easily (mistakenly) attributed to another condition, while others can be severe and impossible to ignore. This is why SIBO has been so difficult to diagnose. Any of the following may in-

Abdominal pain and discomfort

- Bloating and abdominal disten-
- · Gas and belching
- Heartburn Fatigue
- Queasiness
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) • Inflammatory bowel disease
- Weight loss
- Anemia and other nutrient deficiencies • Brain fog and mood symptoms

Dr. Ashley Turner is a traditionally-trained naturopath and board-certified doctor of holistic health for Restorative Wellness Center. An expert in functional medicine,

Turner is the author of the gut-healing guide "Restorative Kitchen and Restorative Traditions," a cookbook comprised of non-inflammatory holiday

Medications like antibiotics can increase your chances of developing SIBO.



New Research: COVID Infection Antibodies Could Last Years

Researchers learn more about acquired immunity to COVID-19 and the impacts of mass vaccination

JOSEPH MERCOLA

ew research is revealing surprising things about the virus that causes COVID-19 and how humans react to it, including a study that finds the antibodies we develop after infection may last much longer than new reports led us to previously

In one recent study published in Circulation Research, researchers discovered that the spike protein shell of the SARS-CoV-2 virus can damage your endothelial cells independent of the effect the virus has on cells—and may be responsible for many of the vascular and long-haul symptoms.

In other words, some of the symptoms people experience from COVID-19 are a result of the shape of the coronavirus's spikey shell rather than the specific actions the virus produces in the cells it invades.

The researchers arrived at this conclusion by creating a cell surrounded by spike (S) protein without a virus and then testing it on Syrian hamsters.

They administered the spike protein to the hamsters' lungs and found it was enough to cause damage and inflammation. The experiment was replicated in the lab using cell cultures.

ACE2 is a protein on the surface of many cell types that plays several roles in the body and has the unfortunate quality of binding with SARS-CoV-2 and allowing it entry into the cell. The data showed that when the S protein attached to the ACE2 receptor, it disrupted signaling to the mitochondria and caused damage and fragmentation.

Senior co-author of the study Uri Manor explained that the S protein receptor was enough to damage vascular cells "by virtue of its ability to bind to this ACE2 receptor." Some of the long-haul symptoms of COVID-19 may be related to such vascular

In other words, even without entry into the cell, the spike shell caused problems, possibly by blocking the ACE2 receptor from doing the work it was supposed to be doing.

While that study revealed some bad news, another revealed some good news. A more recent study published in Nature found patients who recovered from COVID developed an immune response that could protect

Evidence Suggests COVID Antibodies

May Last Years

In the study, the researchers began with the understanding that protective antibodies are generated by long-lived bone marrow plasma cells. They noted that research in 2020 reported people who were infected with SARS-CoV-2 showed a rapid decline in serum antibodies in the first few months after infection.

Natural infection nearly always produces a better immune response than a vaccine.

Most people

will develop

long-lasting

antibodies

after COVID.

producing cells. The team concluded that these bone mar-

row plasma cells remained inactive, or sleeping, but didn't disappear, indicating they are part of a long-lived immunity.

"Overall, we show that SARS-CoV-2 infection induces a robust antigen-specific, long-lived humoral immune response in humans,"concluded the researchers. Senior author of the study Ali Ellebedy, an

ies in the blood.

"Last fall, there were reports that antibodies waned quickly after infection with the virus that causes COVID-19, and mainstream media interpreted that to mean that immunity was not long-lived. But that's a misinterpretation of the data. It's normal for antibody levels to go down after acute infection, but they don't go down to zero; they plateau," he said in a statement released by the university.

"Here, we found antibody-producing cells in people 11 months after the first symptoms. These cells will live and produce antibodies the rest of people's lives. That's strong evi-

quiescent [inactive], just sitting in the bone marrow and secreting antibodies. They have been doing that ever since the infection was resolved, and they will continue doing that indefinitely."

Humoral and Cellular Immunity:

ies indicated the bone marrow plasma cells generating immunity against the virus may also have been short-lived. The researchers engaged a group of 77 participants who had

a mild COVID-19 infection. The group donated blood samples at threemonth intervals beginning one month after they had recovered from their initial infection. Eighteen of the participants also donated bone marrow approximately seven or eight months after the infection, and five came back four months later for a second bone marrow extraction.

The question the researchers sought to an-

swer is whether this reduction in antibod-

As the researchers expected, the levels of antibodies in the blood dropped quickly within the first month. However, some of the participants had detectable antibodies even after 11 months.

The testing also showed 78 percent of the bone marrow samples had antibody-producing cells for SARS-CoV-2. Researchers also tested bone marrow of 11 people who had never had COVID-19. In their bone marrow samples, there were no antibody-

associate professor of pathology and immunology at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, pointed out one flaw in assuming natural immunity against CO-VID-19 had waned by measuring antibod-

dence for long-lasting immunity."

"These cells are not dividing. They are

What's the Difference? There are two main areas of your immune

system. The first is the innate immune response that has physical and cellular responses to pathogens. The purpose is for an immediate reaction to help prevent the

Innate immunity is nonspecific and uses natural killer cells, macrophages, mass cells, and basophils at the cellular level, as well as skin, cough reflex, and membranes on a physical level.

Long-term immunity is tied to the adaptive immune system. This is specific to the pathogen invading your body. Adaptive immunity is also called acquired immunity and develops when your body is exposed to protein antigens. The immune system then builds specific defense mechanisms against

Within the adaptive immune response are humoral and cellular immunity. Antibodies are part of humoral immunity. The humoral system is first on the scene to deal with foreign pathogens that are circulating or outside of infected cells. Cellular immunity is mediated by Tlymphocytes and addresses pathogens inside infected cells.

The media reported that natural immunity against SARS-CoV-2 declined after a person recovered from the infection because

about effecspread of foreign bodies throughout the body. COVID has

was their only

response to any infection and is expected. Recent data from the research into bone marrow immune cells demonstrates that while circulating humoral antibodies decline after an active infection, a high percentage of those who had been infected with mild disease continue to produce low levels of immune cells that would recognize the virus if the person was infected again and mount a significant defense against it.

levels of humoral immunity measured in

the bloodstream decline as the person re-

covered. However, this decline is a natural

Before COVID-19, it was acknowledged that a natural infection nearly always produces a better immune response in the body than a vaccine. The argument for vaccines was that it reduced the risk from diseases that may produce long-term disability or death, such as birth defects from rubella or liver cancer from hepatitis B.

But the same can't be said for SARS-CoV-2. Vaccines against COVID-19 may not be a necessary health risk for many, especially when you consider the following. Practicing physicians such as Dr. Vladimir Zelenko have proven early treatment reduces death rates and long-haul symptoms; robust scientific reviews and multiple clinical trials

have suggested use of ivermectin could have reduced COVID-19 deaths by as much as 75 percent, recent data demonstrate natural immunity is produced following a COVID-19 infection, and that natural immunity produces a better response than vaccines.

Doctor Warns if You Had COVID, **Don't Get Vaccinated**

One international survey of 2,002 people found those who had recovered from a CO-VID-19 illness and received their first dose of the vaccine experienced "significantly increased incidence and severity of side ef-

These side effects included fever, breathessness, and severe effects that led to hospitalized care.

Retired cardiac surgeon Dr. Hooman Noorchashm, a strong proponent of vaccination programs, has raised concerns about the unprecedented nature of the COVID vaccination program, including the fact that public health authorities are recommending people who have recovered from COVID still get vaccinated. He believes that questions should be asked about specific vaccines and their potential side effects.

Noorchashm has written multiple letters warning people should be first screened for the presence of viral proteins before vaccination. In one letter, he warned that without screening, "this indiscriminate vaccination is a clear and present danger to a subset of the already infected."

COVID Vaccine Deaths Exceed All Other Vaccines Over 15 Years

During a recent Texas state Senate Health and Human Services Committee hearing, Dr. Peter McCullough, vice chief of internal medicine at Baylor University Medical Center, testified that according to available data, early treatment could have prevented up to 85 percent of deaths from COVID-19.

Yet, despite being inexpensive and readily available, many of these early treatments have been censured and suppressed as public health officials have encouraged people to wait for a global mass vaccination campaign.

The result of waiting for a gene therapy vaccine has been devastating. Five months into the campaign, the U.S. Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS) shows that more than 4,200 people in the United Dr. Joseph Mercola is the founder of Mer-States have died after getting the shot. Any cola.com. An osteopathic physician, bestother vaccine would have been pulled from the market by now.

For example, in 1976, 45 million people were vaccinated against the swine flu. After more than 500 cases of Guillain-Barre were reported with more than 25 deaths, the program was canceled.

Currently, health authorities have decided that more than 4,200 deaths from the CO-VID vaccine is either coincidental or inconsequential. When you consider the numbers,

the death toll is 7,000 percent greater from the COVID-19 vaccine than during the swine flu vaccination campaign, which was canceled because the vaccine was deemed too risky.

These numbers are likely to be seriously underestimated since VAERS appears to be backlogged by about three months.

Even if the data were current, only 1 percent to 10 percent of adverse events after vaccination are ever reported, according to studies that have examined reporting ratios. This means that while the VAERS records 4,406 deaths as of May 21, this number may be significantly underestimated.

Death Rate May Rise

This Fall and Winter

Although deaths from COVID-19 vaccines have already reached a historic level, I fear this may go even higher during the fall and winter months. One of the greatest wild cards of these vaccines is antibody-dependent enhancement (ADE) or paradoxical immune enhancement (IPE).

I have detailed this issue in several articles including "How COVID-19 Vaccine Can Destroy Your Immune System" and "Will Vaccinated People Be More Vulnerable to Variants" In summary, ADE means the vaccine actually enhances the virus's ability to enter and infect your cells, rather than enhancing your immunity against the infection. This results in more severe disease.

Fall and winter months are when most coronavirus infections occur, whether those are from SARS-CoV-2 or other coronaviruses responsible for the common cold. If ADE does turn out to be a common problem, then vaccinated individuals may be at higher risk for severe COVID-19 illness and a potentially lethal immune reaction due to pathogenic

If you or someone you love has already received a COVID-19 vaccine and are experiencing side effects, be sure to report it, preferably to all three of these locations: If you live in the United States, file a report on vaers.hhs.gov

Report the injury on VaxxTracker.com, which is a nongovernmental adverse event tracker (you can file anonymously if you like). Report the injury on the Children's Health Defense website.

