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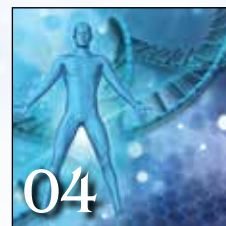
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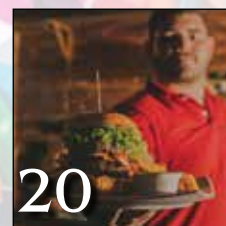
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# Joyful Living

Winter 2018-19

*Joyful Living Magazine* is committed to embracing a lifestyle of joy and abundance. We are a platform for beauty, goodness and grace. We value inspired thinking and embrace changing seasons. We honor your legacy and where you are from. Our desire is to serve and respect our community.

Our intention is to bring valuable resources as diverse as our natural surroundings. We devote this magazine to you and bless your journey today, tomorrow and always. Grateful is our foundation. Love is where we live. We are Joy. We are Full. We are Living.

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# Cellular Healing



Designed by kjpargeter / Freepik



**BY BENI JOHNSON**  
Grandmawithmuscles.com – Author of *Healthy & Free*

Cellular health is very fresh on my mind. For the last 8 months, I have walked through overcoming cancer. Right now, I am on the healing path, and I want to tell you that there are things that you can do to protect your body. You can build up the strength of your body on the cellular level to maintain your health.

Two months ago, my health journey took me to Spain where I discussed my process of healing and restoration. As the doctor was talking to me, I noticed that he never mentioned the word cancer or the diagnosis. So, I asked him, “What about the cancer?” He looked at me and said, “Listen, this is how we work here. We don’t talk about the cancer; we talk about the reason you got cancer. Our goal is to take care of that reason, so you never get cancer again.” That, for me, hit the mark. That was some really good news. I’ve always been the kind of person who wants to get to the root cause of issues and then fix that, rather than just focusing on the symptoms. That this doctor saw cancer as a symptom felt extremely empowering and hopeful.

I chose to approach my healing journey through a natural process. So, I know that the steps I describe may be controversial for many. Each person has to choose their own path to healing, but I

want to share with you the journey that I’ve been on. And I want to encourage you: there are things that you can do right now to keep yourself healthy on a cellular level.

Four months before I went to Spain, I had gone through surgery to remove the tumors. During that process, I had sent a blood sample to the doctor in Spain. So, before I even went for treatments, I was on an individually-tailored protocol to jumpstart the healing process.

What is cellular health? I like to think of it as the foundation of wellness. With trillions of cells in the human body, it is critical that they get the support they need to sustain life. Healthy diet, regular exercise, periodic detoxification, and targeted cellular health supplements all support your cellular health. Doing this

will help to sustain a foundation for optimal vitality throughout your life.

When I first sent back my blood test, I was told that I was dehydrated on a cellular level. Stress—from my diagnosis and my lifestyle—along with EMF’s (electric magnetic fields) had played a big role in this. That was the bad news. The good news was that I could get well.

Let’s start with healthy diet. Can you say green? You’re going to want to eat lots of green vegetables! One way that I make sure my body is getting enough greens is to drink green juices. Are they wonderful to drink? Not really. But I know that my body is thanking me because I am giving it living food that nourishes me

**I chose to approach my healing journey through a natural process.**

on the cellular level.

Through this journey, I have learned that there are some vegetables that are especially good for fighting and preventing cancer. Crucifer vegetables should be a big part of your diet, cooked or raw. Refined sugar is a big no-no. I use only no-glycemic (alcohol) sugar like monk fruit, organic stevia and Swerve. Meat is an inflammatory food, so it should not be the main part of your diet. Fruit is ok, but you want to eat it sparingly. Because of the diet I am on and my sugar restrictions, I need to avoid all fruits except for blueberries and green apples.

Exercise is also very important for optimal health. At the minimum, make sure you are getting out and walking. Get your heart rate up above your resting heart rate. Find some type of exercise that you like and make yourself do that. I mentioned earlier that periodic detoxification is also a tool for cellular health. You’ll want to incorporate things like green juices, which keep your liver getting rid of bile, and eating good fiber to keep your colon healthy. Fiber carries away extra junk in your intestines, encouraging your gut to stay healthy. One easy thing you could try is dry brushing. It’s so simple and detoxes your lymphatic system beautifully.

Many people ask me what kind of supplements I take. First, I make sure that I have a good, plant-based multivitamin. My doctor put me on a product that you can get in any health store called Cellfood. It is a nutritional supplement that addresses health at the cellular level, and my husband and I have both had good results. This is just the very beginning of what could be said about cellular health. The good thing is that there is so much information now for us to live by.

Please, do yourself a big favor and look up some of these things I’ve talked about. Find out how you can live your life to the fullest. We can and should be healthy, living a long life the way God intended it to be. To Your Health! **JL**

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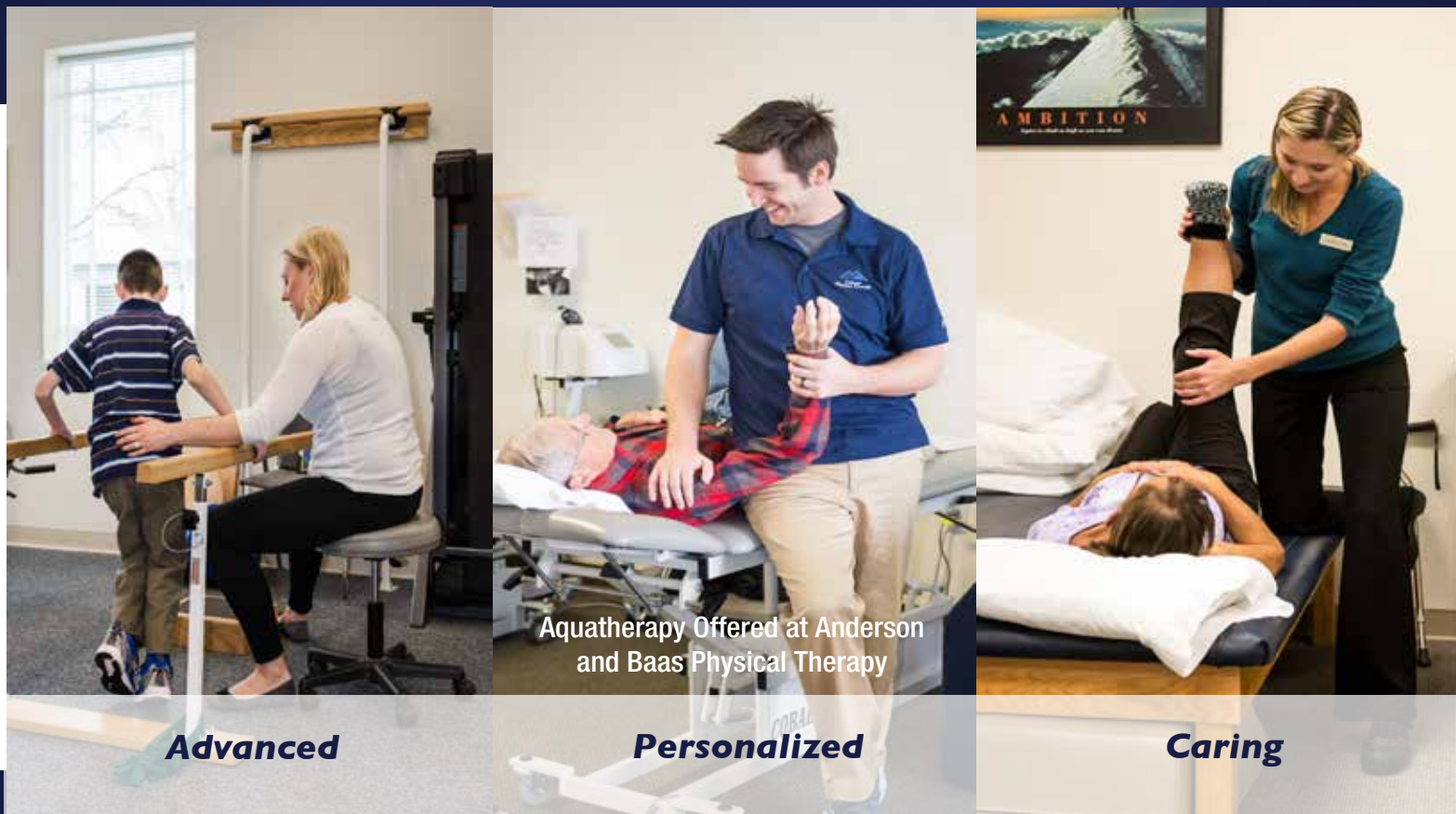
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## What is it ABOUT FOURTH GRADE?



