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FROM THE EDITOR

By ANGEL CHAVEZ

WE THE PEOPLE… WE ALL MUST DO!

This New Year will bring only that of which we are willing to put into it. Therefore, it is time to regroup and encourage one another and pray for the new administration; it is our duty as Americans.

I hope in this New Year 2021 that everyone reading this article will find themselves closer to The Father. I know in my heart that this is The Father's will for all mankind. So please read this article with that intent of heart.

ONLY TWO COMMANDS FOR ALL MANKIND:

"Jesus replied, "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments." *Mathew 22:*

God will never ask us to do something that we are not capable or equipped to do.

God will never ask us to do something that He will not do Himself. Why? Because He created us in His likeness, in His image. "Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us…" *Genesis 1:26*

What I am trying to say is that God Himself loves us with all His heart, with all His soul and with all His strength.

COULD THAT BE POSSIBLE?

Well, if we being natural or evil by nature, love our kids with all our heart, with all our soul and all our strength, (I am talking about a normal family…), then yes God loves us with all His heart, soul and strength.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A FATHER AND HIS KID. Psalm 139

"O Lord, You have looked through me and have known me. You know when I sit down and when I get up. You understand my thoughts from far away. You look over my path and my lying down. You know all my ways very well. Even before I speak a word, O Lord, You know it all. You have closed me in from behind and in front. And You have laid Your hand upon me. All You know is too great for me. It is too much for me to understand.

THESE WORDS ARE NOT A POEM, BUT REPRESENT REAL ACTIONS OF A FATHER TOWARDS HIS KID. IN THIS CASE GOD IS THE FATHER THAT IS WHY HE HAS THE ABILITY TO DO ALL OF THE ABOVE FOR EACH HUMAN BEING HE HAS EVER CREATED. ISN'T THAT AMAZING?

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I run away from where You are? If I go up to heaven, You are there! If I make my bed in the place of the dead, You are there! If I take the wings of the morning or live in the farthest part of the sea, even there Your hand will lead me and Your right hand will hold me. If I say, "For sure the darkness will cover me and the light around me will be night," even the darkness is not dark to You. And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are the same to You.

WHEN WE DO SOMETHING THAT ISN'T PRETTY, WE FEEL UNWORTHY AND DESIRE TO HIDE. BUT THAT WILL BE

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KNOW YOUR LOCAL PROFESSIONALS
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10 WAYS TO RAISE CREATIVE KIDS

"The creative is the place where no one else has ever been. You have to leave the city of your comfort and go into the wilderness of your intuition. What you'll discover will be wonderful. What you'll discover is yourself." - Alan Alda

Are you interested in raising your child to be their most creative self? The path to creative thinking isn't a direct on, but there are a few landmarks that can help us find our way.

Here are 10 ways to raise creative children:

1. Make Mistakes
Stanford researcher and author of Mindset: The New Psychology of Success, Carol Dweck, shares that children who are afraid of failure are less likely to think creatively. If your child acts disappointed at making a mistake, try saying something like, "what can we do to change this outcome?" or "how could you do this again?" I like how my friend and colleague Ben Grossman-Kahn of The Nordstrom Innovation Lab calls this Failing Forward, or looking at mistakes as opportunities for growth rather than failures.

2. Get Messy
Most of us like a clean space and feel overwhelmed when messes get out-of-hand. However, when children are in their creative element, messes can quickly develop. The next time your child asks to paint or wants to dump a bag of cotton balls all over the floor, make room for it (and/or take it outside). You might have to contend with a mess, but the creative benefits will surpass this temporary inconvenience.

3. Offer Praise for Effort
We've all heard a lot about how praise can hinder a child's independent thinking. In Alfie Kohn's book, Punished by Rewards: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise, and Other Bribes, he talks about how rewards succeed at motivating people to….earn more rewards. The problem with praise is that it can strip a child from searching for his own internal motivations. This isn't to say that all praise is bad, but next time you're tempted to praise, try saying something objective such as, "I see that you put your shoes on by yourself," or "You're working really hard on that math problem."

4. Be open-minded
Offer your child choices as a way to encourage independent thinking. You may not be in the habit of eating dinner for breakfast, but if your child says she wants to eat pasta before heading off to school, make room for that. If she wants to help in the kitchen, try turning your kitchen into a science lab and give her open access to a handful of ingredients and kitchen tools.

5. Model Creativity
What's your creative outlet? Where do you enjoy putting your creative energy? Cooking, singing, gardening, drawing, dancing? Children who watch their parents engage in creative activities are more likely to embrace these activities themselves. If it's been a while since you've done something creative, think about what made you happy in your own childhood and spend half an hour doing that activity with your child. How did it feel? Could you try it again tomorrow? And the next day?

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FROM THE MAYOR

by GREGORY J. ORAVEC
City of Port St. Lucie
cityofpsl.com

The COVID-19 Vaccine is Here!

"I am heartened that so many of you are eager to receive the vaccine".

Happy New Year! Wouldn't it be amazing if we could start 2021 fresh and free from the challenges of 2020 as easily as turning the page of a calendar? If only…

Instead, I would ask us to confront the brutal truth that while we do have reasons to be hopeful and we can now see a pathway for our lives to return to normal in 2021, we are still in a difficult spot. We are likely months away from our desired destination; and we won't be able to make it there without additional struggle, sacrifice, and, sadly, loss.

According to the St. Lucie County Office of the Florida Department of Health, as of early January, COVID-19 levels in our community are at their highest to date. That dreaded post-Thanksgiving spike has come to be not just in places reported on TV, but right here in St. Lucie County. Tradition Hospital is fully occupied, and it is going to take months for the vaccination effort to ramp up. As a result, as much as some of our residents might hate masks and be tired of distancing and other precautions, it is vital that we stay diligent and committed until the end, until our population is sufficiently immunized, because our circumstances can get worse, and, frankly, will get worse if we don't take appropriate action. Wouldn't it be especially heartbreaking to see things take a turn for the worse now, after so much sacrifice and just as the end game comes into view? Don't let a moment of weakness cheapen the sacrifices that have been made to date, rob you or someone else of a loved one, or derail our economic recovery.

I am heartened that so many of you are eager to receive the vaccine, and I am sorry that many of you haven't been able to get one right out of the gate. Unfortunately, I think the rollout of the vaccine is going to be much like the rollout of testing. It's going to take months for the supply and delivery system to catch up with demand, making it hard to get a vaccine, especially at first. We will see mistakes and inefficiencies. There will be anxiety, frustration and worse. Being mindful of this dynamic, let's try to stay informed (through reputable sources, including www.cityofpsl.com/covid) and constructive. Let's also be sure that we are doing what we can as individuals and households before casting stones at others.