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

For links to studies mentioned in this article, please see the article online at TheEp-

Foods With Natural Chemopreventive Properties

Just as some foods can cause cancer, other foods can reduce our cancer risk

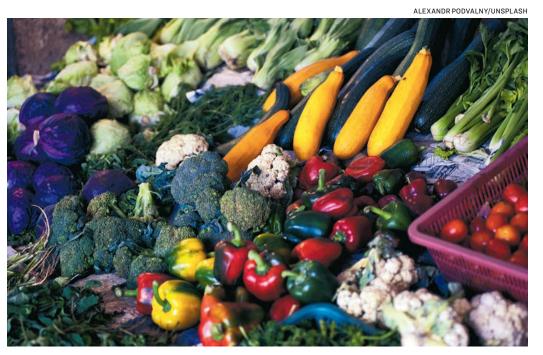
The greatest ally against chronic disease may be found in your everyday diet, from fresh, raw fruits and vegetables to popular beverages such as coffee and green tea.

Because just as we grow our bodies from the food we eat, we grow many of our sicknesses in the same manner. An estimated 42 percent of all cancers may

be prevented by diet and lifestyle alone, notes an article published in the American Cancer Society journal, CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians. The numbers are likely to be even higher for some types of cancer.

There's an increasing awareness of the power of food and herbs in preventing and helping to heal from cancer. GreenMedInfo. com hosts some of the largest open-access databases on this topic, providing more than 10,000 studies on the value of nearly 1,000 natural substances for cancer. The following are some commonly available foods that are natural chemopreventive agents.

An estimated 42 percent of all cancers may be prevented by diet and lifestyle alone.



Foods With Anticancer Properties

Eating fruits and vegetables has been linked to a reduced risk of cancer. According to a report from the 2007 World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute for Cancer Research, foods containing vitamin C probably protect against esophageal cancer, with fruits in particular helping against gastric cancer. Similar findings were observed in a 2016

study that saw "a marginally decreased risk" of esophageal cancer, squamous cell carcinoma, and esophageal adenocarcinoma, along with a non-significant risk reduction in gastric cardia cancer, with each

intake. Consuming citrus fruits has also been tied to decreased bladder cancer risk. Results from a 2019 study offered strong evidence that eating more fruit is associated with a lower risk of lung cancer among both current and former smokers, while vegetable intake is linked to a significantly reduced risk of lung cancer in current smokers. A meta-analysis also showed a correlation between fruit and vegetable intake and a reduced risk of oral cancer.

100 grams per day increase of citrus fruit

Cruciferous Vegetables

The family of vegetables that includes cauliflower, cabbage, kale, broccoli, and Brussels sprouts is renowned for its outstanding action against cancer. Cruciferous veggies have been found to have anticancer properties, with research showing:

- A high intake was inversely associated with renal cell carcinoma risk among Americans, based on a meta-analysis.
- · A diet that includes cruciferous vegetables could be a crucial modifiable risk factor for ovarian cancer, the fifth leading cause of cancer-related deaths among
- Consuming cruciferous vegetables was strongly associated with a reduced risk of prostate cancer progression.
- Consuming cruciferous vegetables may reduce lung cancer risk among men who currently don't smoke.

Only 1 to

10 percent

of adverse

events after

vaccination

are ever

reported.

A yellow substance from the root of the plant Curcuma longa, curcumin is the main active ingredient in the spice turmeric, with strong anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

Due to the role of oxidative damage in

a range of conditions such as cancer, atherosclerosis, and neurodegenerative diseases, curcumin's antioxidant properties are believed to play an important role in reducing the risk of developing such dis-

Research from 2001 showed

genesis in animal models.

that curcumin is safe in humans at up to 8,000 milligrams per day when taken or ally for three months, providing chemopreventive properties. Curcumin combined with turmerones, the essential oil components of turmeric, may be a powerful intervention to prevent inflammation-associated colon carcino-

"TUR [turmerones, a bioactive compound in turmeric] is a novel candidate for colon cancer prevention. Furthermore, we consider that its use in combination with CUR [curcumin] may become a powerful method for prevention of inflammation-associated colon carcinogenesis," researchers wrote in a study published in Biofactors.

Coffee is more than a morning pick-me-

up—it's also a powerhouse against various types of cancer. A meta-analysis of prospective observational studies showed a link between coffee intake and a reduced risk of oral, pharynx, liver, colon, prostate, and endometrial cancers, as well as melanoma.

There is also mounting evidence of the

cancer-fighting properties of coffee against liver cancer. A prospective cohort study involving 30,824 subjects Cruciferous echoed the finding in its probe veggies like of whether coffee, green tea, and abbage and kale caffeine are associated with livare renowned er cancer risk, showing that coffor their action fee consumption significantly against

reduced the risk, while the same

association wasn't observed for

caffeine intake. A separate study found drinking coffee was linked to lower hepatocellular carcinoma risk, with the protective effect detected in healthy populations as well as those with chronic liver diseases. In addition, researchers found that drinking coffee may prevent people from developing liver cirrhosis.

Green Tea

Green tea, another popular beverage around the world, scores high in chemoprevention. Researchers observing Chinese women concluded that eating more mushrooms significantly reduced breast cancer risk in pre- and post-menopausal women. They also observed an additional reduced risk from the joint effect of mushrooms and green tea.

In a randomized clinical trial of brewed green and black tea in prostate cancer patients prior to prostatectomy, green tea induced changes in inflammation and systemic oxidation, and the uptake of its polyphenols in prostate tissue displayed a potential role worthy of further research in preventing and treating prostate cancer. In a population-based study, women who

reported drinking at least one cup of green tea per day had a 54 percent reduction in ovarian cancer risk. Drinking more green tea might even prove helpful in reducing the risk of colorectal cancer in those with unhealthy lifestyles. You can discover more natural substances

with chemopreventive properties on the GreenMedInfo.com database.

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A new book shows how making healthy lifestyle choices can stave off cognitive decline

JILL SUTTIE

ike many people over the age of 60, I sometimes lose my keys or forget the names of favorite films. When I do, it makes me wonder: Is this the beginning of cognitive decline? Or, worse, am I fated to follow in the footsteps of my mother, who died of Lewy body dementia in her 70s?

According to neurosurgeon Sanjay Gupta, a CNN medical correspondent and author of the new book "Keep Sharp: Build a Better Brain at Any Age," the answer is no. Forgetfulness is normal at all ages, and your genes don't doom you to dementia. What's important is taking care of your brain in the best way possible, he argues.

"You can affect your brain's thinking and memory far more than you realize or appreciate, and the vast majority of people haven't even begun to try," Gupta wrote.

Gupta has distilled results from hundreds of research studies to help readers understand what's known—and not known about keeping your brain healthy. Along the way, he has busted common mythsthat doing puzzles is a good way to ward off dementia, for example—and replaced them with science-based advice on how to live a longer, healthier life with a more functional brain. He has also distinguished typical memory lapses, such as forgetting an acquaintance's name, from more troublesome ones, such as not remembering the way home from a frequent destination—a distinction I found quite reassuring.

While he has been quick to hail the cognitive strengths of older people—they tend to have better vocabulary skills, for example—he has also pointed out that our cognitive capacities can start to decline much earlier in life than we think—even in early adulthood. That's why he recommends making lifestyle changes now to improve brainpower at every age—not just when you hit your 60s.

"Keep Sharp" includes a questionnaire assessing risk for cognitive decline—with some surprising questions, such as "Do you sit for most of the day?" or "Do you have a history of depression?" Understanding your risk can inspire you to take corrective action. To that end, here are Gupta's five keys to a healthier brain.

Move More

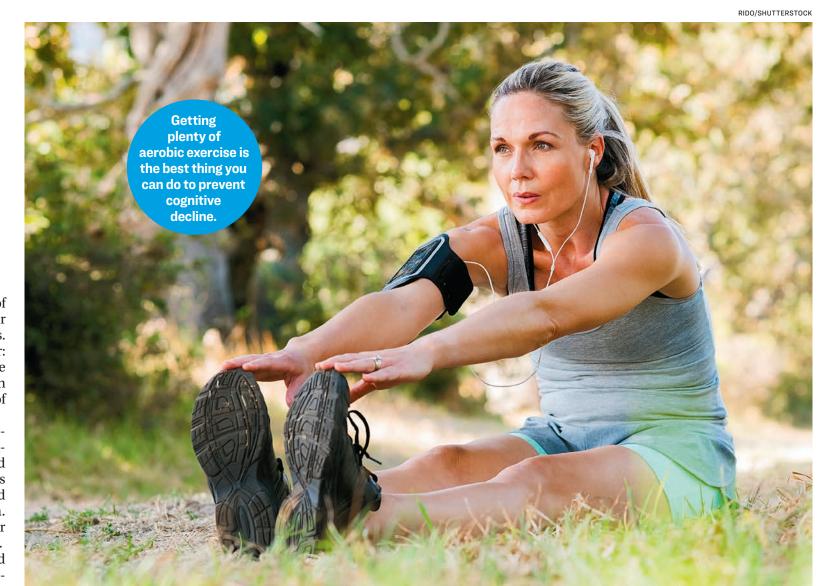
"When people ask me what's the single most important thing they can do to enhance their brain's function and resiliency to disease, I answer with one word: exercise," Gupta wrote. Being inactive is probably the most significant risk factor in dementia, while staying fit can help stave it off. Fortunately, it doesn't take much movement to make a difference: Even walking for two minutes every day can have an effect.

Exercise provides many benefits overall, including better stamina, strength, stress management, and immune function. But the main reason movement helps the brain is that it reduces inflammation while stimulating growth factors that promote the function and growth of neural cells. That's why aerobic exercise—more than stationary exercise, such as weightlifting—confers cognitive benefits, though weightlifting can build muscle.

Get Enough Sleep

"Sleeping well is one of the easiest and most effective ways to improve your brain functions, as well as your ability to learn and remember new knowledge," Gupta wrote. That's because sleep seems to clear the brain of debris that might otherwise build up and create problems.

For people who have trouble getting good sleep, Gupta's book reminds them of sleep hygiene principles that can help. He also pointed to the importance of resting in general, and suggests replacing daytime naps with stress-reducing walks in nature



Exercise helps the brain by reducing inflammation while stimulating the growth of neural cells.