BY CAROL WERTZ

Associate Professor at Simpson University with over 35 years in education and experience in teaching pre-K through adult, Carol has developed a wealth of experience and is ready for a new challenge in answering your educational questions. Please contact her at [carolbwertz@gmail.com](mailto:carolbwertz@gmail.com)



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### Dear Dr. W.,

I just had a conference with my child's fourth grade teacher, and I was surprised to see that his grades had slipped from the stellar performance he had in third grade. The teacher told me, "Oh, don't worry – the fourth grade slump is common." What does she mean?

### What Is It?

"Fourth grade slump" is a term used to describe the slipping of grades when a child moves from third grade to fourth. It's certainly not a given, and it may not be exactly fourth grade, but is common enough that it has been well documented for a number of years.

Basically, children in kindergarten through third grade are learning to read. Then we spend the rest of our lives reading to learn. In the younger grades, we're reading more fiction – stories with characters, plots, dialogue, and problem resolutions. Even picture books have all of these elements. But in fourth grade, we are reading more informational or "expository" text. Not only do we have fewer pictures, but we have more complex sentence structure and more difficult vocabulary. It's a different type of reading, as we look for main ideas, topic sentences, and supporting information.

This is why the Common Core standards put more emphasis on non-fiction reading in earlier grades now. We want to expose students to the two types of reading at a younger age, so we can hopefully avoid the mild shock that might come when parents first see their child's fourth grade report card.

Might there be other causes? Sure. Perhaps life has begun

to move faster, with more after school activities, more interests, social concerns popping up, the discovery of better videogames. A child's world is beginning to expand with more to do and perhaps higher expectations at school.

If your child talks about not liking reading, there may be another problem. Is he complaining of eyes that hurt, trouble with the way he's seeing the print, stomach aches during reading time, etc? These can be real issues and follow-up with a professional may be necessary.

### What Can Parents Do?

As always, monitor your children's devices. Make sure their time is balanced between interacting in real time with family and friends and what they're doing on the screen.

Take your child to the library and help him/her choose books of interest. There are a number of chapter book series that engage children and help them to maintain an interest in reading. For help with this, you can google "chapter books for 3rd grade" or the grade level that your child is.

Explore your child's interests with him/her. Is it reptiles, rocks, cars, fashion.....? Look at articles and books centering on non-fiction topics. New vocabulary can be learned anyplace and building vocabulary is a key ingredient in becoming a better reader.

Most of all, don't panic. This is a temporary slide while your child adjusts to a new situation. With your loving support and emphasis on building his/her strengths, this can be an opportunity for you to know your child better and broaden his world.

If you have more concerns or questions, please email me at [carolbwertz@gmail.com](mailto:carolbwertz@gmail.com). JL

# THANKS



BY JULIE WINTER

Julie Winter is a family nurse practitioner, author of ReNew, and was elected to the City Council. She is a graduate of Leadership Redding and served on the Cities Development Advisory Committee. She also served on the board of Advance Redding that manages the Civic Auditorium. Julie is committed to our city's development

## Renew Your Mind through Thankfulness

As we head into the Holiday season, it is a good time to meditate on the power of gratitude to change how we think and feel. In my book, ReNew, there is an entire chapter devoted to the principle of using thankfulness to renew the mind.

Thankfulness focuses our attention to what is good in the world around us. Gratitude is not just a sentimental feeling but a virtue that expresses our faith in the goodness of God, no matter our circumstances. Every thought we have produces a chain of chemical reactions. Some of those reactions produce chemicals that make us feel joy, peace, faith, etc. Alternatively, our thoughts can make us feel sad, fearful, angry or offended. In

other words, if we want to change how we "feel", we need to change how we "think." If you're feeling sad, worried, angry or offended, I encourage you to speak out loud the things in your life that you are thankful for. This is difficult when we are stressed or fearful. Quiet your mind and begin to remember the situations where God has rescued you or come through for you. Speak out loud your thankfulness, even if you don't "feel" like it. The beauty of this

discipline is that you can express thankfulness even when you don't feel happy. Continue this until your spirit is ignited by the Holy Spirit and your soul erupts into joy. David used this technique repeatedly.

Many Psalms start with David expressing sorrow, despair, or anger by his current situation. He then figuratively grabs his soul by the lapels and says, "But I will remember your faithfulness (or another characteristic of God or past victory)." He then speaks out his thankfulness to God and by the end of the Psalm he has moved himself into praise and worship. We can use this same technique to renew our mind. Paul commands us to take our thoughts captive. I am grateful that he did not command me to take my feelings captive! Have you ever had someone say to you, "You shouldn't be angry"? It's frustrating because you can't really tell yourself not to "feel" a certain way. What you can do, however, is change the thought that produces the feelings. Thankfulness is the discipline of taking our thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ. The fruit of that discipline is feelings of joy, peace, faith, etc.

Our city just experienced a catastrophic fire and as a city leader I've felt the weight of the grief of those who lost loved ones and their homes. I have felt the stress of getting our city infrastructure rebuilt, homes rebuilt, and the responsibility of coming up with a plan to prevent this from happening again. I've felt overwhelmed, as have many of our citizens. In the midst of this I have purposefully taken a stance of openly thanking God for the lives spared. I have never seen anything like that fire tornado and I will never forget the feeling of terror as I rushed to evacuate. I was sure my home would be lost. That more lives and homes were not lost is the grace of God. I am thankful for Ron DeMaagd, the engineer overseeing the Quartz Hill widening project. Before the

crew left that morning he had them spread road base down and move the heavy equipment off the road. That act alone saved lives and homes as it allowed emergency vehicles access to the neighborhoods off of Quartz Hill. I am grateful to the crews who at their own risk protected the Buckeye water treatment plan and for the REU crews who worked throughout the night to keep the one functioning power relay station working so the city could have power as the other 3 had failed.

Imagine what it would have been like for crews to lose power and not have treated water? I am thankful for the generosity of many individual and organizations that immediately started relief services. There've been so many fundraisers for fire victims I've lost track. I'm thankful for Signarama who spontaneously placed signs everywhere expressing thankfulness to our first responders, utility workers and the message that we would rebuild. I don't know how many times I cried when I drove by those signs. In the midst of tragedy our community expressed thankfulness and generosity. I couldn't be more proud to live in Redding! So as we head into Thanksgiving, take some time to daily thank God for what is good around you. Your brain and your spirit will thank you! JL



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One stop was at a little church called Calvary Baptist in Susanville Ca. Here relationship formed and the church was moved to support all God was doing through Chuck and Thelma. Time passed and the Runyon's traveled on. Back in Susanville a young woman by the name of LaVonne Floyd became president of The Women's Missionary Group at Calvary Baptist. Among many duties, LaVonne would correspond with missionaries and she would share letters she received back filled with praise reports, prayer requests and any needs the missionaries expressed. LaVonne diligently reported and responded to the letters of many missionaries including that of a couple named Chuck and Thelma Runyon. Though having never met them, she was instrumental in the behind the scenes for them.