Each state is responsible for its own vaccination plan. As you may know, the Florida Department of Health has an office in each of Florida's 67 counties, including St. Lucie County. The Department of Health in St. Lucie County is leading the local vaccination effort. I encourage you to check its website often at http://stlucie.floridahealth.gov/. On this site, you can register for local vaccination events and get on a waiting list if the event is full. I also encourage you to reach out directly to your medical provider to see if they have plans to receive the vaccine and, if so, how they will distribute it.

Please know that I will share important news here and through other channels, but I would always encourage you to stay tuned to **www.cityofpsl.com/covid, www.stlucieco.gov/departments-services/a-z/public-safety/covid-19** and other reputable sources directly.

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FROM THE SHERIFF

by KEN J. MASCARA
St. Lucie County Sheriff
stluciesheriff.com

Watch Out For Scams

IRS, kidnappings, timeshares, contests, even Florida Power and Light bills and COVID vaccines…all now ploys to try and scam you out of money. Each and every day it seems like there is a new scam plaguing our community, seeking to steal your money or personal information and wreak havoc on your credit or financial stability. Remember the old cliché "if it's too good to be true, it probably is". Not a day goes by that my office isn't notified of a new twist on the same old scams, and it amazes me each time when I hear how unsuspecting victims have succumbed to the scheme and are out hundreds, thousands and in some cases, hundreds of thousands, of dollars. Now, these scammers are evening using my office phone number and names of my good deputies to try and trick you out of money. JUST HANG UP!

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) provides up-to-date and helpful information on current scams being seen around the country and these tips to help you avoid being a victim.

- Spot imposters. Scammers often pretend to be someone you trust, like a government official, a family member, a charity, or a company you do business with. Don't send money or give out personal information in response to an unexpected request - by text, phone call, or email.
- Don't believe your caller ID. Technology makes it easy for scammers to fake caller ID information, so the name and number you see aren't always real. If someone calls asking for money or personal information, hang up.
- Don't pay upfront for a promise. Don't pay in advance for things like debt relief, credit and loan offers, mortgage assistance, or a job. They might even say you've won a prize (like the lottery, a raffle or a sweapstakes), but first you have to pay taxes or fees. If you do, they will probably take the money and disappear.
- Consider how you pay. Wiring money through services like Western Union or MoneyGram is risky because it's nearly impossible to get your money back. That's also true for reloadable [gift] cards like MoneyPak, Reloadit, Green Dot or Vanilla. Government offices and honest companies won't require you to use these payment methods.
- Hang up on robocalls. If you answer the phone and hear a recorded sales pitch, hang up and report it to the FTC. These calls are illegal, and often the products are bogus. Don't press 1 to speak to a person or to be taken off the list. That could lead to more calls.
- Don't deposit a check and wire money back. By law, banks must make funds from deposited checks available within days, but uncovering a fake check can take weeks. If a check you deposit turns out to be a fake, you're responsible for repaying the bank.

Before you give money to anyone you don't know personally, talk to someone you trust. Con artists want you to make decisions in a hurry. Don't be threatened by someone asking for your money, slow down, check out the story, do an online search, consult an expert - or JUST HANG UP. ◆

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WHAT IS DIRECT HEATING AND HOW DOES IT IMPACT OUR FUTURE?

By RYN ORR

Scientists Jacob Haqq-Misra and Brendan Mullan assess what factors might lead to the doom of human civilization. With some simple calculations, they estimate that Earth will be unlivable by 2370 due to direct heating, which, despite how it sounds, is not related to climate change.

In modern times, we are already seeing the effects of disease on our population through COVID-19. But what events could cause a global human extinction? What happens if human civilization continues business as usual? How many humans could feasibly be supported by the Earth, and at what cost? In 1975, scientist Sebastian Von Hoerner attempted to answer these questions, and he estimated doomsday - an event that would disrupt human civilization as we know it - would occur by 2050. Fast forward to 2018, scientists Jacob Haqq-Misra and Brendan Mullan have updated Von Hoerner's estimates based on modern data. By looking at projected population growth, they estimate that Earth could be unlivable by modern standards in the year 2370.

Haqq-Misra and Mullan used an estimation of total agricultural production based on the current global crop yield multiplied by the amount of land used to

grow the crops. If the crop yield in 2012 is sustained in the future, and the current 1.41 billion hectares of land used to grow crops stay active, the Earth could sustain seventeen billion people. We could push this estimate to the extreme and say that sixty billion people could be sustained if all farmable land was used to cultivate food. This is impractical, but at least gives us a hard upper limit.

However, this calculation relies on a few assumptions: it assumes every human would live on a "subsistence vegan diet" and consume 2500 calories per day. If farming technologies aren't improved in the future, then over-farming could cause crop yields to drop significantly. Sixty billion people would require a lot of energy and resources to live comfortable lives. This high demand for energy would cause global temperature changes that might also diminish crop yields depending on the geographic area.

Haqq-Misra and Mullan to estimate how long humans could live on Earth based on direct heating of the planet due to energy use, independent of any warming contributed by climate change. According to Haqq-Misra and Mullan, human civilization currently shows an exponential growth rate of 2.0 percent per year in energy consumption. If human civilization continues as usual, the growth rate of energy consumption would become 2.6 percent per year.

Direct heating refers to the release of heat into the environment whenever humans consume energy resources. As human civilization consumes more energy, more heat is released and warms up the atmosphere. Based on heat stress tolerance in mammals, we could only survive until 2370. By then the average temperature of Earth would be intolerable to humans.

If humanity can harness about a planet's worth of energy resources, we would be considered a Kardashev type-I (K1) civilization. To become a K1 civilization, we would need to cover the surface of the Earth in solar panels. If we were a K1 civilization, that means that we will one day run out of energy resources on Earth if we do not stabilize our growth and become a K2 civilization that harnesses the energy of an entire star. At this point, human civilization would need to expand to other planets and solar systems to maintain our increasing energy consumption. Therefore, according to Mullan and Haqq-Misra, the end of life on Earth might not necessarily mark the end of human civilization.

Considering that the universe is so vast, it seems probable that there would be more civilizations like ours out there. So where are the other space-faring civilizations? There are several running arguments on why we haven't met our interstellar neighbors yet. One possibility is that there might be a bottleneck event, such as a doomsday, that all K1 civilizations reach, that prevents them from growing and being detected. Whether humanity could surpass this bottleneck will depend on our actions. These calculations do not include an error analysis, however, and there is more work underway to see how this would vary. Haqq-Misra and Mullan conclude that civilizations with unsustainable growth must curb their energy consumption if humanity is to survive long enough to explore space. ◆

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I lost 35 pounds in 6 months without going on a diet, and it taught me 7 lessons about eating for healthy fat loss

By RACHEL HOSIE

Losing weight is, in theory, simple. But that doesn't make it easy.