Sanjay Gupta, MI

KEEP SHARP

"Keep Sharp: Build a

Better Brain at Any Age,'

Sanjay Gupta, Simon &

Eating a Mediterranean-

like diet and other heart-

healthy foods is great for

your brain health.

Schuster, 2021, 336

pages.

To reduce stress and rumination—those troublesome thoughts that keep us up at night—he recommends that people add a gratitude practice to their day, which, he wrote, "acts like a big reset button." You can also think about community volunteering, taking regular breaks from email and social media, and avoiding multitasking.

Learn, Discover, and Find Purpose

While puzzles may not be the answer to cognitive decline, we do need to stimulate our brains with learning and discovery, Gupta wrote. Learning creates new neural pathways and promotes brain resiliency—something that may help stave off the outward symptoms of dementia, such as memory loss, even if you develop the telltale brain plaques associated with Alzheimer's.

"Think of it as a big backup system in the rain that results from enriched life experiences such as education and occupation,"

Building cognitive reserve doesn't happen overnight, he warned—it results from a lifetime of challenging your brain through education, work, social relationships, and other activities. However, just because you don't have a college education doesn't mean you will experience greater cognitive decline, either. Aiming to challenge your mind throughout your life is what offers protection, not a formal degree.

Gupta warned that the majority of commercial "brain games" aren't effective at staving off dementia—though they may improve memory—because they don't train in problem-solving or reasoning, keys to cognitive reserve. People would be better off taking a traditional class or learning a second language, he said, because these activities offer more complex challenges and social contact, which is also important for brain health.

Finding purpose in life can be good for the brain, especially if it involves contact with people of different generations or personal learning and challenge. Re-

> search suggests that people with a sense of purpose have a reduced risk of suffering the deleterious effects of dementia—even if their brain contains Alzheimer's plaques—probably because having purpose inspires them to take

"What's good for the heart is good for the brain," Gupta wrote. Still, there is so much conflicting information out there about diets and dietary supplements, it can be hard to separate the wheat from the chaff—pun intended.

better care of themselves.

Gupta took pains to dispel myths around gluten and so-called superfoods, such as kale and fish oil. There is no evidence to suggest gluten affects people's brain function, he said, and kale and fish oil, while good for you, aren't going to stop cognitive

While it's hard to recommend a perfect brain diet based on research, Gupta cited

Martha Clare Morris's work. An epidemiologist and founding member of the Global Council on Brain Health, Morris recommends a Mediterranean-like diet—one rich in vegetables, berries, beans, whole grains, fish, poultry, and olive oil.

That diet may not be palatable or available for everyone, though. So, Gupta provided more general diet advice, using the acronym SHARP:

- Stay away from lots of refined sugar.
- Hydrate regularly. • Add more omega-3 fatty acids from di-
- etary sources—not pills. • Reduce portions—possibly trying inter-
- mittent fasting. • Plan ahead, meaning have healthy
- snacks around so you don't turn to junk food if you become hungry.

Having close relationships with others you can count on is important to a happy, healthy life, and may help you live longer. It's important for brain health as well, as research suggests its opposite, loneliness, seems to be a factor in developing

Sleep seems to clear the brain of debris that might otherwise build up and create problems.

Gupta suggested combining socializing with other activities designed to get you moving or learning. That could mean taking a walk or class with a friend, joining a team sport, or volunteering. Socializing with more diverse people or people of different generations can also be a plus. And staying connected virtually, while less than ideal, may be helpful when one lives in a remote place without many social supports. While it's true each of these lifestyle factors is good for preventing cognitive decline, Gupta has advice for people already experiencing cognitive decline, too. Part of his book is devoted to helping readers experiencing decline to assess where they are and figure

out how to move forward from there. For the rest of us, his book is a useful and highly readable primer for sharpening your brain at any age—not just to stave off dementia, but to simply enjoy your life more fully.

"The brain can be continuously and consistently enriched throughout our life no matter your age or access to resources," he wrote. If you change your lifestyle, even a little, he promises, "Your brain—no, your whole body—will love it."

Jill Suttie, Psy.D., is Greater Good's book review editor and a frequent contributor to the magazine. This article was originally published by the Greater Good online

On Living and Dying

Advice from a doctor who deals with terminally ill patients

Continued from Page 1

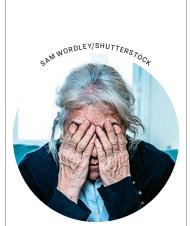
are available to guide you through the process. We plan for many life events with intensity, such as births, marriages, anniversaries, and birthdays. It's valuable to plan for our final crucial time of life—and it is still life. In truth, I have seen so many living their best life once given a terminal diagnosis.

2. Those who wait until they get a grim prognosis to start pondering these matters often find the process more difficult. It is challenging to have end-oflife discussions in times of crisis when everyone's emotions are more volatile. I've been witness to so many families under stress becoming divided when opinions differ on what should be done as decision trees are presented by the medical team. In critical situations, if preparations have been done, families can focus more fully on the care and love of the patient rather than wondering what the patient would want.

3. Conversations about death and dying make most people uncomfortable. Even though the conversation itself doesn't increase our chances of dying, just having it can make us fearful or sad. But contemplating end-of-life issues within our control is not morbid—it's wise. Take two real-life examples.

The first was my friend Lani. When she learned that she had less than two years to live, she fought hard, mostly for her family. I was amazed to learn that two years earlier, she had cleaned out her closets and attic. "Get rid of that stuff," she told me personally. "Your kids won't want it." She had prepared, so she was able to spend her last months enjoying life and enjoying her family. I remember her bedroom in her home as being a beautiful place of quiet and peace. That's where she passed away, surrounded by her big family.

The other example is a man named Ralph. He was far from an ideal father or husband. A robust man, he didn't seem anywhere near death, but a massive stroke brought him to the brink. Ironically, this father who had never done much for his family had prepared for his death by completing an online \$5 directive known as "Five Wishes." In his final months, as



Those who do not prepare seem to suffer

A patient dying

from ALS said

it best, 'No one

makes it out

alive.'

his children ministered to his needs according to his written directives, they got to know a dad who was vulnerable, and in his vulnerability, he became lovable. The last gift he gave his children—his planning—was the best gift he ever gave his children. And the last months of his life were the best months of his life. People ask me how to talk about death

with younger children. A recent article in Parents Magazine emphasized the importance of talking with our children about death, even when they're young, to avoid confusing and often terrifying feelings. I still remember how terrified I was as a child when I watched the animated film "Bambi" and—spoiler alert—the death of Bambi's mother. My grandson was terrified in "The Lion King" whenspoiler alert—death claimed Mufasa.

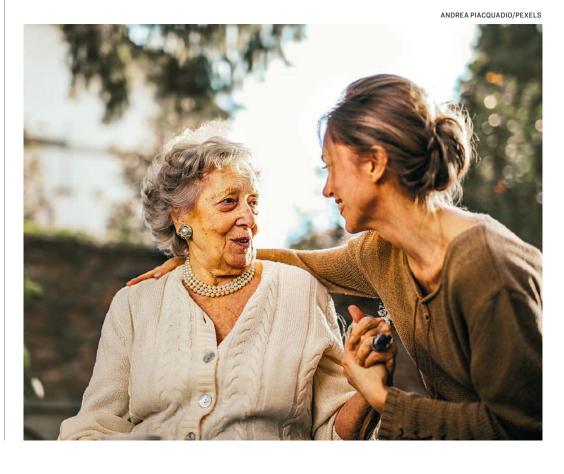
The reality is that most kids' movies feature dying or death as a prominent theme. We need to talk openly with our children about those sad and scary scenes, listening more than we talk.

4. Most faith traditions offer spiritual (and even non-spiritual) guidance to their adherents who are dying and to those who love them.

The Jewish faith, for example, has rituals that take into account the theological, practical, and emotional needs of the terminal patient. The rightness or wrongness of our beliefs will become evident after death, but the preparation that precedes that last breath is valuable and integral to the dying process. Those who do not prepare seem to suffer more. Families that are left to deal with an unexpected, sudden death seem to suffer

Once we're comfortable with the concept of our own death and make a plan for how we're going to die, we can join with those who make light of this inescapable human condition. We can laugh with Jerry Seinfeld who says, "Make no mistake about why these babies are here—they are here to replace us." And we will leave earth with the confidence that we're not burdening those babies, but actually blessing our families.

Dr. Pamela Prince Pyle has practiced hospital-based medicine in the U.S. since 1992 and on mission since 2009 with Africa New Life Ministries in Rwanda. She is the author of "A Good Death: Learning to Live Like You Were Dying."



The end of our lives can be a time of confusion and strain. Preparation allows

us to focus on more pleas-

STOCKCE/SHUTTERSTOCK

You can never

you've become

leave behind

the person

or the life

you've lived.

You Can Never Escape Yourself

No matter where you go in life, you will have to live with yourself

You can travel

to the ends of

the earth, but

take yourself

you always

with you.

JOSHUA BECKER

"Wherever you go, there you are."

After a busy few weeks, I was on vacation with my family. I spent the vacation trying to detach from

as many things as possible. No email, no obligations, no social media, just resting and being together with family. However, I did notice about halfway

through the trip that I was never able to fully disconnect from one thing: myself. The exact moment I had this realization

was one afternoon when I was floating alone in the middle of the ocean. (Well, not technically the middle, but quite a few feet offshore). The sun was shining, the water was warm,

and I was simply being tossed to and fro by the incoming and outgoing waves. I wasn't moving forward, wasn't moving backward, I was just floating in relative quietness. While floating, a work project came to my

mind. Something I've been thinking about doing for a while but haven't yet started. That thought led me to another thought about work, which led me to another. I didn't really want to be thinking about

work, so I tried to push it aside and think about something else. I started to think about my son leaving home in August and if we've done all that we could to prepare him for a life on his own. I'm proud of how we've raised him, but I can't help but have some regrets along the way as well.

Some of the mistakes got me thinking about a few of my friends at home who had recently been through a similar life change and how I should probably be asking them for advice on navigating this new season of life.

That thought, somehow, morphed into thinking about a close friend who is about to be married and how they are just starting a new life together and wondering if my wife and I might be able to help in any way. Which then got me thinking about my own marriage and how I'm doing as a husband..

As I floated and my mind considered more and more aspects of my life, an important reality came to mind: No matter where you go, you can never escape yourself.

Wherever you go, however far you travel, regardless of how hard you try to disconnect, you will always be there.