*I never dreamt  
I would meet her  
this side of heaven.*

Now after roughly 30 years since those letters were exchanged, Lavonne Floyd and Thelma Runyon become neighbors in the same hall at the same Assisted Living in the same season of their lives. Upon meeting Thelma, LaVonne said, *I never dreamt I would meet her this side of heaven.* Yet! God let the ladies open a present early. Today they enjoy one another's company and sharing about the places they've been, the people they've met, and the pebbles they have collected along the way. JL



BY LONNIE JULIUS MARTIN

## People, Pebbles and Pathways

Life has a funny way of bringing people across our path to teach us things, to share the road, to partake in the journey. Some relationships last a lifetime while others are simply comprised of fleeting moments, simple interactions, or a seemingly divine appointment. We collect pebbles of wisdom from each unique personality, experience shared and attribute observed and place them on the path that paves the way to who we become, how we view the world and the importance of our role in it. If we think back it is easy to name the many who have stood in our corner and cheered us on from the sidelines, led and guided from the frontlines of friendship or spurred us on from behind. It is often true that the people contributing behind the scenes set the stage for the story of our lives to unfold.

Just recently I witnessed this play out in the life of two women who live at the Vistas Assisted Living in Redding. LaVonne Floyd watched as her family unloaded the final moving box into her

new apartment. Treasures and pictures adorned the shelves and hung in perfect placement on the walls. A history, a life, a legacy displayed in creative arrangement. As LaVonne made her way down the hall she read the names of the other residents who now called the Vistas home. One name in particular caught her eye. Runyon.

"Runyon?" she thought. "Hmm... that sounds so familiar. Chuck and Thelma Runyon."

As LaVonne read the biography neatly framed near the door she could not believe what she discovered. The Runyon's were career missionaries that spent their lives ministering and caring for people in the Philippines. Though originally from the US, they lived in the Philippines full-time and raised their family there.

The Runyon's would return to the US on Furlough to tell of the great things happening overseas and to raise support. They travelled across the US creating relationships and partnerships with churches.

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# Finding Stillness in the Whirlwind



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BY CHRISTY LARGENT

Christy Largent is a motivational speaker with a focus on positivity and engagement. She helps organizations use her positivity principles to increase employee engagement. She lives in Flower Mound, Texas with her 2 school-aged kiddos and a very patient husband. Follow her on all social media @christylargent and subscribe to her Instagram channel for daily encouragement helping you find the bright side of life. [www.christylargent.com](http://www.christylargent.com)

I just knew this time it would be different. Christmas cards would be sent the week after Thanksgiving. Christmas decorations would be put up and presents would be bought, wrapped, mailed or put under the tree by the end of the first week of December. Miscellaneous gifts “just in case” for parties and friends dropping by would be ready. Thoughtful notes and teacher’s gifts ready to go weeks before they were needed. I had it all pictured perfectly! It would be the best holiday ever!

And then reality hit. My son got sick, I hit a deer and crushed the front of the car. One of my clients decided that we really weren’t that great of a fit - she fired me! My husband was stressed out over getting all his end of year work and reports completed and was working extra long hours. And in the midst of all this “life” whirlwind, the presents were unbought, the cards unwritten and decorations still in their boxes...and Christmas was just 10 days away!

And that’s where the promise of Psalm 46:10 comes into living beauty.

*“Be still and know that I am God”*

Be still.

Are you kidding me?

Yet it’s the being still part that allows us to really, truly understand that He. Is. God.

Sit with that thought for a minute. He is God. God. Triune, never ending, all knowing, forever loving, awe-inspiring God.

And when we really bask in the knowledge that He. Is. God. We are able to take the pressure off and get some perspective on all this whirlwind we call life.

So this holiday season, here are 3 ways we can add some “stillness” to our crazy whirlwinds:

- 1. Get up 5 minutes early and breathe the 5-6-7 Method.** Try it like this. Deep breath in for 5. Hold for 6. Breathe out slowly for 7. Repeat 5 times. This breathing technique calms and resets your parasympathetic nervous system. After you’ve done the breathing, speak out loud 5 things you are thankful for. Sit with that thought for a minute. Take another deep breath, stretch your arms up and out blowing out ending in a smile. You’re ready to face the day!
- 2. Go for a walk outside every day.** No matter the weather, try to get in 20 minutes outside. This could be early morning, lunchtime or evening, what’s important is that you are moving, breathing and noticing nature. Current research validates the impact of nature on our general wellbeing. With one study in mind, 95% of those interviewed said their mood improved after spending time outside, changing from depressed, stressed, and anxious to more calm and balanced. Other studies by Ulrich, Kim, and Cervinka show that time in nature or scenes of nature are associated with a positive mood, and psychological wellbeing, meaningfulness, and vitality. Especially here in the North State, there’s always something beautiful to marvel at and be thankful for. You just have to notice. Walking makes it easy.

- 3. Include a 30-minute Epsom salts/essential oils hot bath to your nighttime routine.** New research from the University of Freiburg in Germany suggests taking a hot bath will actually improve depression. (Even more than exercise!) So I figure, even if you aren’t technically “depressed” an improvement in mood is something all of us need more of this time of year. So I’m adding this to my list. And the stillness you’ll enjoy as you luxuriate in the warm, fragrant waters will help.

I’d love to hear your results! Let me know how you add “stillness” into your life this holiday season. **JL**

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# Impactful Ways to Help Develop Your Child's Self-Worth

As our children grow and develop, they are also developing their sense of self-worth and how they view their value. For our children, much of how they view themselves is dependent on their parents. They turn to us for cues on how to feel about themselves.

You may have failed that test. But you are not a failure. You may have made a big mess with the paint. But you are not a mess.

As their parents, we have the opportunity to set them up for success. Children who have a strong self-concept typically do better with friends or school. They go into the classroom believing they can succeed. Children who have a low self-concept often won't even begin a homework assignment because they believe before they begin that they will fail. Our daughter has a shy nature, especially when she is uncomfortable. But she is willing to try because she knows she has a chance to succeed. And if she doesn't, Mom and Dad will still think she's awesome. We focus

on the learning process, not on the end result. We focus on how hard she tried, instead of if she won.

Here are a few simple ways to help build your child's self-worth.

- 1. Notice what they are doing, not how well they are doing it.** Let them help. Allow them to do chores with you, even if they don't have the skills to do them well yet. Focusing on the learning process and encouraging them along the way is more important than the end result of a spotless house. But do not go over the top. If they failed, do not lie to them. Tell them you are proud of them for trying. Ask them if they tried their hardest. If they didn't, ask what they can do about it next time.

- 2. Show them unconditional love.** Love them even when they make a bad choice or miss the mark. We cannot allow kids to think our love depends on their performance, nor can we let them



BY EMILY SCOTT, PHD

Emily Scott, PhD, is a wife, stay at home mom of three, and part time parenting consultant and blogger who has written and spoken on various parenting topics including child development, ACEs, and tips on raising responsible kids. She has lived in the Redding area her whole life, and together with her husband help parents navigate the difficult aspects of parenting at Renewed Hope Parenting. Her website is [www.renewedhopeparenting.com](http://www.renewedhopeparenting.com)

think failure is fatal. They do not have to get straight A's to be loved. Show them: hugs, smiles, eye-contact, high fives. Tell them: I love you. You tried hard.

- 3. Allow them to make choices.** When we do not allow our kids to make choices we communicate to them that they are not capable of making decisions and they cannot survive without us doing it for them. Consult them and help them, and set appropriate limits, but allow them to practice the skills of decision making, even if it means they fail.