The vast majority of people, and women in particular, are always trying, or at the very least wishing, to lose some weight, no matter how much, for health or aesthetic reasons.

If it were as easy as it appears on paper - that is, take in less energy than you're burning - the multibillion-dollar diet industry wouldn't exist.

Whether it's a reality-TV star peddling a bikini blitz workout DVD, an influencer plugging laxative teas, or a tabloid claiming to have come up with a diet plan that will see you losing 10 pounds in a week, supposed quick fixes are everywhere, because we all love the idea of putting in minimal effort and getting results fast.

But the truth is, none of these things work. There is no shortcut, and anything that results in rapid weight loss won't be healthy or sustainable. You didn't gain 10 pounds in a week, so how could you possibly lose it that quickly?

Over the past five months, I've lost nearly 35 pounds, or over 15 kilos.

Like many, my weight has fluctuated over my adult life, but at the end of 2018 I was the biggest and heaviest I'd ever been. I felt sluggish, hated shopping, and barely fit into any of my clothes (smocks were life), but I don't think I realized quite how much weight I'd gained until I had a body scan at the end of November.

I'd put on 11 pounds, or 5 kilos, since I'd last weighed myself the previous July, and seeing the number on the scale was the wake-up call I needed.

There's nothing wrong with gaining weight if you're healthy, but I wasn't, and my weight gain was a reflection of the fact that I wasn't looking after myself.

The weight had crept up over the years, as it so often does. I will always love to eat and drink, but as a 20-something living in London, I'd lost all concept of moderation or balance, regularly binge-drinking and overeating. My diet wasn't necessarily unhealthy, and I was very active, but I was simply consuming far too much, frequently eating to the point of pain.

I had an unhealthy relationship with food and my body, and that's what I decided I would consciously work on come the new year — might as well capitalize on the "new year, new me" vibe, after all.

Losing weight wasn't my main incentive, but it was part of the overall lifestyle switch I've successfully made. And that's what's made this time different to every other time I've lost a few pounds.

It was time to start putting myself, my health, and my happiness first. No restrictive plans, no strict rules, no thinking of myself as being on a diet, but rather approaching it as a journey toward creating a healthier, happier, sustainable lifestyle.

And it worked.

As a lifestyle journalist with a focus on health, food, wellness, and fitness, I was already well informed about how to live a healthy lifestyle. But there's still so much I've learned this year, from how to train to how to deal with saboteurs (both separate articles entirely).

But perhaps the most important changes I've made have been regarding my diet. So here are seven lessons I've learned about how to eat to lose weight sustainably.

1. Cutting out foods just results in bingeing.

Cutting bread, sugar, or anything else you enjoy out of your diet is not a good idea as you'll only end up bingeing on it. Do you want to cut those delicious foods out forever? Didn't think so.

While you may think you "can't do"

continued next page

moderation (stopping after a few squares of chocolate and not eating the whole bar), you can if you stop demonizing the food. There's no such thing as "good" and "bad" foods, although, yes, there are more and less nutrient-dense foods.

For me, it's also helped to think of foods in terms of macros - are they a source of protein, carbs, or fats? So a bar of chocolate is a carb, just like a banana or oats, and they can all be part of a healthy diet.

If you love doughnuts, you don't have to give them up forever to lose weight, and this can make them easier to resist when your colleague brings in a box of Krispy Kremes - you know what they taste like, you'll eat doughnuts at a later point in your life, you don't need to eat one just because they're there. But at the same time, if you really want a doughnut, just eat one and enjoy it!

If you feel like you're punishing yourself, it's never going to work.

2. Working out won't result in fat loss if you don't also address your diet.

Before I changed my lifestyle, I already worked out four to five times a week, doing a mixture of weight-lifting, dance classes, and netball. I was also active in my day-to-day life, walking at least 14,000 steps a day. But I was still overweight.

The past six months have shown me how much truth there is in the adage, "You can't out-train a bad diet." Or, more specifically, a diet that simply involves consuming too much.

Working out is great for you in so many ways, and it certainly helps the fat-loss process (more on that another time), but if you think exercise alone is going to see your weight dropping off, you may be disappointed.

3. Upping your protein intake will help a lot.

It's a complete myth that eating for fitness means plain chicken and broccoli with a protein shake on the side for every meal, but it's true that keeping your protein intake up is important.

In fact, studies have shown that following a high-protein diet can help maintain muscle and boost metabolism, keep you feeling full when trying to lose weight, and reduce hunger.

"Eating a sufficient amount of protein when you're losing weight is paramount in order to preserve lean muscle mass," specialist registered dietitian Nichola Ludlam-Raine told INSIDER.

"Eating around 1.6 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight," she said, "alongside resistance exercise, helps to maintain both muscle strength and metabolic rate" - the rate at which your body burns calories. "The digestion of protein also requires more calories in comparison to carbs and fat, and help to keep you feeling full too." ◆

JUST GETTING INTO FITNESS?

AVOIDING THESE COMMON MISTAKES

by PATRICK WOOD, ATC, CSCS

Lots of people decide to become more active to achieve a fitness goal such as losing weight or adding muscle – especially when the new year looms and they want to make a change. They are dedicated but can make some common mistakes. Hopefully, this article will help you avoid those mistakes so you can get a good start towards your goal.

Mistake #1: Going "too hard, too soon"

This is a very common mistake. The resulting stress on your muscles can cause you to be so sore that you cannot move and might not be able to finish out the week's workouts. Not only will your body not be able to recover properly, but working out can become mentally draining and discouraging. This is a big problem when one of the most important aspects of beginning a fitness journey is consistency.

You have to learn to enjoy the process. If you lose your motivation before you even start, you will never achieve your goal. Also, if you are not ready for that level of difficulty, injury can occur. This can set you back or cause you to quit altogether. Make sure to ease into any fitness journey. Start out focusing more on bodyweight exercises, smaller durations of cardio, and flexibility/mobility. Then, work your way into weighted exercises or longer durations of cardio.

Mistake #2: Not working on flexibility and mobility

This is another big mistake. Flexibility is the ability of the muscles to stretch, while mobility incorporates everything that affects the joints' mechanics and range of motion. I know it doesn't seem like stretching and doing mobility exercises will help you lose weight or help you gain muscle, but they contribute to the longevity of training, which should be an important part of any person's fitness goal.