I think, more than anything else, I began to realize the importance of living a life that I can be proud of. Because there's simply no escaping it.

You will always be you. You can travel to the ends of the earth, but you always take yourself with you.

The wise decisions we make each day about how to invest our time and money and talents are carried forward with us every day. As are the foolish decisions we

The changes that we're making, whether for the positive or the negative, are the changes we'll reflect upon for the rest of our lives.

foster, the parenting strategies we employ, the work we choose to do, the character and

integrity we pursue all contribute to the person we spend time with in the future. No matter where you go, you'll always be there. Make sure you're someone you want to spend time with.



Joshua Becker is an author,

public speaker, and the

founder and editor of Be-

he inspires others to live

more by owning less. Visit

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coming Minimalist, where

Understanding these 3 blocks can open a wider path to health

BRANDON LAGRECA

ur mindset is key to how we face any disease. And there are certain elements to mindset that can help with virtually any health challenge. Similarly, there are three very common obstacles to adopting a foundational healing

Not Knowing Enough

This is the simplest (but not always the easiest) block to rectify when adopting a healing mindset. It entails not having the proper diagnosis with which to align one's efforts. Finding the right course of treatment takes a combination of a patient's insights mirrored by the experience of a trusted health care provider.

Let's take for example someone who wakes up with acute wrist pain. Perhaps it's carpal tunnel syndrome, a median nerve impingement in the wrist. But it could be thoracic outlet syndrome, a nerve and circulatory obstruction in the shoulder girdle. It might also be cubital syndrome, or ulnar nerve entrapment in the elbow. Each of these diagnoses has differentiating signs and symptoms, and they can be present at the same time.

The trick is finding the right medical provider who can ferret out the proper diagnosis or diagnoses. Dr. Google can help, but that also leads to the next obstacle to adopting a healing mindset.

Knowing Too Much

This is a harder nut to crack, personified by someone attached to their diagnosis. It matters little if that diagnosis was issued from a medical doctor or from Dr. Google. If the diagnosis is incorrect (or incomplete), and attachment to it prevents considering other lines of treatment, then knowing too much is a liability.

This can be particularly frustrating for practitioners of traditional medicine, when a patient who has been through the medical wringer has arrived at a "conclusive" diagnosis that, although comforting, fails to address the root cause of disease. Diagnoses such as irritable bowel syndrome, chronic fatigue syndrome, and fibromyalgia are helpful labels to describe a group of symptoms that rarely correspond to successful treatment options.

Not Knowing What You Don't Know

This is the trickiest obstacle to a healing mindset; it is the diagnosis that eludes patient and practitioner alike. An example of a poorly understood and seldom acknowledged diagnosis is chronic Lyme. With limited testing for tick-borne illnesses, it's the rare medical provider who can derive the correct antimicrobial course of treatment based upon clinical presentation

Silent infections get their name by being insidious, often presenting with symptoms months or even years after the initial exposure. Environmental toxicants pose a similar burden, not presenting with symptoms loud enough to diagnose acutely, but robbing one of life chronically. I have witnessed patients bear a mysterious and slow degradation in their health over years from undetected radon or mold exposure.

Think Outside the Box

Healing takes time, and it takes the right

ONLINE

BY MAIL



Our minds can obfuscate-our path to health.

Researching our own illnesses can lead to fear and fixation on a misdiagnosis. course ahead, providing guidance on treatment options and lifestyle changes that will most effectively help you arrive at your destination of optimal health. Awareness of the obstacles clears that path so you don't waste time, energy, and money on medical red herrings.

Now that you understand the foundation of mindset, build upon it with nuanced concepts of healing specific to your needs. Do you need to be empowered to make better dietary choices following a diabetes diagnosis? Perhaps a growth mindset around exercise is the top of the pyramid for moving through chronic muscle pain? Is fear of death preventing you from living your life to the fullest after a cancer diagnosis? Ask yourself these leading questions, but only upon a bedrock understanding of a healing mindset.

Brandon LaGreca, LAc, MAcOM, is a licensed acupuncturist in the state of Wisconsin. He's the author of "Cancer and EMF Radiation: How to Protect Yourself From the Silent Carcinogen of Electropolution" and "Cancer, Stress & Mindset: Focusing the Mind to Empower Healing and Resilience." He shares his thoughts at Empowered Patient Blog.



trajectory. A healing mindset maps the The road to wellness begins with good information and a healing mindset.

Tips for Balancing Freedom and Safety

Parenting out of fear can undermine making wellreasoned decisions

ANTHONY RAO

Allowing your child more freedom often feels linked to concerns for their safety. Younger kids want to ride their bikes beyond their streets. Preteens want to hang out with friends after school in the town center. Teens want to go to parties. Older teens ask to borrow the car to drive with friends.

A child's job is to become more independent, push limits when appropriate, explore the world, and gain knowledge through direct experiences. Your job is to encourage this process of growth and development, but safely and smartly.

But parents can easily freeze up when they face these parenting situations. They run the latest news headlines through their mind and feel fear. When you allow fear and worry, or even anger, to surface during your parenting, you aren't your best. You're leading your kids with your emotional brain centers—you're parenting via your primitive limbic system.

When emotional, you lose access to the most important parts of your thinking apparatus, your executive functions and decision-making abilities. You want to parent with your frontal cortex.

Decision-

making should

always be a

logical task.

Here are a few tips.

Don't make parenting decisions while emotional. Decision-making

should always be a logical task. Follow basic steps to slow the process down and follow procedures and rules.

Never make important decisions on the fly. Enlist other viewpoints, such as checking in with spouses, trusted relatives, friends, other parents, or maybe even teachers and coaches.

Watch less cable news.

Studies show that watching news events on screens too long, particularly 24/7 cable news, can leave you with more traumatic feelings than people who were actually at those events. You aren't getting the news or staying informed as much as overstimulating your limbic system. You believe the world is far less safe than it actually is.

Stop over-communicating your fears to your children.

Tell them how you think and feel based on what you know rather than proclaimin that some activity is dangerous, like "Kids get killed all the time doing that." When you communicate what you are fearful of more calmly, it helps to keep your child or teen calm as well.

Plan additional freedoms ahead of time. Devise a simple plan that rewards greater freedom for small steps of compliance. Keep moving your kids further out into the world in graded steps, tied to them showing small

Anthony Rao is a nationally known child psychologist. For more than 20 years, he was a psychologist at Boston's Children's Hospital and an instructor at Harvard Medical School. He is the co-author of "The Power of Agency: The 7 Principles to Conquer Obstacles, Make Effective Decisions & Create a Life on Your Own Terms."

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Enjoy These 9 Foods for a Late-Spring Detox

Help your body flush out benzene, arsenic, lead, carbon tetrachloride and more

Even though spring has almost passed, it's still a great time to lighten up and start fresh. This is the season to clean things out, whether that be your home or the sluggishness that comes from eating poorly the previous year. Now is the time to favor seasonal fruits and veggies over meat and starches. Incorporating these nine foods into your diet will help you purge the detritus of the

past year in preparation for lighter, brighter

days ahead.

Cleanse Your Body and Mind Detoxifying the body has been practiced

throughout recorded history. Roman baths, sweat lodges, and mineral springs have long attracted people wishing to rid their bodies of toxins, both mental and physical. Cleanses are meant to be engaged whole cloth, by the body and the mind, through stillness and attention.

Continued on Page 11



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Talk show host

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A Dozen Ways to Get a Better Night's Sleep

If you're not sleeping well, there are many things you can do to help you

LYNN JAFFEE

ou've had a long day and you're exhausted. You finally call it a night and get into bed for a restful eight hours. You try to relax, but all of a sudden your mind is in overdrive. It's rehashing the day and planning for tomorrow, next week, and next year. In short order, any thoughts of restful sleep have flown out the window.

Whether it's falling asleep, waking in the wee hours of the night, or not sleeping deeply—or at all—throughout the night, sleep issues have a huge impact on your life. That's because your body rejuvenates, heals, and resets itself while you're asleep. Not getting enough shuteye leaves you exhausted, distracted, forgetful, and prone to mistakes and accidents. Poor sleep can also increase your risk for other health problems, such as heart disease, obesity, depression, and ulcers. The bottom line is that you need to get sleep, and you need to get enough of it to maintain your health.

The good news is that, in many cases, you don't need to reach for prescription medications or an over-the-counter sleep aid. Some tweaks to your lifestyle and before-bed rituals may be all you need. If you have a hard time falling asleep or struggle with getting enough hours of good quality sleep, here are some things to try:

- 1. Make sleep a priority—as important as eating well, exercising, or taking medications. If you're a super-busy person, this may actually translate into putting sleep into your schedule.
- 2. Do something relaxing, such as reading a book, meditation, stretching, or taking a warm bath before bedtime. These activities help you unwind and them with sleep.
- 3. Finish eating two or three hours before you go to sleep. Digesting your food and sleeping don't mix. Also, avoid over-stimulating food late in the day. Coffee, spicy foods, and alcohol all can play a role in sleep
- 4. Keep the room where you sleep cool, as feeling warm can interrupt your
- 5. Be sure the room you sleep in is dark. Even a little bit of light is enough to
- 6. Step away from the computer, phone, and TV screens at least an hour before you go to sleep. The light emitted from these screens is as bright as those used in seasonal light therapy lamps, which can keep you awake.
- 7. Exercise during the day to help you

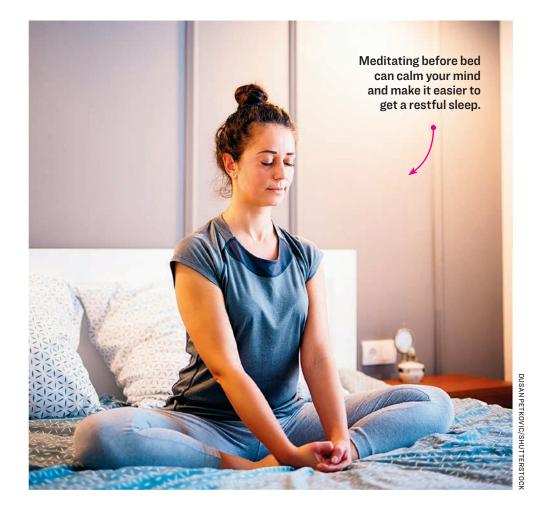
workouts right before bed.