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Kids need to learn they are capable enough to make decisions, strong enough to handle the consequences, and able to grow from the process. Learning how to make wise choices is an accomplishment that will help build their sense of value. Allow them to struggle if they make poor choices and allow them to feel accomplished when they overcome the struggle and figure things out themselves.

**4. Focus on their strengths.** Observe them and see what their strengths and natural gifts are. Then, foster their growth in those strengths. Point out how kind you daughter is. Tell your son you admire his ability to keep building the block tower even though it fell.

**5. Spend time with them.** There is perhaps nothing more important to a child's self-worth than the time you

spend with them. Their value will grow when they know Mom and Dad want to be with them and love them regardless of their achievements. Giving your child your undivided attention and pursuing time with them shows your love. This is the time when you assist in their character and self-worth development. Even the older child or teenager who may seem like they want nothing to do with you. Pursue your kids. JL

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## Practicing the NOW

Have you ever wanted to get past right now? It happens to the best of us, whether it's because we have an appetite for success and are driven to get *there* or it may be a painful season and it just hurts to be in that *now*. But our now is all we have. When we try to get ahead of now, we get out of timing that serves us best. It's like a multi-levered machine when it gets out of sync: the gears jam and the smooth operation of its intended design comes to a halt.

As I've studied the lives of people with Alzheimer's and dementia in my years of working in long term care, I have learned a valuable lesson I never anticipated to learn: We practice the life "now" we end up living "later". Many people struggle to live in the *now* – later – because their life was spent racing somewhere else or away from – the *now*.

When it comes to timing, it fascinates me to consider God knows the end from the beginning. It challenges me to change my perspective and take a look at life from the backside and ask the question: What would it look like to be more intentional of how I want to end and start practicing from that vantage point? Contentment takes practice. Our lives are a cumulative result of our choices: physical, relational and emotional. Truly, the most powerful thing we do in a day is make a choice. One choice builds upon the other and a structure is created, called our life.

### Practice the life you want now!

I dare say most of us in the first half of life are searching for significance and we *practice* being driven toward it. We aspire to more, to reach a destination that is magnificent by design. Sometimes though, our drive for significance can deplete joy as we race in to mindsets that don't serve us. Comparison is one of those mindsets that yields the message we are a less than rather than completely enough. True wealth is knowing there is only one of us and no one else can be that person except us.

In our race, the prize of significance could equate to status, possessions, awards, or monetary earnings. But when a person is driven towards significance, once one goal is met, there is a brief pause and it's on to the next goal because the last one didn't quite satisfy. But the truth is being at peace with ourselves and realizing the value that resides inside our own heart is our ultimate significance. Being okay in the present, being able to be present in the now and appreciate the life lessons that are being presented to us even when they appear unfavorable is the significance that satisfies. It costs us nothing other than the choice to value our own heart. We have the opportunity to choose.

For me, practicing the now includes slowing down, being intentional about connecting with myself, others and God; purposely taking some deep breaths and being still. The best now we can accomplish is letting the treasure within give expression to the world around us. JL

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BY MARIE WARNER

Marie Warner, RD is a Wellness Consultant and has worked half of her 30 years as a Registered Dietitian in long term care. She celebrates life with her husband Kurt, their children, extended family and friends.

### The Prize

I was saying "Yes" to everything and ran out of day.

Was I planning to succeed or planning to fray?

Doing drains my tank but I never gave that a second glance.

How could I? I kept going at every chance. I couldn't notice without planning that in. I didn't have much time left even for silly grins.

I was racing to the finish line again, But there wasn't a race so I couldn't win.

I just kept running and running to get first prize.

It was like the time I ran a marathon in my twenties.

I started the race early to make sure I could finish with the rest.

But midway, I followed arrows on the road and found myself off track and in distress.

Realizing I had made such a fatal error, got me so mad, I hitch hiked back to the course,

Not caring if the driver tried to harm me because I would show him my rage without remorse.

What if that is still in play to this day?

What if I win because I am the only one running the race,

No matter the wrong turns or the blunders - the utter fails and stupid mistakes?

What if there is no second place being me?

What if that wonder I could actually see?

What if the revelation that there is only one me is the prize I can win and finally be free?

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## ESCAPE TO REDDING FOR A WINTER ADVENTURE

Just because its winter doesn't mean you have to get stuck inside for the season. Escape to Redding, an outdoor paradise located in the heart of UpStateCA.

The opportunities for exploration are as vast as the mountains that surround the city. Discover the winter landscape on an active volcano with free ranger-led guided snowshoeing and cross-country skiing tours at Lassen Volcanic National Park. Feel the joy of walking on packed snow that just beckons you to wander and explore the hundreds of miles of backcountry wilderness in its purest form.

For the lighter adventurers, and those of all ages and sizes, excellent sledding hills are also available at Lassen Park, and the nearby Eskimo Hill snow play area is a popular spot to slide down the snow.

The more daring enthusiasts can take it to the next level at the Mt. Shasta Ski Park, scheduled to open for the season mid-December. Hit the slopes at one of California's most unique resorts where you can enjoy an affordable winter adventure of alpine skiing and snowboarding, Nordic and backcountry skiing, tubing, and snowmobiling without the crowds.

The Mt. Shasta Ski Park has something for everyone with both day and night operations, miles of trails available to cater to all skill levels, 32 conventional trails for 425 skiable acres, and two terrain parks to test your skills on twists, jumps and rails. For those new to winter activity, take advantage of the one of the finest learning center programs in the industry during January, which is "Learn to Ski Month."

So grab your gear, and maybe a friend or two, because California's last frontier is calling. You'll find More Ways to Play in Redding this winter. Find out more at VisitRedding.com.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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Admission: \$10-\$25  
See RiverfrontPlayhouse.net for more information.  
Riverfront Playhouse, 1620 E Cypress Ave, Redding, CA 96002

### A Celtic Christmas

December 20  
A favorite State of Jefferson holiday tradition, Tomáseen Foley's heart-warming holiday frolic returns to the Cascade Theatre with all new stories, music and dances that celebrate Irish culture and the giving spirit of Christmas.  
Admission: Tickets start at \$26  
See CascadeTheatre.org for more information.  
Cascade Theatre, 1731 Market St, Redding, CA 96001

### Under the Streetlamp: Hip to the Holidays

December 22  
Let's get Hip to the Holidays, as Under the Streetlamp celebrates with a joyous performance of your favorite holiday tunes plus songs from the American Radio Songbook.  
Admission: \$29-\$52  
See ReddingCivic.com for more information.  
Redding Civic Auditorium, 700 Auditorium Dr, Redding, CA 96001

### Clikapudi Trail Runs

January 1  
Start your New Year on the right foot (or left) with an awesome trail race on the shores of Shasta Lake!  
See ShastaTrailRuns.com for more information  
Shasta Lake, 14225 Holiday Rd, Redding, CA 96003

### Ranger-Led Snowshoe Walks

Every Saturday and Sunday, January 5 - April 27  
Ranger-led snowshoe walks are an excellent way to learn or practice snowshoeing techniques and explore Lassen in its winter form. The walks cover one to two miles of moderately strenuous terrain.  
Admission: \$1 donation  
See nps.gov/lavo for more information.  
Lassen Volcanic National Park, 21820 Lassen Peak Hwy, Mineral, CA 96063

### Crystal Ice Cave Tours

Every Saturday, January through March  
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See nps.gov/labe for more information.  
Lava Beds National Monument, 1 Indian Well HQ, Tulelake, CA 96134

### Chad Prather: Star Spangled Banter Comedy Tour

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Prather is known for his way with words. He is a comedian, armchair philosopher, musician, and observational humorist.  
Admission: \$29-\$49  
See ReddingCivic.com for maore information.  
Redding Civic Auditorium, 700 Auditorium Dr, Redding, CA 96001

### The Temptations

January 18  
The definition of Motown soul, The Temptations have amassed an astounding 30 top ten hits. Known for their rich harmonies, precise choreography and impeccable dress, they are electrifying!  
Admission: Tickets start at \$32  
See CascadeTheatre.org for more information.  
Cascade Theatre, 1731 Market St, Redding, CA 96001

### Redding Cultural Cruise

Late January  
Visit local art and culture centers on the annual Redding Cultural Cruise! Tour the Redding's art and culture highlights on board of the cruise bus while sipping complimentary wine.  
Admission: \$20  
Se ShastaArtsCouncil.org for more information.