Again, consistency is key. If you can't properly get into a position or hold correct form without any weight, you sure can't do it with weight. If you have some form of tightness causing you to compensate during each step of your run, this will lead to improper mechanics and eventually injury. A proper warm up and intelligently incorporated flexibility and mobility work are necessary for any fitness plan.

continued next page

Mistake #3: Changing your diet too much, too fast

When it comes to nutrition, people usually make the mistake of changing their diet too much, too fast. They tend to cut too many calories when trying to lose weight, or add too many if they are trying to gain muscle. A better way would be to find out how many calories you are eating right now and track your weight. Find a calorie amount where your weight stays relatively consistent. Once you find a calorie level where your weight stays consistent, substitute healthier choices for any junk food or processed food. Make a gradual transition. You want it to be something sustainable.

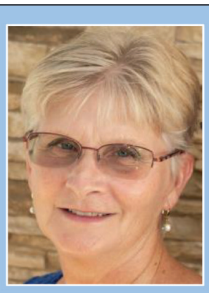
Just as you don't want to start working out too hard, you don't want to eat in a way that's not possible to maintain. Once you have transitioned out the unhealthy foods, you can then start changing the amount, whether that be increasing or decreasing calories.

Mistake #4: Making sweating and soreness your main goal

Finally, sweating and feeling sore should not be the main goal. You can add muscle without being sore. You can burn calories without being drenched in sweat. The main goals should be holding correct form, staying healthy, and progressing a little each week. There are so many ways to be active. Cardio has many forms and there are millions of resistance training programs out there. You have to pick something you enjoy. If you find enjoyment in your workouts, you will be more likely to stick with it and see long-term results.

It's all about safety, longevity, and consistency.

Make your workout routine a progression, don't kill yourself the first week. Incorporate proper warm-ups, flexibility, and mobility work to ensure a long and healthy fitness journey. Make small changes over a period of time in your diet to create a sustainable eating habit. Learn to enjoy the fitness process. I promise you'll like the results! I hope these tips help lead you to an exciting and successful entrance into the fitness lifestyle. ◆



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Choosing the Best School for Your Child

Families in St Lucie County have a wide variety of choices when it comes to educating their children. There are public schools, magnet schools, charter schools, private schools, and home-schooling options. With school registration and open enrollment going on in St Lucie County, families must make the decision as to what school should they send their child to. The linger question however: What school is the best fit?

Choosing a school is not an easy task. Families want an educational experience that is as rewarding as possible. With children spending so many hours of their day at school, families want a school whose values and mission closely aligns with their own beliefs.

How does a family even begin to navigate these waters?

To begin this process and not be overwhelmed, take a few minutes to figure out what is important to you and to your family. Make a list of the top five things you want in a school. When making your list, ask yourself what are your child's needs (behaviorally, emotionally, and educationally)? What is your child's learning style? What are your family's needs? Do you like lots of activities? Do you need a lot of communication? Do you want to be involved and volunteering at the school?

After narrowing in on what you are looking for, start to gather information about schools. A great source of information is asking family and friends. Families can seek out opinions online from families that attend certain schools or have attended through Facebook groups. Take some time to go to the school's website and learn about school policies, procedures and what, if any, supplemental services are offered. One of the most important and effective ways to get a feel for the school is to take a tour. Most schools offer tours both during and after school hours, just reach out directly to them to schedule a time.

When you visit the school it's informative to observe the staff. Was the receptionist friendly and helpful? In your time at the school she will certainly become your best friend! Is the school neat and orderly? What do the bulletin boards look like? Is student work out for display? The items are key indicators of the pride students and staff have in their school. As you walk around, are the staff members welcoming? Do the students appear happy?

As you tour and research a school pay attention to key points such as what is the school's approach to learning? What is the school's overall academic performance (this can be determined by their state grade)? Ask about their behavior policy? Take note of building safety, what protocols are in place? Are their any special programs such as arts, athletics, clubs, or before and after care services? What is the school's admission policy? Throughout the process, make sure you talk to the principal, teachers, and other staff members to get a feel for the school. Be sure to ask about the school's community and parental involvement.

Check the school's social media pages to get a feel for the school environment. The social media pages can tell the school's story. Are they responsive to questions? Are the pictures showing happy students, engaged in learning? Do they do fun activities?

When your research is complete, go back to your top five list wants and needs. Which school fits that list? Which school most aligns with your values and your needs? While no school is perfect, by researching and prioritizing what is important to you, you can find the perfect school for YOUR child and family! Renaissance Charter School of St. Lucie is a high performing tuition-free public charter school that serves students in St Lucie County in grades K-8. Our family-oriented atmosphere offers an abundance of options to customize your child's learning experience and meet the needs of all. Our teachers provide research-based and evidence-based instruction that is aligned to the Florida State Standards. The faculty is committed to providing each student with the opportunity to experience academic success and to reach their greatest potential! For a tour or more information email info@stluciecharter.org or call (772) 344- 5982 or visit our website at stluciecharter.org.

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Interview with

DR. MICHAEL G. COOK

Southport Dental Care

ICARE EXCLUSIVE

Welcome to this issue of iCare Community Magazine

Today we are bringing you the inside scoop on dentistry from one of Treasure Coast s most popular dentists, Dr. Michael Cook. Dr Cook is the proud owner of Southport Dental Care (Port Saint Lucies oldest full time dental practice) which has been proudly serving our community for over 42 years. We are absolutely delighted to have his perspective and experience in the field of dentistry.

Dr. Cook, thank you for allowing us some of your time. I couldn't help but to notice that you have a very infectious laugh; do you enjoy dentistry?

Dr. Cook: Yes, I love my job, but I love people more. Dentistry is a very persona l profession. I get to know my patients and they get to know me. In fact, they become part of our dental family. Our Practice Philosophy is based on our relationships with our patients. We want EVERYONE to feel comfortable and at home when they come to vis it us. And yes, we like to laugh a lot around here.

Doctor, will you share with us a little about yourself and your team?

Dr. Cook: Well, I graduated from the University of Florida College of Dentistry in 2002. I have been part of Southport Dental Care for 18 years. Before that, I was a former Naval officer and I proudly served my country in both Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm.

I have the GREATEST team EVER! I feel very lucky and blessed to have the team that I have, as a matter of fact, most of my staff have been with the practice well before me. We are all passionate about what we do, and as you can see, we love to laugh. I definitely could not be where I am without them.

Describe your typical day.
Dr. Cook: For me, it s mostly a 7:30am 5:00pm job; I like to get in earlier to review my surgery cases, and I also set time aside for emergencies, (either before business hours or at the end of the day.) Having been a victim of an accident myself, I know first hand what it s like to lose teeth. So I m very empathetic and I try to see my emergencies as soon as I can. Sometimes, I will see emergencies during my lunch break. I don t need much time for lunch, my lunch is always an easy peanut butter jelly, my favorite.

What do you enjoy most about your job?
Dr. Cook: I love that dentistry combines art, science, and medicine. It s great when I can change something for someone and have it impact, not only their health, but their confidence as well. Dentistry can be l ife changing and it s very rewarding to see my patients smiling and happy.