- 8. Try to get to sleep at around the same time every night. After a couple of weeks, your body will get the message that it's time to sleep and begin to feel tired at that time. Also wake up at roughly the same time every day, including on the weekends. Setting consistent times for sleeping and waking helps your body sleep better at night.
- 9. Meditate. If you're tossing and turning, try concentrating on your breathing. It's a little hypnotic and may help you fall asleep. If you need help, there are a number of apps for meditation and visualization, and there are some really good ones that are free—check out Insight Timer.
- 10. Wind down before you actually get into bed. Stop working, watching TV, or any other activities that stimulate your mind. This helps your body move into the mindset of slowing down for sleep.
- 11. Go to sleep when you're drowsy. Your body releases melatonin, a hormone that makes you sleepy. However, the surge of melatonin only lasts for a short time. If you ignore your sleepiness, it's harder to nod off when you finally do go to bed.
- 12. Get some help in the form of acupuncture or massage. Acupuncture and Chinese medicine have been used for thousands of years to help people sleep. In China, it's one of the first treatments used for patients to improve the quality of their sleep. Also, scheduling regular massages helps to reduce muscle tension, relieve stress, and promote relaxation.

How much sleep do you need? It actually depends on your age. Interestingly, the older you are, the less you need. While over time your body will associate babies and small children need anywhere from 12 to 17 hours, teenagers need 8 to 10 hours, adults under age 64 need 7 to 9 hours, and those over 65 need about 7 or 8 hours per night. If you're regularly sleeping considerably less than is recommended for your age, you're likely not functioning at your best, and your health may be suffering.

The bottom line is that if getting enough sleep feels like a challenge, there are some things you can do. You don't need to lie there night after night looking at the ceiling. By making sleep a health priority and switching things up a bit, you can set the stage for getting a better night's sleep.

Lynn Jaffee is a licensed acupuncturist and the author of "Simple Steps: The Chinese Way to Better Health." This article was originally published on sleep better. Just don't do strenuous *AcupunctureTwinCities.com*.



Enjoy These 9 Foods for a Late-Spring Detox

Help your body flush out benzene, arsenic, lead, carbon tetrachloride and more

Continued from Page 9

A proper cleanse includes ceasing productive life for a time, to direct one's focus toward processing and releasing that which no longer serves. Spring is a traditional time for cleansing, which serves as a reboot for the system.

"Spring clean" by ridding closets of worn and unused items and donating excesses to charitable causes. Don't forget to purge your pantry as well, making room for a bounty of fresh garden produce, especially greens, asparagus, and cruciferous vegetables that mark the early harvest.

When it comes to cleansing methods, most people can't afford to take a week off from their routines to detox. So, how can a busy person safely and efficiently remove toxins and reboot their system while living an actual life? The key is to eat more—not less—of these nine detoxifying foods.

1. Broccoli Sprouts

Sprouted broccoli seeds, along with the sprouted seeds of other cruciferous vegetables like Brussels sprouts and cabbage, produce a sulfur-based nutrient called sulforaphane. Studies on sulforaphane have linked it to such effects as reducing inflammation, slowing tumor growth, blocking cancerous DNA mutations, and detoxifying the body by neutralizing toxic free radicals.

One of the most notable effects of sulforaphane is how fast it clears toxins from the body. And while eating whole broccoli has significant health benefits, broccoli sprouts may be even more powerful. At just three days old, the sprouts contain nearly 100 times more sulforaphane per gram than the mature plant.

Another study of broccoli sprouts demonstrated their powerful detoxifying ability by rapidly enhancing the elimination of benzene, acrolein, and crotonaldehyde—three common airborne pollutants.

2. Whey

Whey protein, a byproduct of the cheesemaking process, is an amino acid-rich supplement long favored by bodybuilders and the health-conscious. Associated with improving body weight and reducing fat composition, whey can be an effective aid in the treatment of certain metabolic conditions such as high blood pressure, insulin resistance, and lipid metabolism.

In a 2008 study on whey supplementation for weight loss, subjects consuming whey protein drinks twice daily lost significantly more body fat than control subjects consuming a calorically equivalent placebo. While both groups lost weight, the whey protein group lost significantly more fat while preserving more lean muscle than those who took the placebo.

3. Chlorella

Chlorella is a versatile nutritional supplement derived from freshwater algae. Used to support health and wellness, chlorella is a good source of vitamins and minerals, but this supplement's superpower may be its detoxifying properties.

Numerous studies demonstrate chlorella's ability to purify different chemical contaminants. In a study published in the journal Experimental and Toxicologic Pathology, researchers explored chlorella's detoxifying effects on carbon tetrachloride, a chemical known to cause acute liver failure at high exposures. Dosing with chlorella extract produced a protective action through antioxidant effects, markedly reversing disease phenotypes in test mice.

Another study was performed to estimate the effects of chlorella on certain carcinogenic chemicals commonly found in the Western diet. Dosing human female subjects with chlorella resulted in significantly lower amounts of heterocyclic amines (HCAs) in the urine

Children receiving pectin experienced a reduction in body burden of Cesium-137, a deadly radioactive isotope.

Broccoli sprouts

demonstrate a powerful

ability to eliminate

benzene, acrolein, and

crotonaldehyde.

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Ginger's detoxifying

properties may be

due to the compound

zerumbone, which

has exhibited

chemoprotective

The sprouted seeds of cruciferous vegetables produce sulforaphane,

> than control subjects. HCAs are a class of carcinogenic chemicals formed by cook-

Chlorella is only available in supplement form and can be added to a fruit smoothie to aid palatability. Green algae are a rich source of iodine that may also help remove fluoride from

ing muscle meats at high temperatures.

which appears to

block cancerous DNA

4. Apple Pectin

Apples aren't only delicious and convenient—nature's fast food—they're a rich source of pectin, a beneficial plant fiber associated with gut health. Pectin causes homemade jams and jellies to thicken and gel, and more importantly, it chemically binds to toxins in your body, allowing your gastrointestinal (GI) tract to flush them out.

In 1990, research was published on children of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster in Russia. Considered at high risk for contamination, these children were closely monitored for long-term development of radiation poisoning. As part of a strategic intervention, apple pectin was administered to test subjects for a two-week period under supervision.

Compared to placebo subjects, children receiving pectin experienced a reduction in body burden of Cesium-137, a deadly radioactive isotope. Consuming whole organic apples is a great way to get more pectin in your diet, but it's also available as a supplement. In powder form, apple pectin makes a pleasant addition to smoothies, but you should consume it immediately after mixing, lest it thickens too much.

5. Coffee

If you're not already a coffee drinker, you may want to reconsider during a detox. Coffee is a superfood that provides sharper focus and can rid your body of xenobiotics, substances that are foreign to your body.

A study published in the journal Cancer Research found that green coffee beans fed to mice produced glutathione (GSH) S-transferase, a major detoxification enzyme. Consumption of green coffee beans promoted GSH Stransferase activity in the small intestine and liver of mice, lending support to research that has uncovered coffee's anti-tumorigenic effect on the liver.

6. Garlic

Garlic is another plant-based detoxifier that is probably already in your kitchen. Garlic contains the organosulfur compound allicin, which boosts the number of detoxifying enzymes that are present in your body. A 2010 study identified that these compounds, found in high concentrations in onions and

garlic, may induce phase II detoxifying enzymes that bind to reactive metabolites in the bloodstream, thus facilitating their elimination.

Other studies on garlic have demonstrated its effectiveness at reducing lead concentrations in the blood and tissue, including a 2012 study published in Basic Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology that determined garlic may be clinically safer and just as effective as d-penicillamine at removing lead from the body.

7. Turmeric

Curcumin, one of the active polyphenols in the spice turmeric, is a super-supplement with an array of health-promoting properties, including its ability to detoxify your body through antioxidation.

Curcumin's detoxification and antioxidant effects were observed in an animal study on rats exposed to mercury. Oral curcumin treatment, at a dose of 80 milligrams per kilogram of body weight daily for three days, was found to have a protective effect on mercury-induced oxidative stress parameters, namely lipid peroxidation and catalase activities in the liver, kidney, and brain. Catalase is an important enzyme that protects cells

from oxidative damage by free radicals. Curcumin treatment was also effective for reversing mercury-induced serum biochemical changes, which are the markers of liver and kidney injury. Mercury concentration in the tissues was also decreased by the pre- and post-exposure treatment with curcumin.

If you plan to incorporate smoothies into your spring detox, consider addng ginger and turmeric for additional detoxifying effects. A 2016 study found that turmeric and ginger were effective at eliminating arsenic, a highly toxic metal, from the body.

Results showed that the combination was not only useful in increasing the amount of arsenic eliminated via feces and urine, but it also provided a protective effect against damage caused by arsenic exposure.

Ginger's detoxifying properties may be due, in part, to the compound zerumbone, which has exhibited chemoprotective properties that may help protect the body against certain cancers.

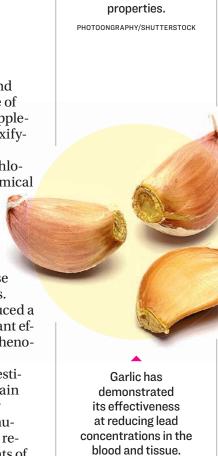
9. Green Tea

A cool glass of fresh green tea may sound purely indulgent as temperatures climb, but did you know that you may also be providing a boost to your detox efforts? Consumption of green tea has been clinically shown to reduce the adverse effects of lead and may even help to increase

An experimental study of 70 rats exposed to lead showed that rats given green tea extract retained more bodyweight than other test subjects and showed reduced effects of lead poisoning. Male rats in the green tea group also had the highest sperm counts and lowest rate of sperm abnormalities, helping to reduce lead's damaging effects on

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Can This Natural Sweetener Lower Blood Sugar?

JOSEPH MERCOLA

raising your blood sugar.

No-calorie sweeteners come with

consequences, but this one may be different

any people have a sweet

tooth. For some, it can be-

come an addiction, fueled

by a food industry that con-

tinually creates an abun-

dance of highly palatable, inexpensive,

ultra-processed foods. As some companies

cash in on a market for lab-created, low-

calorie sweeteners, one natural sweetener

may help curb your sweet tooth without

In fact, it may have the opposite effect.