### Golden Dragon Acrobats

February 2  
The Golden Dragon Acrobats represent the best of a time honored tradition that began more than twenty-five centuries ago. Featuring dance, juggling, acrobatics and trapeze, this is a high-energy evening of breathtaking acts and heart-stopping daring stunts.  
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For more events, go to [VisitRedding.com/Event-Calendar](http://VisitRedding.com/Event-Calendar)

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BY SARAH WIND

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# Finding Joy in Your Closet

Do you find joy when you look inside your closet? A friend of mine said she read somewhere that in order to simplify your life you should empty out the clothes from your closet, put them on your bed, and only

keep what outfits bring you joy. "If I did that," my friend said, "I would only have, like, five things to wear!" Then she asked me, "Do you find joy in the clothes that you wear?" "Well, yes I do," I said.

At some point in my adult life I heard a piece of advice that said you should only own articles of clothing that either make you feel happy or feel good about yourself. So I try to abide by that guideline when I go shopping. If I don't feel strongly about the item and if it doesn't fit well, I won't buy it. Obviously some items are more practical than fashionable, but nevertheless, there are choices to be made with each item, no matter how basic. Even just a black t-shirt can be dull and boring or it can have a texture that feels great and a hemline that you really like. Every so often when I sort through the clothes in my closet, I apply the same guideline and will donate items that don't inspire joy or make me feel good about myself when I wear them.

I personally believe that the abundant life Jesus offers includes wearing fun, colorful

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clothing and accessories. While clothes do not define our identity, they can express our inner world and also reflect a heavenly Kingdom. As sons and daughters of the King, why shouldn't we dress to match our royal identity? If we are called to be the light of the world, how does hiding in the shadows in drab clothing help to that end?

God has created each of us uniquely, and we each have different color and design preferences. Some of my friends look fabulous in yellow. Others gravitate towards floral, animal, or geometric prints. My mom has been wild about leopard prints for years! It takes time and some experimentation to figure out what you like and what looks good with your skin tone and body type. Don't be afraid to try color combinations and prints you haven't been drawn to in the past. You might be pleasantly surprised.

If you honestly don't know where to be-

gin to brighten up your wardrobe, enlist the help of someone else. Ask them to take a look at your closet and share their opinion on what needs to be done to add to your existing apparel. Enhancing some items may be as simple as adding a scarf, colorful belt, necklace, or fun pair of earrings. You may also go shopping with that person, and if they aren't charging you for their style advice, offer to buy them a piece of clothing or take them out for a meal to thank them.

We can tend to overlook maintaining our appearance and wardrobe for many reasons including lack of time because of work, lack of motivation, prioritizing our children's/family's needs, and other looming expenses. Looking good doesn't have to cost a fortune, but it does involve some time and intentionality.

Asking the Holy Spirit to help us find attractive clothes and accessories at

great prices in a short amount of time is always a good strategy too! Just recently I had to buy a dress for an event. God brought a certain store to mind, so I went to their website and within minutes I found the perfect dress at a fair price. I couldn't believe it! I was so thankful.

Remember that you're worth it! You are worth investing time, money, and energy into so you can look great and feel good about yourself. I give you permission to play with color combinations and prints and to have fun putting outfits together! Cheers! JL



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BY LAURA BURWICK

Laura Burwick is a certified Drug and Alcohol Counselor on staff at Redding Transformation Center. She facilitates Hope Recovery, a Christ centered support group that meets weekly. It is for families and individuals who have been affected by addiction, childcare is provided. She is an educational instructor for CARE-EDU, providing professional education for drug and alcohol counselors. For more information or an appointment, email [laurab@bethelsozo.com](mailto:laurab@bethelsozo.com)



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## What now?

Watching your children become adults is rewarding. They are learning, growing and developing their belief systems. It is vital, if you want to maintain a place of influence in their lives to let them be their own person. If we offer our advice and honor their choices, they will ask us again. We can offer our wisdom and understanding, but do we really know what is right for them? What do I do now?

Out of fear, we sometimes try to control them and their choices. We pray and ask the Lord to watch over our children, then we try to rescue them, instead of trusting that life's natural consequences will lead them to seek God and/or keep them moving towards Him. When we react in fear we are saying I don't have confidence in you as a person. I would rather empower them to feel confident in their choices and ability to build their identity. In doing so, it allows them the confidence to learn and creates a place of influence for you in their lives. It also allows you the freedom to accept your children as adults.

What happens when an adult child chooses an addiction or destructive behavior? Parents experience difficult situations: A couple watch their 25 year old rapidly decline in drug abuse, A son/daughter in prison for one bad decision, A single parent terrified because their

son/ daughter can't be found. Parents want so desperately to find a solution they end up intervening and not letting the Lord work in their children's lives.

During these times reach out and let your family, church and community love you. Realizing what you can and cannot control is critical for your mental and physical health. Understand that it requires making difficult choices with no guaranteed outcome. Seek counseling for you and your spouse. It is not a time to isolate out of shame or guilt. Be vulnerable and reach out to find support from others, who have had similar experiences. Surrender to the Lord; let them make their own mistakes.

Judging your performance as a parent requires grace for yourself. Trust you did your best and they are doing the same. Be a parent grounded in love, you owe it to them no matter their age to model a life of trust in the Lord and not of fear. At some point, everyone must take responsibility for their lives and their choices, even your adult children.

The key is in forgiving them and yourself. As parents we will always love our children. We will always want to be a part of their lives and want the very best for them. But, our love is limited. How much more is God able to love and care for us and them. He wants to be our source of wisdom and peace. Phil. 4:6-7. JL

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# 7 Simple Steps to IMPROVE Your HEALTH



BY SUSAN U. NEAL  
RN, MBA, MHS

Susan U. Neal RN, MBA, MHS is on a mission to improve the health of the body of Christ. She is the author of five books including 7 Steps to Get Off Sugar and Carbohydrates. For additional healthy living resources go to [SusanUNeal.com](http://SusanUNeal.com)

**Our society faces an epidemic because over half of Americans live with a chronic illness and a third suffer from obesity.<sup>1</sup> Does your health or weight impede you from having a healthy, bountiful life? If yes, the seven steps outlined in this article will help you improve your energy level, clarity of mind, and lose weight naturally.**

**W**hat caused this epidemic? I believe it is the food-like substances that manufacturers entice us to eat. Instead, we need to eat the foods God created for humans. God gave you a glorious body that is programmed to heal itself if you provide it with the proper nutrition he intended.

**Step 1.** Decide to improve your health through proper nutrition.

The decision to improve your health and well-being is very personal. No one can make this decision for you, it is your choice. But I hope you will choose to improve your health by changing what you eat.

**Step 2.** Acquire knowledge to help make a lifestyle change.

Learning which foods are harmful versus beneficial is crucial in sorting out what you should eat. For example, most oat, soy, corn, and wheat crops in the US are GMO Roundup Ready crops whereby the carcinogen, glyphosate (active ingredient in Roundup) is used on the crops as the farmer deems

necessary.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, you could consume glyphosate residue if you eat foods containing these ingredients unless they are organic.