How has the profession of dentistry changed over the years?
Dr. Cook: The digital revolution that is transforming the every aspect of our world is also impacting dentistry. Times are changing and so are most dental practices, which is very exciting to me because I love staying on top of new technology. Technological innovations have improved my patients experiences and, in many cases, resulted in better patient outcomes.
Our office now offers many technology driven treatments such as, same day crowns. We no longer have to send out our crowns, we can now make our own. We are able to digitally scan and design a crown, then mill and hand paint it to perfection. sounds like a scene in Star Trek, right?

Our patients now have the luxury to walk out of the office with a brand new crown in one visit. No more temporaries and secondary appointments. Furthermore, we now offer digital CT scans, guided implant placements, teeth in a day, and implant supported hybrids. The future of technology in dentistry is wide open, and it s going to be amazing!

What are some common misconceptions that people have about the work you do?
Dr. Cook: "Aha, where do I start?! Most people hate the dentist, don't they? That makes me very unpopular, LOL. But once we get past "fear of the dentist," the most common misconception is mainly money. The truth is that some people have had negative money experiences with other dentists(wether it be a private practice or a franchise.) We understand, and we take time to make sure that they understand their treatment plan.We break it down into digestible chunks. It's very gratifying to gain their trust because ultimately, our goal is to better serve them.

What are some of the challenges you've faced during Covid-19 and how have you overcome these challenges?
Dr. Cook: No doubt that Covid-19 has been a challenge for every business. Here, in our office, we have always adhered to higher standards. Now we have amplified our sanitation measures and have added additional equipment to keep our patients even safer. Dental procedures are especially challenging because many involve the use of high-pressure sprays of water and air that could disperse viruscontaining aerosols from a patient into the treatment room. I know people worry about aerosols, which is why I have installed a HEPA filtration system to keep the air cleansed and moving. PPE gear is mandatory in our office, and social distancing is non-negotiable. Our front door has a 'do not enter without a mask' sign, and our waiting room has been re-arranged to accommodate social distancing.

In addition to all of that, I have already been vaccinated and so have some of my staff. We are taking every possible measure to protect our patients and our staff from this devastating virus.

We all appreciate the measures that you have taken to protect all of us, believe me. Where do you see yourself in the next ten years?
Dr. Cook: Hopefully working hard doing the same thing I'm doing now... My plans are to continue to serve my community until I retire. I'm very happy here. I hope to serve my community for many-many years to come.

AND JUST FOR FUN... Are you first in the office or last to leave?
Dr. Cook: I'm an early bird! I'm first one in, definitely!

Tea or coffee?
Dr. Cook: Coffee, I was never a coffee drinker till I met my wife. She's a nurse and evidently, Nurses love coffee.

Elevator or stairs?
Dr. Cook: STAIRS

Out after work or straight home to the couch?
Dr. Cook: Home to the couch! Sometimes, it's exercise at home-then couch. But definitely home. I don't feel the need to gather in large groups, especially during this pandemic. If I do go out… it's usually fishing, crabbing, or building home projects.

Thank you, Dr. Cook. It's been a pleasure visiting your friendly office, you've given us great insight. I know that iCare Magazine has featured your office many times before, and I hope that we will visit again soon.

Dr. Cook: It's been my pleasure, really. I love showing off my new projects and I'm always excited to talk about dentistry. Stay healthy and safe.

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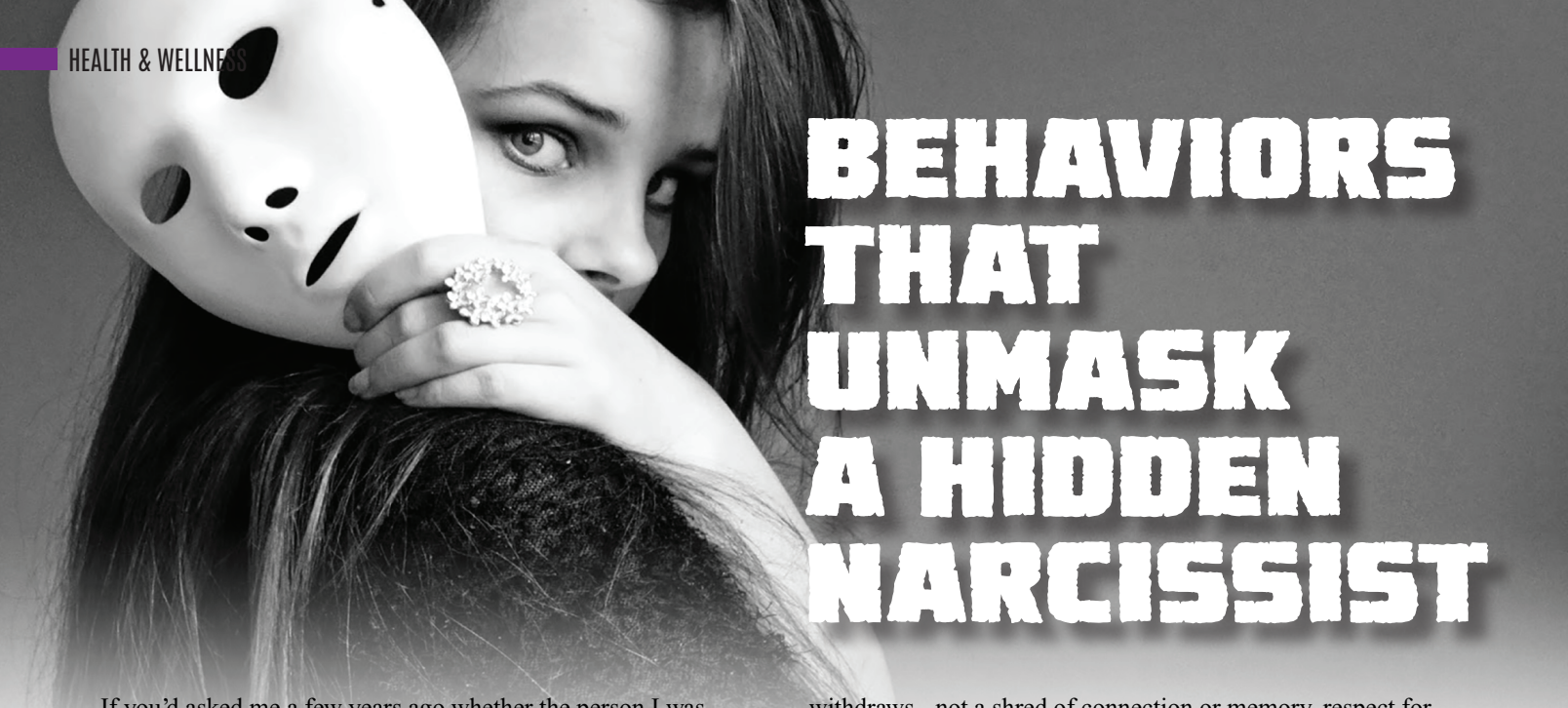