While manufacturers seek out "perfectly

engineered food," the incidence of obesity

and obesity-related health conditions has

skyrocketed. Type 2 diabetes is one of the

obesity-related conditions that has a sig-

nificant impact on many of your bodily

People with diabetes have a higher risk

of also having heart disease, stroke, glau-

coma, kidney disease, and high blood

pressure. It follows that if you could lower

diabetes and obesity rates, you could re-

duce rates of these other conditions. That

could save many people's lives, given that

heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and kidney

disease are all in the top eight causes of

The obesity epidemic is one of the most

important global public health challenges.

Obesity was linked to 4.7 million premature

34.2 million people, or 10.5 percent of the

this sweetener, you may reduce your risk

of insulin resistance, a primary symptom

Sugar is a carbohydrate found in fruits and

vegetables and added to food products.

Added sugars are usually sucrose (table

sugar) and high-fructose corn syrup. Evi-

dence shows that no matter what type of

sugar you're consuming, it has a signifi-

cant effect on your metabolism, even in the

healthiest people. But while the sugars

occurring in fruit come with nu-

trients we need and fiber that

dulls blood sugar spikes,

added sugars in processed

Not All Sugar Is Created Equally

Sugar hides

under as many as

61 different names

in 74 percent of

processed food

products.

death in the United States.





Allulose is one of the few lowcalories sweeteners without serious side effects, unless you overeat it.

cited interchangeably with fructose, HFCS and fructose are not the same. Fructose is a simple sweetener found naturally in many fruits and vegetables. HFCS, on the other hand, is artificially produced from corn, through a process that involves first turning it into corn starch and then back into a mixture of fructose and glucose.

But whether it's simple fructose or HFCS, there is evidence to show this type of sugar causes greater damage than simple glucose or table sugar. This is because fructose doesn't act like glucose in your body.

In one study, a group of postmenopausal overweight or obese women consumed fructose beverages with their meals for 10 weeks. The data showed that this practice increased fasting glucose and reduced insulin response. The researchers concluded that the "present results suggest that long-

term consumption of diets high in fructose could lead to an increased risk of

CVD [cardiovascular disease]." Unfortunately, because HFCS is cheaper and 20 percent sweeter than regular table sugar, it's used by many food and beverage manufacturers. Numerous studies have shown, however, that not only can it contribute to impaired glucose toler-

ance, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes, but also HFCS can disrupt your sense of hunger and satiety.

Regarding diabetes, in one global analysis of 43 countries, researchers found that in areas where HFCS was highly available, the prevalence of diabetes was 20 percent higher. The results suggested that increased consumption of HFCS increased the risk of Type 2 diabetes, which was independent of obesity.

In another study, men and women were given a 24-ounce beverage sweetened with either HFCS or sucrose. Blood and urine samples were collected over six hours, and a variety of metabolic biomarkers were measured. The researchers found that HFCS led to significantly different acute metabolic effects compared to sucrose.

Initially, experts thought fructose would be a better choice because it has a low glycemic index. However, only the liver can metabolize fructose. And, as mentioned, consuming fructose also increases your appetite, which ultimately contributes to obesity, diabetes, and NAFLD.

Many sweeteners have side effects, and

those from artificial sweeteners are more

toxic than others. Research in 2008 re-

vealed that sucralose, also known as

Splenda, reduces your gut bacteria by 50

percent and increases the pH level in your

intestines. A study from 2018 found that

sucralose is metabolized and accumulates

Research published in 2016 from the

Ramazzini Institute linked Splenda to leu-

kemia. Not long after this study was pub-

lished in a peer-reviewed journal, the com-

pany hired a public relations firm to dull

the impact of those findings. By 2017, the

market for Splenda reached \$697.4 million

worldwide and was projected to increase 3

percent through 2025. Most of it was sold

It was originally hoped that artificial

sweeteners would help curb cravings for

sweets in people who have diabetes. Yet

in one small study using healthy partici-

pants, researchers found that it took only

two weeks for the noncaloric artificial

sweeteners to trigger adverse effects on

A 2017 study concluded that these sweet-

eners actually exaggerated post-meal glu-

cose absorption in users, "which could

predispose them to developing Type 2

Artificial sweeteners may also increase

your risk of weight gain, obesity, meta-

bolic syndrome, and other related prob-

lems such as Type 2 diabetes by inducing

'metabolic derangements," according to a

report published in the journal Trends in

Further research found that the artificial

sweetener aspartame (NutraSweet) is as-

sociated with greater glucose intolerance

in people with obesity. These are only some

of the side effects of artificial sweeteners,

which increase your risk of challenging

health conditions and are not a safe alter-

Dr. Joseph Mercola is the founder of Mer-

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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

For links to studies mentioned in this

article, please see the article online at

was originally published on Mercola.com

Endocrinology and Metabolism.

native to table sugar.

TheEpochTimes.com

blood sugar levels.

in North America and Asia-Pacific.

The Toxic Effects of Artificial

Sweeteners





is one of the most

behavior.

contribute to impaired glucose tolerance, cardiovascular

and satiety.

disease, and diabetes. It can disrupt your sense of hunger

foods pose several health risks.

Sugar hides under as many as 61 different names in 74 percent of processed food products, and while there are countless studies demonstrating the psychological and physiological consequences of sugar this dangerous additive remains ubig-

In one 12-week study, researchers found that men who ate 650 calories a day in sugar had higher levels of fat in their blood and liver. Lead researcher Bruce Griffin, Ph.D., from the University of Surrey, commented on the results saying, "Our findings provide new evidence that consuming high amounts of sugar can alter your fat metabolism in ways that could increase your risk of cardiovascular disease."

Sugar can also affect your brain, mood, and behavior. Several studies have found an association between a rising intake of sugar and an increase in rates of depression.

Sugar stimulates the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with focus and motivation. Dopamine plays a role in many important metabolic pathways, many of which affect your mood. That's why sugar feels so good and why manufacturers use it to drive your behavior. But, like other addictive drugs, sugar is unhealthy.

Allulose Natural Sweetener Has **Unique Action on Blood Sugar**

One natural sweetener option is Astrea deaths worldwide in 2017, and according Allulose. Although the market in Japan to the National Diabetes Statistics Report, is significant, it's a relatively little-known alternative sweetener in the West. Allulose U.S. population, have diabetes. By using is found in small quantities in some fruits such as figs, jackfruit, and raisins and was given a generally-regarded-as-safe (GRAS) food designation by the FDA.

> Allulose is a monosaccharide sugar that differs from fructose only at one of the carbon atoms. This one change makes a world of difference in the way the molecule acts in the body. It's functionally a carbohydrate and mostly absorbed in the small intestines. However, the majority of allulose is excreted by the kidneys before it's

> This means that most of the calories you consume from allulose are excreted through your kidneys before being metabolized. It was only recently that the FDA differentiated allulose from sucrose

Highfructose corn syrup can

labels. Before this, anytime it was added to a processed food, it was simply listed as an added sugar. Therefore, there was little incentive to include allulose in products. Since allulose has 95 percent fewer calories than sucrose, the FDA allowed manufacturers to exclude

or high-fructose corn syrup on nutrition

it from the total and added sugar counts on nutrition labels. In one animal study, researchers found that allulose contributes a fraction of 1 percent of the energy (calories) of sucrose.

The researchers called the energy value "effectively zero" and suggested that this "rare sugar providing zero energy ... may be useful in sweeteners for obese people as an aid for weight reduction."

In addition to contributing little to no calories, allulose elicits a physiological response in the body that may lower your blood glucose and reduce abdominal fat and fat accumulation around the liver. This may reduce the rising number of people who have nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). Allulose can also decrease insulin resistance and reduce the potential risk for Type 2 diabetes.

Natural Compound May Reduce Glucose With Few Side Effects

In an analysis of 40 human trials, allulose demonstrated the ability to significantly reduce after-meal insulin response, which the researchers believe leads "to modest improvements on postprandial glucose and insulin regulation.'

Another study engaged 30 people who didn't have diabetes. They were given a loading dose of sucrose and then randomized to receive 2.5, 5, 7.5, or 10 grams of allulose. Plasma glucose and insulin levels were measured at 30, 60, 90, and 120 minutes after ingestion. The researchers found that in a dose-dependent manner, allulose reduced plasma glucose and insulin levels.

In other words, allulose not only contributes very little to caloric intake or blood glucose, but also may help to improve insulin regulation. While there aren't yet allulose-specific human studies regarding safety, animal studies have not found toxicity even at high doses.

In one nonrandomized controlled trial using 30 healthy individuals within a normal body mass index range, researchers discovered that individuals experienced gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms when the dose reached 0.4 grams per kilogram of body weight (g/kg*BW). Gastrointestinal tolerance testing didn't indicate severe diarrhea or other symptoms until the dose read 0.5 g/kg*BW.

has about 9.75 teaspoons of sugar.

While there is no immediate toxic effect on the body, evidence suggests that consistent use may affect the weight of your kidneys and liver, the two organs through which the natural sweetener passes. In a study published in 2019, researchers noted that using allulose can prevent obesity, but continuous consumption may increase the weight of the liver and kidneys "without apparent pathological and functional ab-

these parameters could change after the participant no longer consumed allulose. Jsing an animal model, the researchers fed allulose for four weeks and then a controlled diet without allulose for another 10 weeks. At the end of four weeks, the weights of the liver and kidney were higher, but the difference disappeared after the animals were no longer fed allulose.

High-Fructose Corn Syrup Is Worse Than White Sugar

High-fructose corn syrup (HFCS), aka corn sugar, is another common form of sugar found in processed foods. While it's often

Studies have found artifical sweeteners can have serious side effects, including destroying healthy bacteria that your body depends on.



The obesity epidemic important global public health challenges.

in nature in cities. Nature's contributions are multidimensional—they can support cognitive, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing, as well as physical health. Previous work from the Natural Capital Project has shown many of these connections, but the new research adds an important link to physical health

that had been missing from the equation.

"Nature experience boosts memory, attention, and creativity as well as happiness, social engagement, and a sense of meaning in life," senior author Gretchen Daily, faculty director of the Stanford Natural Capital

> "It might not surprise us that nature stimulates physical activity, but the associated health benefits—from reducing cancer risks to promoting metabolic and other functioning—are really quite astonishing."

In cities, nature provides cooling shade to neighborhood streets, safe harbor for pollinators, and rainwater absorption to reduce flooding.