Sweets and refined carbohydrates are addictive and harmful to the human body. The food industries spike our foods with sugar, and this causes us to become addicted. In addition, as the whole food is processed it is stripped of its nutritional value to extend its shelf life which increases the food industries profits but depletes our health.

**Step 3:** Clean out the pantry and refrigerator by removing unhealthy foods.

Remove unhealthy foods from your kitchen, so you are not tempted to eat them. Some unhealthy foods include wheat, sugar, corn syrup, white rice, artificial sweeteners, processed meats, margarine, milk products, and soft drinks.

**Step 4:** Purchase healthy food.

Plan your menu and grocery list and buy healthy foods.

I post menus, recipes, and corresponding grocery lists at [HealthyLivingSeriesBlog.com](http://HealthyLivingSeriesBlog.com). God gave us a vast variety of fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and grains to nourish our bodies. These wholesome foods can replace processed items that the food industry wants us to consume.

**Step 5:** Begin changing your eating habits.

Now that you cleaned out the pantry, bought nutritious food, and planned your menu, start weaning yourself off harmful products. Only drink water and a glass or two of tea or coffee. Stop eating wheat and any processed foods.

**Step 6:** Prepare and eat foods differently than you did before.

Follow the healthy eating guidelines listed below:

- Buy organic fruits, vegetables, and meats.
- About 50 percent of your food should be fresh, organic vegetables.
- Eat one fresh, raw serving of a low-glycemic fruit per day. Low-glycemic fruits include green apples, berries, cherries, pears, plums, and grapefruit.
- Do not always eat cooked foods. Eat a couple of servings of raw vegetables every day. Eat a salad for lunch with nuts, meat, or an avocado. When eating out, order a salad or coleslaw as sides since both are raw.
- Plan for 25 percent of your food to be an animal or vegetable protein such as beans, nuts, and lean meats. Fish is especially nutritious.
- A variety of different nuts and seeds are excellent sources of protein, minerals, and essential fatty acids.
- Eat nontraditional grains such as quinoa, amaranth, pearled barley, and oats.

**Step 7:** Improve your health through continuing this new lifestyle.

As you incorporate these seven steps into your life, your energy level and health improve, and you lose weight. Live the abundant life Jesus wants you to experience by continuing this lifestyle change for the rest of your life.

Jesus told us, "The thief's purpose is to steal, kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness" John 10:10 Are you living life to its fullness? If not, are you ready to take steps necessary to birth a new you? May God bless you on your journey to improve your health. (Article originally appeared in CBN.com) JL



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# Divinely Orchestrated



BY SHEREE MAREE

www.ShereeMaree.com.

About a month ago, while channel surfing, a show on TV caught my attention. It's called "God Friended Me". I've watched a couple of episodes. The premise is that there's a guy, who is the main character, who gets a FB friend request from God, and through a series of events has no choice but to accept. His God account keeps making friend suggestions for him. He tries to resist following this guidance but something

always happens to convince him to accept all the friend suggestions.

Of course it's a little contrived for TV but I do find it interesting. In each scenario there is a series of events that occur that cannot be planned or figured out by the human mind. It shows how the universe is always orchestrating things on our behalf.

I truly know and believe this, but when I live an experience of it, I get really excited. Here's a story I'd like to share.

A couple of months ago I decided I was going to get a new iPhone. It took me a while to decide which one I wanted and to find the time to go. Then a few weeks ago there was an ad in the paper that Target was offering \$250 off a new iPhone if you turn in your old one. I thought that was my sign to get moving and get a new phone.

The offer was good for a week and on day six I finally made it over to Target. I was feeling excited. I got to the counter and the person there called a manager right away to help me. There was no one else waiting so I thought my timing was good. I waited about 10 minutes for the manager but I wasn't in a hurry so it was fine. As the manager walked over to help me, I could tell right away that he was in a bad mood. I was consciously thinking to myself, "I'm sorry he's in a bad mood but I don't want him to ruin my good mood". I continued to be excited and smiled as we got started. I answered all his questions and he took all my information and entered it. Purchasing a phone is a process that takes a while.

During this process he went in the back to physically get the phone. It took about another 10 minutes. The next step was to specifically take this phone out of the inventory in the computer. He tried several times and it wouldn't let him do it. He told me if he couldn't do this step, he couldn't sell me the phone. I suggested maybe there was another phone in the back and that one would work. Another 10 minutes went by while he went in back and came out with another phone. The same thing happened.

At this point there was nothing I could do. He said they had to fix the problem on their end. I asked if he would still honor the offer when the problem was solved on his end and he said yes.

Then as I looked closer at the offer, and read the smaller print, it wasn't exactly what I thought. It turns out I would save

\$26 not \$250.

Me being me went into analyzing this scenario. I was thinking, "Why was there this glitch? That took an hour of my time and I was expecting to go home with a new phone. What is going on that this transaction didn't go smoothly?" I decided it was because he was in a bad mood. I know that sometimes our moods affect technology. Well, that's been my experience. I can't explain it, but I've definitely experienced it.

I let it go as I got busy again. A couple of weeks later I said to my husband I'm free tonight, let's go try again to get a phone. He said let's go to Target because you save 5% by using the Target card. On the way there, I got one of those bad feelings in my stomach. My first experience had been unpleasant and I was resisting going there, but I agreed saving 5% was a good idea.

There was someone different working that evening. We inquired about the phone I wanted and it turned out they didn't have any in stock at this time. I have to admit I felt relieved. I just didn't have a good feeling about making this purchase at that store. He checked the inventory at a store nearby and it showed they had it. So we drove to the nearest Target.

It turned out not only did they have the phone I wanted at this Target, but

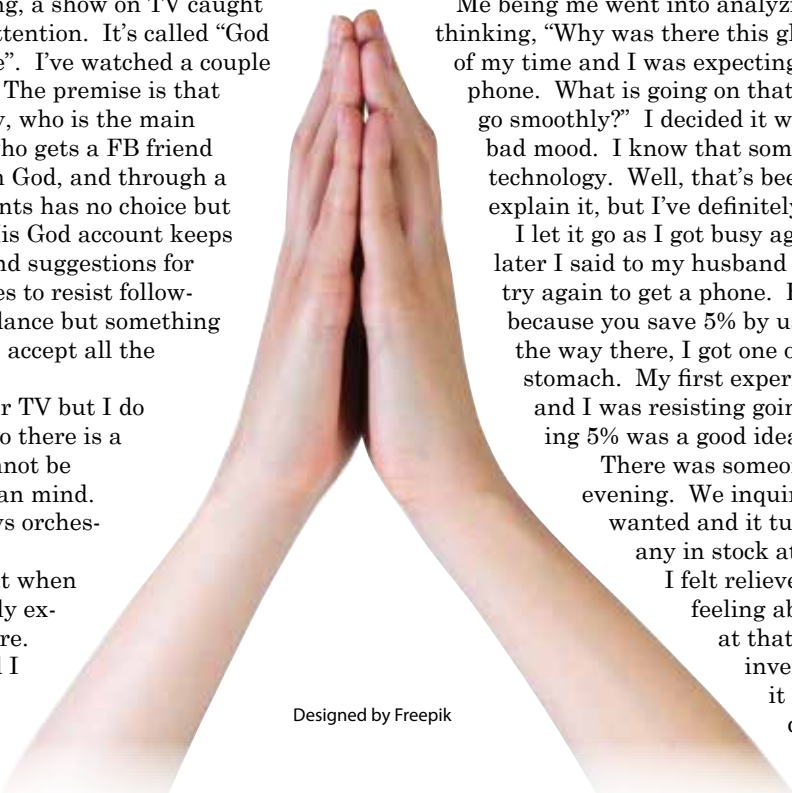
the young man helping us was so helpful and knowledgeable and made us laugh a lot. It was a completely different experience. He was very thorough. So thorough that when he was taking my information, he asked to see my driver's license. He noticed right away that my license had expired two months ago.