BEHAVIORS THAT UNMASK A HIDDEN NARCISSIST

If you'd asked me a few years ago whether the person I was involved with was a narcissist, I would have answered "absolutely not." He had none of the hallmarks that make it relatively easy for a layperson to spot a narcissist - the grandiosity, the need to be the center of attention, the haughty or overbearing remarks and competitiveness. He didn't display the preening, the need to manipulate, or, of course, the lack of empathy. He didn't appear to fit any of those definitions; in fact, if anything, he was quiet and not that into socializing, intent on not drawing attention to himself. He was insouciant about his appearance except in professional situations, and relatively laid-back. He was a thoughtful giver of gifts, willing to accommodate to my needs and - for me, at least - perhaps a bit too happy being by himself and away from the company of others. Does that sound like a narcissist to you? It didn't to me.

He had other flaws I didn't know about and discovered, none of which flashed a neon billboard that said NARCISSIST.

What I didn't understand at the time and do now is that the narcissist shows his true colors in conflict. That point is brought out with clarity by two new books on the subject, Re-thinking Narcissism by Dr. Craig Malkin and The Narcissist You Know by Dr. Joseph Burgo, and borne out by my own personal experience. Both of these authors take the position that the narcissist is, in fact, emotionally wounded. The behaviors he or she evinces are efforts to disguise or assuage the pain of that wounded self.

It's in conflict - when even the healthiest among us becomes defensive and self-protective - that the narcissist reveals him or herself in fullness. They fully expose their lack of empathy -the cornerstone of the narcissist - because when the narcissist feels threatened, winning or succeeding to protect him or herself is all that matters, not consequences. A narcissist's focus and determination to win at any cost underscore the shallow nature of their emotional connections - to you and to all others.

What kind of conflict shows the narcissist's true stripes? The answer is all and any, ranging from the petty tiff to divorce court. If it's the latter, abandon all hope of a reasonable negotiation or mediation; the true narcissist does neither. To borrow a term from the military, the narcissist's policy is scorched earth, destroying everything and leaving nothing behind as he or she advances or withdraws - not a shred of connection or memory, respect for past connections, relationships, or the welfare of others involved in the conflict. The narcissist's willingness to lie is nothing short of extraordinary and he or she will be completely unconcerned whether someone finds those lies out or not. It's lack of empathy on steroids or, to put it better, aggrandized and entitled. The motto of the narcissist? "What you think of me is none of my business," and he or she really means it.

If lack of empathy is one of the narcissist's key characteristics, I think we often misunderstand it. Some of the difficulty may have to do with distinguishing fully between sympathy and empathy. When we are sympathetic, we connect largely through intellectual understanding and feel badly about the situation in which a person finds him or herself. Empathy is an emotional response in which we literally feel another's pain as opposed to understanding his or her pain in the abstract. The truth is that most of us are not consistently empathic, nor are we equally skilled at this most important trait.

So what, precisely, makes the narcissist different?

The answer is his or her utter separateness. It's not simply that he or she doesn't feel for others and their pain; it's that the level of connection, of attunement, is utterly foreign. Since you can be sympathetic on a very superficial level (writing a check and contributing to charity; being helpful by dropping off your neighbor's dry cleaning; recommending your attorney to the guy who needs one), many narcissists appear quite sympathetic because they like looking good in the eyes of others. More important, they like reassuring themselves that they're nice guys or gals. Empathy is another matter entirely.

Here are four behaviors that might tip you off to the real personality you're dealing with:

1. Plays emotional "hot potato"

Kudos to Craig Malkin for giving this a name and for singling it out as one of the narcissist's behaviors. Malkin identifies "hot potato" as a form of projection, as in the following scenario: You try talking to your partner about his dismissiveness and lack of connection and he responds by saying that he's not dismissive but he's just not willing to respond to your anger and constant

continued page 20

I lost 35 pounds cont.

I haven't been counting macros, but I have been trying to eat at least 1.5 grams of protein per kilogram of my bodyweight every day, and it hasn't been even remotely painful, as there are lots of delicious ways to get your protein in (Greek yogurt, I'm looking at you).

4. Don't fear fats — they'll satisfy and keep you full.

We're often told to eat complex carbs like whole-grain pasta and brown bread for slow-release energy and to keep us full between meals, but if you don't ensure each meal has some fat too, you won't be satiated and will be craving something else shortly after.

What's more, eating fats are essential to our overall health.

"All macronutrients - carbs, protein, and fats - should be included as a part of a healthy and balanced diet, with some proteins and fats being essential to eat as without them our bodily simply couldn't function. Essential amino acids as well as fatty acids need to be eaten as they cannot be made within the body," Ludlam-Raine said.

"Fats in particular are essential in the diet as they help with hormonal function, vitamin absorption - A, D, E, K - and help to keep our hearts and blood vessels healthy.

"The predominant type of fat in our diet should be unsaturated, which is found in vegetables such as olive oil, rapeseed oil, avocados, nuts, and seeds, as well as oily fish."

5. Cutting down on booze will make a huge difference.

While I've never had a drinking problem, London is a city that revolves around booze, so if you're a sociable person you can find yourself drinking a lot just by being out and about. That was my life for a long time.

I did "Dry January" - going sober for the first month of the year - and felt so much better that I've drastically cut down my drinking since, and I have no doubt it's helped me lose weight, not just because alcohol is so incredibly high in calories but because you always tend to eat more energy-dense foods both while drinking and the next day when you're feeling somewhat worse for wear.

What's more, drinking significantly less has definitely helped me get stronger and fitter. You don't need to give up alcohol altogether if you want to lose weight, because if you enjoy a drink, that's never going to be a sustainable way to live. But if you can cut down, it'll help a lot.

6. The number on the scale means very little.

We all talk about "weight loss" and many of us have been conditioned to live and die by the scale. But, realistically, we should be aiming for "fat loss," and the scale can't measure that (even high-tech scales which claim to measure body fat percentages aren't considered to be entirely reliable).

For women in particular, the number on the scale can vary wildly depending on where you are in your menstrual cycle, when you last ate, and how big or salty that meal was (salt makes your body retain water), when you last went to the bathroom, and other factors.

You also have to remember that if you're putting on muscle, that affects your weight too.