Where Urban Nature Is Missing

As our world becomes more urbanized and city-centric, the ability to easily access outdoor natural spaces becomes increasingly challenging, especially for overburdened

Identifying where urban nature is missing in such communities—then working to fill those gaps—could provide people with valuable new opportunities to improve their health. Researchers hope the new study will equip urban planners with a more complete understanding of the benefits nature can provide their communities.

"Our ultimate goal is to create more healthy, equitable, and sustainable cities," said co-author Anne Guerry, chief strategy officer at the Natural Capital Project. "This research is actionable—and gets us one big step closer."

Additional co-authors are from Stanford; Leiden University; the University of Washington; RMIT University; Nanyang Technological University, the Chinese Academy of Sciences; Harvard Medical School, the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute, and the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health; the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and Stockholm Resilience Centre; the City University of Hong Kong; Maastricht University; Australian Catholic University; the University of Southern Denmark; Wageningen University; and the University of Exeter.

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Sugar can also affect your brain, mood and

New research gives city planners more incentive and insight into how to incorporate green spaces Nature Can Boost Health

emotional, and spiritual benefits of urban nature

SARAH CAFASSO

Your local city park may improve your health, according to a new study.

The research shows how access to nature in cities increases physical activity and, therefore, overall health.

Lack of physical activity in the United States results in \$117 billion per year in related health care costs and leads to 3.2 million deaths globally every year. It may seem like an intuitive connection, but the new research closes an important gap in understanding how building nature into

cities can support overall human wellbeing. "Over the past year of shelter-in-place restrictions, we've learned how valuable and fulfilling it can be to spend time outdoors in nature, especially for city-dwellers," said lead author Roy Remme, a postdoctoral researcher at the Stanford University's Natural Capital Project.

"We want to help city planners understand where green spaces might best support people's health, so everyone can receive nature's benefits.'

In cities, nature provides cooling shade to neighborhood streets, safe harbor for pollinators, and rainwater absorption to reduce flooding. It's widely understood that but how parks, lakes, trees, and other urban green spaces boost physical activity and overall wellbeing is an unsolved piece o the puzzle.

Nature Has Many Health Benefits

For the study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, researchers combined decades of public health research with information on nature's benefits to people in cities. They considered how activities like dog

walking, jogging, cycling, and community gardening are supported by cities' natural spaces. They also factored in things like distance to urban greenery, feelings of safety, and accessibility to understand how those elements can alter the benefits of nature for different people. From tree-lined sidewalks to city parks and waterfronts, the team created a model framework to map out urban nature's physical health benefits.

The researchers' framework explores how people might choose to walk an extra few blocks to enjoy a blooming garden or bike to work along a river path, reaping the health benefits of physical activity they may have missed if not motivated by natural spaces.

In Amsterdam, city planners are currently implementing a new green infrastructure plan. Using the city as a hypothetical case study, the researchers applied their framework to understand how Amsterdam's plans to build or improve new parks might affect physical activity for everyone in the city. The researchers also looked at the effects on different sub-populations, like youth, the elderly, and low-income groups. This example illustrates how the city could invest in urban nature to have the greatest physical activity benefits for

The research will ultimately serve as the basis for a new health model in Natural Capital Project software—free, opensource tools that map the many benefits nature provides people.

The software was recently used to inform an assessment of 775 European cities to solutions for addressing climate change.



This means a person who weighs 160 pounds could eat 29 grams of allulose in one serving, which is equivalent to 7.25 teaspoons of sugar, without experiencing GI symptoms. For reference, a can of coke

The study investigated the potential that

Free Your Mind From Wanting People to Be a Certain Way

When we let go of how we want other people to act, we can ease into a calmer reality

LEO BABAUTA

ne of the biggest sources of difficulty for every single human being is the desire for people to be a certain way. We can't seem to help it: We want the world to be the way we want it. Unfortunately, reality always has different plans, and people behave in less than

The problem isn't other people. It's our ideals and expectations.

Yes, I think it would be great if people stopped killing animals for food and fashion and became vegan instead. But that's not the reality I'm faced with, and it's not going to happen for quite some time, if ever. Yes, I think it would be great if my kids behaved perfectly all the time, but that's

Yes, it would be great if my wife always agreed with me, but that's not going to

ings, for that matter.

So, we can summarize the problem as follows:

• We have ideals about how people should act, or ways we'd like them to be.

• People don't act in those ideal ways, or aren't the way we'd like them to be.

• We get bothered by that reality—frustrated, angry, sad, disappointed, and stressed.

 This makes us unhappy and damages our relationships with others.

This is obviously not great.

We have a few options for how to handle

1. We can stick rigidly to the way we want people to be, and be upset when they don't meet those ideals.

2. We can stick rigidly to the way we want people to be, and try really hard to make them be that way. (This pretty much nev-

3. We can let go of the ideals and expectations, and be happier and less frustrated.

When we think about it this way, it's obvious that the third option is the best route. We'll talk about this option soon, but let's talk about a couple of objections first.

Objections to Letting Go

When people are confronted with the idea of letting go of their ideals about other people, they usually have a few objections:

OBJECTION NO. 1: But then people get away with bad behavior.

There's a difference between wanting someone to behave in a certain way (and getting upset about it) and accepting that a person is acting a certain way, then compassionately finding an appropriate

In the first case, you are angry at them for their behavior, and your response out of anger is likely to make things worse.

In the second case, you aren't bothered too much, but can see that their behavior is harmful and want to help them to not

You can't actually control them, but you can try to help. If you try to help but they won't accept your help, then it will be a continual source of frustration. Offer help, but let go of the ideal outcome you'd like to see.

OBJECTION NO. 2: But what about

There's a difference between feeling agonized about the abuse, and accepting that the person is acting abusively and taking appropriate action.

Letting go of your ideals about how the abusive person should act doesn't mean you let them abuse you. It just means you accept the reality that they are being abusive, while taking the appropriate action to get away from them, and reporting or seek-



not the reality of kids—or any human be- Our ideals and expectations of others can taint our view of them and lead to unnecessary resentment.

ing help for them, if it's appropriate. Don't leave yourself in a place where you're being harmed, and at the same time, you don't have to be internally afflicted by someone

OBJECTION NO. 3: But then we don't

make the world a better place. If people behave in less-than-ideal ways, you can agonize about it while trying to change them, or you can accept that the world is not ideal ... but calmly and compassionately work to help others. In both cases, you're trying to do good, but in the second case, you're not agonizing about how things are.

So these objections are all about wanting to change people's bad behavior. This article is about inner acceptance of "not ideal" behavior. But once you have inner acceptance, you can take appropriate external action. That might be helping the person, feeling compassion, getting to safety, talking calmly and lovingly to someone, reporting abusive behavior, getting counseling, or other appropriate actions that come from a place of love, compassion, and understanding rather than frustration

Letting Go of Ideals

So how do you let go of wanting people to be a certain way?

First, reflect on how these ideals are harming you and others.

This desire to get your way, and expect a specific version of reality, is making you frustrated, unhappy, and angry. It's harming your relationships. It's likely making the people around you unhappy as well. This

is all caused by an attachment to expecta-

Reflect on wanting yourself and others to be happy.

tions and ideals.

If the ideals and expectations are harming yourself and others, wouldn't it be nice to stop harming yourself? Wouldn't it be nice to be happy instead of frustrated? Think about the desire to have a better relationship with other people and for them to be happier in their relationship with you. This is your intention, and it is one of love.

Notice the ideals and

frustrations as they arise. See when you are feeling frustrated by someone else, reflect on what ideal you're holding for them. How do you want them to behave instead? Don't get caught up in your story of why they should behave that way, but instead just take note of the ideal. See that this ideal is harming you. Decide that it's not useful to you.

Letting go of your ideals about how an abusive person should act doesn't mean you let them abuse you.

Notice your mental pattern of

When someone doesn't meet your expectations, reflect on how it makes you think and feel. You can then decide that you will try to catch any resentment early, before it affects your actions. It's a pattern you can be aware of, catch early, and change.

Mindfully observe the tightness.

Turn your attention to the effects on your body, the tightness that comes from holding on to this ideal. Pay attention to how it feels and the quality of the energy in your body, where it's located, and how it

In this moment of observing, you are awake, rather than being stuck in the daydream of your story about why this person



should be behaving differently. At this point, you can decide to try a different pattern.

Week 24, 2021 THE EPOCH TIMES

A Different Way

Now, you can practice a different way of being. Here are some ideas I've found useful:

• Instead of fixating on one way this person (or situation) should be, be open to other possibilities. Open yourself to lots of different ways this person or situation can be.

• Try to understand the person, rather than judging them based on limited information. Try to understand why they'd act this way: Perhaps they are afraid; perhaps they're suffering in some way; and perhaps this is their strategy for self-

• Try to see the good-hearted nature in their actions, rather than fixating on when they are a bad person. For example, you might see that they are tender-hearted and afraid, and they are acting out of fear. Or they just want to be happy, and this is their strategy for being happy. Or maybe they have good intentions and want to help, but are misguided. We all have a good heart deep down inside, but it might take several layers to see that. Anger can stem from jealousy, which stems from insecurities and fear, which stem from a tender-hearted worry that we're not good enough. The angry action isn't justified, but there is still a good heart at the core.

• See their suffering that causes their actions and know that you have suffered in the same way. Remember how that suffering feels, so you can see what they're going through. Compassionately wish for an end to their suffering.

 Tell yourself that you don't know how people should act. Honestly, I don't always know how I should act. I am fooling myselfif I think I know how other people should act. Instead, I might be curious about their actions.

• See the other person as a teacher. They are helping you practice mindfulness and let go of your old patterns. They are teaching you about reality versus ideals, about how humans act.

• Seriously, see the tightness you're holding, and just relax. Smile. Be happy in this present moment.

• Practice seeing the goodness in the other person, in yourself, and in the present moment. There is always an underlying goodness in this moment, if you choose to notice. Trust in this goodness, and you'll be afraid less and happier more.

These are some practices. Try them, and practice them over and over. I think you'll be happier for it, and every relationship will be better.

Leo Babauta is the author of six books and the writer of Zen Habits, a blog with over 2 million subscribers. Visit ZenHabits.net

WHAT'S THE BEST AGE TO GIVE MY TEEN A

Smartphone?