I did one of those big gasps in disbelief. I can't believe I've been driving without a valid license. Not only that, I was traveling in the next week and I might not have been able to get through security with an expired license. I'm not sure about that, but either way, I didn't want to be driving with an expired license! I was so grateful that he noticed that. I felt so appreciative that we wound up with this particular person in charge of my purchase. The next day I was at the DMV first thing in the morning renewing my license.

I could never have planned all the steps in this scenario. From my first "Target run" to the discovery of my expired driver's license. I knew it was "divinely orchestrated"!

I know everything is always being orchestrated on our behalf, even if it doesn't always feel that way. I also know that it doesn't mean to jump off a cliff and the universe will orchestrate a soft landing. I'm not saying it couldn't happen, I'm just saying that living our life and following where it takes us could provide us with some amazing orchestrations. Ones we never would have thought of.

So, consciously pay attention, and see how many scenarios are showing up for you to confirm that everything is always working out on our behalf. JL



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# The Antidote to Offense



BY MIKE MAESHIRO

I'm a public figure, author, speaker and coach.

One of the hardest things I get to deal with in my line of work is offended people. Offended people are some of the most irrational, volatile and accusatory people; they can be so angry and mean. It's easy to get offended, ourselves. It's easy to want to retaliate or punish them or defend ourselves. But here's the thing...

The person in pain, who is offended and scared and angry, is actually in the lower seat; they are the one with the disadvantage. They are less in control of themselves than I am of me. If I get angry at them and "put them in their place," call them to an accountability they don't know how to manage, I end up adding to their pain and tightening their connection to the spirit of offense. This has been one of the most painful surrenders I've been privileged to give to love. When someone comes at you with a knife, it's easy to want to pull your sword out.

But the King, the One who cannot be wrong and cannot be evil, doesn't touch His sword. To their offense and aggression, He offers gentleness and compassion, He's such a humble guy.

If we can get past the temptation of pride and offense, we can hear the song in their scream. We can see the child in their eyes, we can feel the pain in their heart. How can we know them like this? Because they are us. Their pain is our own, it's easier to reject them than to feel it.

Love is unconcerned with deficit, He's unafraid of running out of Himself. He is endless in His supply but even if He wasn't, by His very nature, He would still spill all of His blood to spare them. If I attack while He surrenders, I attack myself. If I harm them while He bows, I harm myself.

Offense is evil but offended people are not, they are sick and the sick need a doctor, not a judge.

It's when we have the power to discern between good and evil, the power to be correct, and we choose mercy that we have allowed love to be our sword. JL



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# Five Small Ways to Have More PEACE in YOUR LIFE

Designed by bristekjgor / Freepik



BY CYNDI BARBER

Cyndi Barber is a Pastoral Counselor at Redding's Transformation Center where she specializes in relationships and inner healing. She also writes for iMom.com, a parenting website. Her own blog is [upandovercomers.com](http://upandovercomers.com).

**S**tress has become normalized in today's culture. It can even seem that if you are not stressed out you are not successful or achieving well at life. But life isn't meant to be overwhelming. Anxiety is not a normal state of being. We were designed for peace. Peace in your life will heighten critical thinking, physical health, creative problem solving, and healthy relationships. I have also become aware of how stress manifests in my body. Typically, I feel tension between my shoulders. That's my signal to do something to add more peace to my life.

Here are five things I've used to reduce my stress level and increase my sense of peace.

## SING SONGS

Whether you have a fantastic voice or not, singing has many benefits to your overall well-being. It boosts the immune system, helps with sleep, lowers stress, is a natural anti-depressant, and

lowers blood pressure. I have a play list of happy songs with a positive message and sing my heart out.

## DE-CLUTTER

Having clutter around creates a sense of chaos in the home. I used to struggle with clutter. It was so convenient to just set down the mail or other objects on any available surface. But the clutter was always calling to me from the back of my mind. I learned that it doesn't really take that much longer to put things away immediately.

## LESS TV TIME

When the television is running in the background it fills the air with noise and the drama of the show that's on. I like to keep it off, except when I am actively watching a show. Quiet in the background makes for a more peaceful home.

## RELEASE BURDENS AND WORRIES BEFORE SLEEP

As tired as I may be when my head finally hits the pillow I have found tremendous peace simply by releasing the things on my mind before I fall asleep. I imagine myself handing things, in list form, to God. Anything of slightest concern goes to Him. Then I am free to sleep unburdened.

## MORE TIME IN NATURE

Being in nature is healing and restorative. Going for a walk, sitting in the grass, or gardening all connect me to the calmness of nature. I am terrible at growing plants indoors so I buy flowers for myself in order to bring nature inside. *JL*

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# Apple Roses

Prep time: 20 minutes  
Bake time: 45 minutes

## INGREDIENTS

1/2 package (Pepperage Farm Puff Pastry)  
2 red sweet apples  
2 tablespoons lemon juice (1/2 lemon)  
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour, to sprinkle the counter  
3 tablespoons apricot preserves or ground cinnamon.

## DIRECTIONS

1. Thaw the puff pastry at room temperature if you haven't done so yet. It should take about 20-30 minutes.
2. Prepare a bowl half filled with water and the lemon juice. Cut the apples in half, remove the core and cut the apples in paper-thin slices. Leave the peel so it will give the red color to your roses. Right away, place the sliced apples in the bowl so that they won't change color.
3. Microwave the apples in the bowl for about 3 minutes, to make them slightly softer and easy to roll. If you prefer, you can also simmer the apple slices with the water in a small pan (on the stove). The apple slices should be cooked just enough to bend without breaking. If they break, you need to cook them a little more.
4. Unwrap the puff pastry over a clean and lightly floured counter. Using a rolling pin stretch the dough into a rectangular shape of about 12 x 9 inch (30 x 22 cm). Cut the dough in 6 strips, each about 2 x 9 inch (5 x 22 cm).
5. In a bowl, place three tablespoons of apricot preserves with two tablespoons of water. Microwave for about one minute (or warm up on the stove) so that the preserves will be easier to spread. Spread a thin layer of preserves on each strip of dough.
6. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Drain the apples.
7. Arrange the apple slices on the dough, overlapping one another. Make sure the top (skin side) of the slices sticks a little out of the strip. Sprinkle with cinnamon.
8. Fold up the bottom part of the dough.
9. Starting from one end, carefully roll the dough, keeping the apple slices in place. Seal the edge at the end, pressing with your finger, and place in a regular muffin cup. No need to grease the muffin mold if it's silicone. Otherwise, make sure to grease with butter and flour (or spray).
10. Do the same for all 6 roses. Bake at 375°F (190°C) for about 40-45 minutes, until fully cooked. **NOTES:** Make sure the pastry is fully cooked on the inside before removing the roses from the oven! If after the first 30 minutes the apples start to burn on top, move the pan to a lower rack of the oven and finish baking. You can also cover loosely with aluminum foil for these last 10-15 minutes, to avoid burning the top. Sprinkle with powdered sugar and enjoy!

Serves 6. JL

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## I Wish I Were More Like You



BY SHERYL BOLDT

Sheryl serves as a Faith/Church guest columnist for several Florida newspapers including *The Tallahassee Democrat* and *The Wakulla News*. Her goal is to honor God and encourage others to experience His loving presence in a life-changing way. Visit her blog, *Today Can Be Different* at ([www.TodayCanBeDifferent.net](http://www.TodayCanBeDifferent.net)).