I've learned to detach myself from the number on the scale, seeing it as just one measurement of data and nothing more. Whether it's gone up or down no longer affects my day, it merely allows me to see a general trend over months.

continued on page 21

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Narcissist cont.

complaints. The reality is that what you are saying is irritating the daylights of him - his jaw muscles are working and he's on his way to being really frosted - but rather than own those feelings, he assigns them to you. (This explanation aligns with Malkin's view that keeping the inner wound hidden is one of the narcissist's primary motivations.) It's entirely possible, of course, that if this continues, you will feel angry even if you didn't start out feeling that way. Playing hot potato permits the narcissist to gain the upper hand.

Since the narcissist isn't actually interested in what you feel or think - or making things better between you, for that matter - the game of hot potato will work to your disadvantage, especially if you care about him or her. You will probably feel guilty - "He wasn't wrong, I was angry - until the moment in time when you have an epiphany and finally get it.

I'd like to add a personal observation about the game of emotional hot potato: They can play consciously to manipulate you but it can also be unconscious behavior on the narcissist's part. In any case, what emerges from hot potato is the narcissist's vision of what really happened and it will all boil down to one basic theme: It's always your fault and never his or hers. The inability and unwillingness to take responsibility for actions and words under any circumstances are also narcissistic hallmarks.

2. Withdraws and then attacks if a demand is made

Some have described demand/withdraw as the most toxic of relationship patterns for good reason: It's part of a downward spiral that often ends in the failure of the relationship. You don't need a narcissist in the dyad, by the way, to have the pattern take over. Essentially, what happens is that one person (usually the woman, but not always) makes a demand for some issue to be fixed or addressed and the other partner withdraws physically and emotionally - stonewalling, folding his arms, etc. The pattern is particularly toxic because escalation is built into it - needs unanswered, the person demanding will become increasingly frustrated and usually louder. Of course, this simply means the person withdrawing will increase his efforts. Both parties feel aggrieved and put upon.

The narcissist's habit of playing hot potato means that, put in the withdraw position, he or she will either withdraw or become incredibly aggressive - essentially blaming his or her partner for making the demand in the first place, casting it as sign of his or her flawed nature, etc. That's hot potato combined with a classic toxic pattern. It not only throws the partner off, but, again, makes her more open to being manipulated into thinking that it's all her fault. (Again, feel free to change up the genders in the description; female narcissists act the same way.)

3. Vindictive to the max

According to Joseph Burgo, this is actually a narcissistic type. To be honest, it was his description that clued me into the fact that the person I'd married was a narcissist after all. Forget meeting in the middle, settling your differences or, if you're unlucky enough to be in a situation where you need an attorney, mediating; the vindictive narcissist will do none of the above. Lies are the arrows in the narcissist's quiver, and it often doesn't matter how outrageous

they are. Perhaps most tellingly, the narcissist seeks to portray him or herself as a victim of injustice - not as a seeker of revenge or someone motivated to win - regardless of the circumstances. As Burgo writes:

"Because of his distorted, defensive relationship to reality, the Extreme Narcissist often believes the lies he tells, both to himself and other people. He doesn't see himself as a liar but rather as an embittered defender of the 'truth' as he has come to see it."

As Burgo points out (and as I can personally attest), the vindictive narcissist may proceed sounding reasonable, despite the fact that everything he or she says is a lie. This person will do what he or she can to impugn you, spread rumors about you, attack your reputation, or whatever else comes to hand. It doesn't matter that none of it is true. That makes it hard fighting her or him - in an office, a community, in a family, or especially in a court of law. The usual rules of decent behavior simply do not exist.

The vindictive narcissist's hustle often takes in otherwise capable and intelligent people, including attorneys and judges. Most of us are hesitant to believe that every word an individual utters is an outright lie, especially if it is easily discovered. But that only works in the narcissist's favor: It's his words against yours, after all, and he doesn't mind grandstanding.

4. Indifferent to emotional outcomes

In my experience - as a person who has lived more than six decades but isn't a psychologist or a therapist - most people want to come out of combative situations losing as few of their personal connections and relationships as possible. They want to feel that they have behaved reasonably well and fairly under the circumstances. That's one reason mediation works but that's not true of the vindictive narcissist, who could care less. If he (or she) ends up with scorched earth, that's no big deal. He will see destroyed relationships as a necessary cost of getting what he deserves.

Of course, discovering that the person you're dealing with may be a narcissist after all doesn't help other than to arm you with knowledge as you think about and analyze his or her behavior. Knowing how the person responds in conflict will not only help you prepare and strategize, but help prepare you for the sorry truth. There's probably no reasonable way to stop the merry-go-round because exhausting you (and your resources, for that matter) is part of the narcissist's scorched earth policy.

It's no wonder that recovering from conflict with a narcissist is so hard, frustrating, and sometimes embittering. ◆

I lost 35 pounds cont.

Instead of obsessing over the scale, take progress photos every month and log your body measurements using a tape measure.

7. Overall calorie deficit is what it comes down to, but it doesn't need to be drastic.

Despite all the fad diets we're bombarded with wherever we look, ultimately losing weight comes down to being in an energy deficit.

But you need to make sure that isn't too drastic.

There are two reasons for that. First, if you cut your calories too low, your body will start burning your existing muscle as well as your fat, which isn't what you want.

Then there's the fact that living off 1,200 calories a day and being hungry all the time is horrible and unsustainable.

"Calories are king when it comes to weight loss, but it's not quite as simple as 'eat as few as possible,' as our bodies don't like to go without and will fight back by either ramping up appetite, which could lead to a binge, or by causing you to feel lethargic, which will cause you to burn fewer calories as you do less," Ludlam-Raine said.

"A moderate daily deficit of 300 to 600 calories (created through a reduction in calories eaten and in addition to burning more through movement) is sufficient to burn 1/2 to 1 pound of body fat a week initially."

The only way you'll make lasting change is if you enjoy your lifestyle while you're losing weight. Just try to make sure you're eating a little bit less than you were before, the pounds will come off, and you won't hate your life in the process. ◆

10 ways cont.

6. Step Back

This may seem to contradict #5 a bit, but it's important to remember that this is all about striking a balance. If a child feels like she's constantly under surveillance, she may be less likely to take risks, which would diminish her creativity. If you encourage autonomy, you'll see your child's imagination bloom. The next time your child is engaged in quiet play, drawing, or writing, refrain from jumping in with a comment like "what are you drawing?" This will only pull him out the zone. Instead, make yourself a cup of coffee and enjoy a moment to yourself!

7. Set aside creativity time

This can be hard, especially for working parents, but children need unstructured time to imagine, build, experiment, and explore. It could be half an hour after dinner, drawing time in bed before reading a book, or an hour of imaginative play every weekend. Look at your schedule and make sure that there's time set aside for this.