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Science Versus Culture

Our child, like a well-prepared prosecutor, pleads her case to us that she "will literally die without a phone." And we are dying to make her happy. So we go against our parental instincts that tell us that our children are too young for smartphones. We then seek to confirm our biases by searching for blog posts filled with likeminded strangers' opinions. In order to make smartphones kid-friendly, society says all you have to do is the following:

- 1. Make the phone less powerful and dangerous by purchasing layers of complicated parental controls.
- 2. Make your child more mature by having ongoing conversations, signing a phonebehavior contract or family pledge, and letting them practice with social media.

After all, we are reminded, all teenagers live online and smartphones are here to stay, so therefore they must be mandatory for teens. But these so-called safety measures are myths.

While necessary for a first line of defense, the first idea (parental controls) turns out to be a band-aid and offers a false sense of security. Teens easily discover workarounds and it's impossible to put parental controls on social media content. Before you depend on this solution, ask any high school parent if parental controls The 'best have ever failed them (spoiler: age for a the answer is usually yes).

The second idea is scienquestion is tifically impossible. Medically speaking, we can't force maturity or speed it up by just having conversations or signing contracts with our teens. Of course it's important to communicate often with your teen, however, conversations and contracts don't change teen behavior. If these methods worked, we would eliminate a host of teen problems—

alcohol, drugs, pregnancy—overnight.

Additionally, practicing social media makes matters worse. Unlike practicing a sport or a music instrument, practicing an addictive activity such as social media doesn't prepare teenagers to use it wisely or make them more mature. Data and science tell us that social media hurts our teen's mental and emotional health in a very measurable way; stress and anxiety Communication Skills: Teens need to are skyrocketing. Teen brains aren't resil-

ient like adult brains and teens have lower impulse control than adults. Research also shows that the more exposure you have to an addictive activity—such as drinking alcohol or using social media—the higher your chances are for problematic use.

What to Focus on Before a Smartphone

very good actors! Just because we see signs of budding maturity in some areas of our teen's life doesn't mean she is ready for a smartphone. Disturbing content can't be unseen. Your apprentice adult needs more time to mature through high school and even college before she develops the wisdom to manage the distractions of social media and beyond. Don't confuse intelligence with maturity.

of healthy hobbies and physical activities to thrive. It's critical for a teen's development to pursue meaningful hobbies, purposeful work, entertainment activities, and excellent communication skills rather than spending time nurturing a screen dependency. The phone becomes a loweffort/high-reward activity that distracts and replaces many critical milestones and activities. Childhood can't be re-done.

smartphone their phones, you are. **Friends:** Teens need relationships

> **Acceptance:** Teens need a chance to grow up without being hurt and rejected online. Rejection is more harmful during this vulnerable and impressionable stage than any other stage of life. Adolescence is the worst

build face-to-face communication skills

Maturity: Teens aren't mature, but they are

Healthy Experiences: Teens need a variety

Attachment: Teens' primary attachment to their family is more important during this stage of development than attachment to their digital peers. If you feel like you are losing your kids to

with a handful of close, in-person friends for the sake of their mental health. Social media won't meet your teen's friendship needs. Your child's friendships are weakened when they move online—making teens lonelier than they have ever been.

time for social media.



Teens need a variety of healthy hobbies and physical activities to thrive.

or sustainable communication skills.

Non-Addictive Activities: Parents should free their teens from addictive practices now so they can develop their full future potential. They need caring adults to remove screen obstacles that get in the way of healthy childhood. Remember, 90 percent than they did. Most will say they wish they of all adult addictions start in childhood.

Protection: Teens need parents to protect them even if it means taking an unpopular and countercultural stand. It isn't being overprotective to guard our kids in this area. Teens crave that kind of love.

A Viable Option

There is a better option. Like a good coach, you change the game plan when you are in the middle of a losing season. Replace the smartphone with a non-data (talk/text) phone if a phone is needed at all, and delay social media indefinitely, certainly through conflicts for the following:

- An in-person social life: Help your child make lasting friendships and fun memories by planning more social activities at your home, often. Get to know their friends.
- Non-tech hobbies: Guide your child to discover new hobbies and spend more time doing non-tech activities, such as the toxic consequences of overuse that reading, sports, music lessons, art, exercise, etc.
- Time with you: Ultimately, your teens your kids.

Texting and posting emojis aren't mature to begin your journey. This 7- or 30-day detox will help your kids reset their habits and get back on track. You will love the break and they will, too!

Conclusion

I have never met a parent who wished they had given their teen a smartphone earlier had waited, as it was one of the worst parenting mistakes they ever made. They have discovered that the risks aren't worth the benefits for teens. And in fact, with the increase in teen depression and suicide, the risks are serious.

There's no longer a need to guess. The data is in and the teen smartphone experiment isn't working. Your teen doesn't need a smartphone or social media. And since it takes only a few minutes for a 4-year-old to learn how to use a phone, you can be sure that your teen won't get left behind. You only have one shot to build a healthy childhood and your teens need your help late adolescence. Trade the smartphone and your leadership. Your kids are worth whatever it takes—even if that means going against the strong cultural pressure and delaying the smartphone.

Melanie Hempe, BSN, is the founder of ScreenStrong, an organization that empowers parents to help their children to gain the benefits of screen media without threaten healthy mental and physical development. The ScreenStrong Solution promotes a strong parenting style that procrave your attention, approval, and love actively replaces harmful screen use with more than all the social media likes in *healthy activities, life skills development,* the world. Spend time getting to know and family connection. This article was originally published on ScreenStrong.com

Advice for the High School Graduate

Here are 18 pieces of 3-word advice for young people about to face the world

Happiness

isn't an

emotion that

accompanies

perfect

circumstances.

JOSHUA BECKER

Before anything else, congratulations on your graduation from high school. I don't know if it feels like a noteworthy accomplishment to you, but it is. Your high school diploma is the culmination of 12plus years of hard work and focus.

My son graduated from high school last month, and I can assure you that each person who sent you a card or stopped you in the hallway to tell you congratulations genuinely meant it. High school graduation may not be the end of the road or your highest achievement in life, but it's still worthy of celebration.

As you end this season of life and rush toward your new one, no matter where your road takes you, here are 18 pieces of three-word advice.

1. Call Your Mother.

Your parents love you and think about you more than you know. And they won't be around forever. Call your mom and visit often—they'll appreciate it and so will you.

2. Don't Chase Money.

The desire for wealth is a desire that can never be satisfied—you'll never have enough. Pursue meaning and contribution with your life instead—it's way more fulfilling in the long run.

3. Encourage Others Often.

It's easy to see life as a competition and believe the best way to get ahead is to beat out everyone else. But this is backward thinking. The most effective way to succeed in life is to help someone else succeed in theirs. And I'm not just saying that. Be the encourager.

4. Find a Mentor.

Find someone you admire and can look up to as an example. In almost every pursuit in life, a good coach is worth their weight in gold. Find someone ahead of you in the journey that you can look up to in your career, in your marriage, in your parenting, and in anything else in which

you want to succeed. 5. Find Happiness Today.

"If, then" thinking is common in our world and culture. It usually sounds something like this, "If I get that job, then I'll be happy," "If I get that husband, then I'll be happy," or "If I make lots of money, then I'll be happy." Avoid it at all costs. Happiness isn't an emotion that accompanies perfect circumstances. Happiness is a decision you make every day.

6. Grow in Faith.

Believe in something bigger than yourself.

7. Live Life Intentionally.

In all aspects of your life—your time, your money, your habits, your relationships, etc.—be very intentional in what you allow in. Don't allow society or your friends to tell you what is important—choose for yourself. Remember, the first step in crafting the life you want is to get rid of everything you don't.

8. Look Up More.

That person in front of you is more important than your phone. Look up and see them.

9. Love Your Job.

There is advice in our world that sounds like this, "Do work you love." And I don't disagree. You should pursue your dreams. But that doesn't mean your current job, even if it's not your greatest passion in the world, can't be enjoyed, appreciated, and loved. There are no perfect jobs in the world. Look for reasons to love the one you've got.

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Advice for the High School Graduate

Here are 18 pieces of 3-word advice for young people about to face the world

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10. Make New Friends.

I know this may be hard to hear just days after finishing high school, but most likely, you still haven't met the greatest friends you'll have in life. Appreciate your relationships from high school, but don't let them get in the way of the new friends you're about to meet.

11. Own Less Stuff.

Excess possessions steal our time, money, and energy. They add stress and burden, and keep us from accomplishing greater dreams. Don't believe the messages of a consumeristic society that you need a lot of possessions to be happy. Be different. Own less and live more.

12. Pursue Your Dreams.

Your whole life is in front of you. If you have a dream career or passion, pursue it. Nobody is going to hand it to you. It's going to take hard work and dedication to achieve it. But victory usually belongs to those who work the hardest to achieve it. So go be the person you want to be.

13. Push Yourself Harder.

A good coach will always get more out of you than you thought you had. He or she will always reveal that you had more inside of you than you ever thought. That remains true of your potential every day. You have more potential inside you than you realize. Push yourself to be the best you that you can be.

14. Think of Others.

Don't live life looking out only for your own interests. Look out also for the interests of others.

15. Try New Things.

Try new hobbies. Try new foods. Learn a new skill. Experience new cultures. I didn't become a writer until the age of 34. You never know for sure the things in which you're going to excel. So keep trying new things.



Graduation marks a transition to new experiences

and responsibilities. Face them with kindness, courage, and integrity.

Don't live life

only for your

own interests.

looking out

Think of

16. You'll Mature More.

The best piece of advice concerning college I ever received was from a friend named Barbie. She was a few years older than me, and shortly after my high school graduation, she said to me, "You'll mature more these next few years than you think." I remember being offended at the time, thinking I was already pretty mature. But she was entirely right. I matured and grew up as much during those four years of college as maybe the previous 12 years combined. You're going to mature and grow more in the next few years than you realize. Look forward to it.

17. Value Physical Health.

Your physical body is the instrument through which you will make your difference and mark in the world. Be disciplined in caring for it. Eat well, exercise, and rest sufficiently. Your future accomplishments will thank you for it.

18. Wash Your Bowl.

There's a famous Zen story that goes like this:

A monk told Joshu, "I have just entered the monastery. Please teach me." Joshu asked, "Have you eaten your rice porridge?"

The monk replied, "I have eaten." Joshu said, "Then you had better wash your bowl."

At that moment, the monk was enlight-

Learn what it means to wash your bowl.

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

others also.

Virtue of the Brush in a Time of Chaos

"When things are chaotic to the extreme, order must be restored."

- "The four books" by Zhu Xi



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