When I see Facebook photos of you with your friends and families, I envy you. You don't seem worried at all about how you look in the pictures. Instead, you're smiling and enjoying the camaraderie of those who enjoy spending time with you.

I wish I were more like you, because I often avoid having my picture taken. I'm afraid all my physical flaws will be frozen forever in that snapshot. This mindset has caused me to miss out on many Kodak moments.

But no longer. I want to develop a different perspective.

Instead of being preoccupied with how un-photogenic I am, I want to ask God to help me see myself the way God and others see me, especially the ones who want me in the pictures with them. I'll begin by not focusing on myself so much, especially my outward appearance.

What if I were to believe that I truly have been chosen – that I am dearly loved by God Himself? Would this change the way I see myself? Would it change the way you see yourself? Eventually, the truth of this kind of status could equip and motivate us to become more compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, and patient.

As we continue to change, our character would become so attractive that it would begin to radiate in our countenance, reflecting the One whose character we desire to emulate. As we become less focused on ourselves, including how we look, we just might become more relaxed and actually enjoy being a part of other people's lives more.

Though I still might not run to have my picture taken, perhaps by developing this mindset I'll stop running away from the chance to be included in someone's photo album or Facebook post – or finally updating my Facebook cover photo. Imagine that.

What about you? Are you preoccupied with your physical appearance? If so, how does it affect your life? What positive changes can you make to better reflect God's opinion of you? JL



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BY DR. BOB BOYLE

Dr. Bob Boyle has been practicing as a licensed psychologist in Redding, CA since 1991. Currently, he is the staff psychologist at Far Northern Regional Center and maintains a part-time private practice. He also works with businesses and athletic teams around leadership and team-building. Dr. Boyle is co-author of *A Hitchhiker's Road Map to Leadership*. Dr. Boyle is married with four grown children, and enjoys coaching basketball and playing golf. Dr. Boyle can be reached at: [drbobboyle@gmail.com](mailto:drbobboyle@gmail.com)



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## Get Quiet and Look Inside

The 21st century world is an incredibly noisy one. I am defining noise in the broadest of terms; simply meaning the sounds that we take in. In that broad definition, noise can be either pleasant or unpleasant. Just think of some of the unpleasant “noise” we hear on a daily basis. We hear the sounds of car and truck engines as we travel to and from our jobs. We hear the wailing cry of an infant, in distress because he is hungry, wet, or colicky. We hear the sound of an ambulance siren, loud and above the din of whatever traffic noise is present. On the other hand, we hear pleasant “noises” in our daily existence. We hear the early morning songs of birds, as they travel from flower to flower, and tree to tree. We hear the pleasant and familiar voice of our spouses, reminding us of the wonderful partnership we have that leaves us feeling connected and loved. We hear our favorite type of music that we play on our car radios, iPhones, and bluetooth speakers. Unpleasant and pleasant – external noise is an integral part of our lives.

But there is another kind of noise that is present in our lives. Internal noise. The noise that happens inside our heads. Again, these “sounds” can be pleasant or unpleasant. For most of us, the thoughts that are rattling inside our minds are of the unpleasant kind. Some examples would be:

- “I can’t do that”
- “I’m going to fail”
- “I’m not very likable”
- “My weaknesses far outnumber my strengths”

When you stop and think about it, the external noise and the internal noise combine to form – a heckuva lot of noise! So what’s the cure? How can we ever hope to combat all this noise?

The answer itself is simple. The application of the answer is very difficult. We need to – get quiet.

I know what you’re thinking. Easier said than done. And you’d be right. But it’s not impossible to learn the skill of getting quiet. You will have to be intentional about it, but here are a few tips.

- 1. Ignore your phone.** Not forever. Not for the entire day. But intentionally take periodic breaks from the electronic data that we fill our lives with. Put your phone face down on your desk and don’t touch it for an hour (or 30 minutes, or even 10 minutes!).
- 2. Turn off your TV for a night.** Instead of blowing through three episodes of whatever you’re bingeing on Netflix or Amazon Prime, choose one night/week where the television stays off. Read. Talk to your spouse. Play with your kids, or your dog. Or even your cat, if your cat is the playing type.

**For most of us, the thoughts that are rattling inside our minds are of the unpleasant kind.**

- 3. Pray.** Most of prayer these days is out loud. Not that there’s anything wrong with that, but quiet, contemplative prayer is important too. Take some time to take a few deep breaths (maybe more if you’ve had a rough day), focus on God, and pray. And sometimes, prayers of the heart aren’t audible and vocal. They are simply turning your attention to God. Resting quietly in His presence. And being rejuvenated in the process.

You may have noticed that the title of this article had two parts to it: 1) Get Quiet, and 2) Look inside. We’ll take a look at the second part, “Look Inside”, in the next edition. JL



BY SUZANNE LUIS

Suzanne is a counselor at Redding's Transformation Center, she has a Lay Christian Counseling Certificate from Regent University, She is also licensed with the State of California as a Drug and Alcohol Counselor.



# OBSessional THINKING

**I**nternal obsessions and compulsions are unseen and not often recognized but can be ritualistic in nature and can be distracting.

When most people think about (OCD), they think of the most well-known forms of compulsive behavior, such as repeated hand washing or checking a door to make sure it is locked. There is a form of OCD, referred to as pure obsessional OCD where obsessions and compulsions take place internally. They perform repetitive, mental rituals to minimize stress.

Since individuals with Pure O are often unaware they are being plagued by OCD, and much of what they experience happens inside the mind, they often suffer in silence and do not know how to explain what is happening to them. Pure O can be misunderstood by others and, misdiagnosed by mental health professionals. As a result, an individual often concludes that he or she is internally flawed, which can result in fear and isolation.

What distinguishes Pure-O from a fleeting unwanted thought is the anxiety that becomes affixed to these thoughts which then creates a significant amount of distress to the sufferer. Pure-O sufferers often report that their thoughts make them incredibly anxious and they can't get them out of their head. Thus, what ignites the symptoms of Pure-O is not the experience of intrusive thoughts but actually one's reaction to them. The more one dislikes experiencing the intrusive thoughts and tries to repress, control, or fight the thoughts, the more they are likely to suffer intrusive ones. It is the very act of trying not to have a disturbing thought that guarantees its resurfacing.

For example, a woman sees her husband talking to a female colleague in a friendly manner, she begins to think he is flirting, this leads to intrusive thoughts about how pretty the colleague is

and how her husband will probably want to have an affair with her and eventually leave. The wife may know this is irrational thinking but is unable to get rid of the anxiety this produces and the internal thoughts of being abandoned.

The human brain naturally generates nonsensical and often bizarre thoughts, most people experience these at one time or another. The difference is that when individuals without OCD experience bizarre-like thinking they recognize them as contrary to their nature and dismiss them.

OCD is both genetic and learned. The structures that are impaired in the OCD brain create sensitivity to uncertainty, this leads to more value placed on incoming thoughts and relentless over responding in the form of compulsions.

While obsessional thinking can take on any theme, the following are several categories of obsessions commonly experienced with Pure O:

- Thoughts about harming oneself or others;
- Ideas about abhorrent sexual activity, such as pedophilia or incest;
- Persistent doubt about one's sexual orientation;
- Persistent doubt about one's romantic partner;
- Anti-religious thoughts; and
- Thoughts about normally unnoticed somatic functions, such as blinking, swallowing, or breathing.

Since individuals with Pure O fear the negative consequences of harmful, thoughts, they perform compulsive mental processes to neutralize fear. Mental compulsions function as a method of figuring out the meaning of thoughts and serve as a desperate attempt to reduce anxiety and distress many fear will never go away.

I will continue this article next publication. JL

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