8. Get Back to the Basics

Toys that beep and flash are fun, and definitely have their place, but they don't build creative thinkers the way sticks, tubes, blocks, dolls, office supplies, sand, and water do. Spend some time watching your child play and take a quick inventory of your toys. What do they play with the most? What objects do they pull into imaginative play? Can you swap a close-ended toy (for example, a toy with buttons that has one or two functions) with an open-ended toy (like blocks that encourage free play)? This post by Amy Anderson for SimpleKids is full of great ideas: Creative Pretend Play Props and Ideas

9. Minimize Screen Time

It can be hard for some families to remove screen time altogether, but we can all make an effort to spend less time in front of the screen. Time spent watching videos or cartoons could be spent drawing, building a city out of blocks, or serving up play dough cupcakes. What could you do to reduce screen time?

10. What other ideas do you have for raising creative kids?

There are so many ways to encourage a child's creativity, and I'd love to hear what works for YOU! What would you add as the #10 way to raise creative kids? ◆

BRAIN GAMES FOR SENIORS

Aging is different for everyone. In fact, the appearance of age is so different from person to person that it is nearly impossible to tell someone's age just by looking at them. One thing we all have in common as we get older is that our brains begin to change in ways that may make it more difficult to learn and retain new information. These changes are invisible and may be very hard to detect, but there are things you can do to help yourself or a loved one.

DOCTOR KNOWS BEST

The very first and most important thing is to maintain an open and honest conversation with your doctor and family members. Even as our bodies remain healthy, it is entirely possible to begin noticing small changes in the way you remember things or the way you are able to form thoughts or speak. The more honest you are with your doctor and yourself, the more likely you are to receive the treatment and attention you need to address these concerns from a medical standpoint. The opinion of your doctor will also be important in helping recognize issues that are not a normal part of aging, like Alzheimer's disease.

FEED YOUR BRAIN

Beyond medical treatment and advice, forming or maintaining healthy lifestyle habits is one of the most important things you can do to stay mentally sharp. Exercise is an obvious choice for staying in shape physically, but a lesser known benefit is that it has a very positive effect on brain health as well. Aging sometimes causes blood flow in the brain to decrease. Regularly raising your heart rate through aerobic exercise has been shown to help slow this process and can help reform some of the connections between neurons (cells) in our brains.

Nourishing your body and mind with the right foods is another important factor. High blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity plague a large percentage of the American population these days. Paying attention to overall nutrition - balancing your diet with whole grains, nuts, fresh veggies and fruits will go a very long way to feeding a healthy brain.

GAME ON!

You read it right. Playing games and regularly challenging yourself through mental and visual puzzles can actually help keep you sharp. Several companies have developed fun and challenging games and activities to help users develop ways to remember information, distinguish sounds, and learn new things. The brain at any age is highly adaptable, which means that it will generally learn and do new things when asked.

It is very important to note that of these things will take the place of a doctor or medical professional when dealing with anything outside of the normal course of aging, but that doesn't mean that you shouldn't try everything you can to maintain a health brain. This may also be one of the only times you are told to play games to stay in shape! ◆

WHAT IS THE COST OF ASSISTED LIVING?

One of the first questions to emerge during the search for an assisted living community is how much it will cost. Many variables will factor into the total cost of assisted living, including the types and amount of services you choose, along with the assisted living facility's size and location.

In a recent report published by the National Center for Assisted Living, over 800,000 Americans live in assisted living facilities. Over half of them are 85 years of age or older and require help with at least some of the activities of daily living (ADLs).

The average cost for these residents throughout the country is approximately $4,300 per month or $48,000 annually, according to the Genworth 2020 Cost of Care Survey. The individual states reveal a wide range of monthly costs from under $3,000 to just short of $6,000.

However, before looking at the costs in specific states, here are a few things to consider and perhaps some misconceptions to clear up:

Living at Home Will Not Always Be Less Expensive Than Assisted Living

Given a choice, many seniors would prefer to live independently. And with technologies to monitor them, many can live at home safely. But the debate on the cost of living at home versus at an assisted living facility is often one-sided. It fails to consider the entire collection of services a facility can offer.

An older adult's cost to live at home goes well beyond the mortgage, rent, or utility payments. Numerous other essentials for senior care are often overlooked when comparing prices. For instance, while living at home may give an aging parent or loved one a feeling of independence, it could also limit opportunities for daily activities and social interactions.

Considering the many services that assisted living facilities offer, the cost of assisted living is often comparable to the cost of living at home. The services provided at the facility would have to be provided by family members or professional caregivers.

continued page 25

4 WAYS TO SPEND QUALITY TIME WITH YOUR ELDERS

We all have elders in our lives, whether they're parents, grandparents, or beloved coaches and teachers. Our time with these people usually isn't as long as we'd like, making it important to spend as much quality time with them as possible. If you're not sure how to spend time with your elderly loved ones, never fear. We've put together a list of five fun ways to spend quality time with your elders.

Talk to them.

This one is simple, but often overlooked. Many elders just want someone to talk to. This is especially true if they live in a care home. They often don't get as many visitors as they'd like, so it is our responsibility to visit. Set aside at least one hour per week to visit your elder and talk to them. This is the most important activity, and it takes a relatively small amount of time.

Once you have set aside some time, make sure to pick discussion topics that interest your elderly relative. Remember that all of them have lived full lives and have a lot to talk about. If you want, bring a voice recorder and document his/her stories for posterity.

Participate in quiet activities.

There are a lot of activities that your elders can take part in. Any physically strenuous activities are not advisable, but there are quiet activities you can both enjoy. These include, but are not limited to:

- Scrapbooking
- Bird watching
- Going for a drive
- Visiting favorite locations
- Playing a board game
- Reading old documents
- Watching a movie
- Preparing a meal together

Most elders are capable of participating in and enjoying these activities. Even if you do a lot of the work, they'll enjoy tagging along and enjoying the company.

Look through photo albums.

This activity goes hand in hand with the previous two, but is important enough to list here. Looking through old photo albums is a popular activity for many elders. It gives them an opportunity to look back through their lives and remember the wonderful times, as well as the hardships they overcame.

It can also be a learning experience for you. A book of pictures is often a catalyst for many great stories. You can learn much from your elders, and they will certainly love to share their wisdom with you.

Go outside.

Venturing outside is important. If your elder is living in a care home, or if you are caring for them yourself, they might not see as much time outdoors as they should. Sun and fresh air is good for their health, and they'll welcome the opportunity to go outside if they're usually inside for long periods of time.

Some of the activities listed above involve going outside. Pick one of them and do it with your elder. If that isn't possible, just take some time to sit outside with them. They will appreciate it. ◆

Assisted living cont.

Keeping in mind that social and fitness activities, both of which are routinely offered in assisted living communities, the costs could be relatively equal.

Here are five states with the lowest cost of assisted living and five with the highest.

LOWEST COSTING STATES

State	Cost Per Day	Monthly	Annually
Missouri	$83	$2,537	$30,438
Oklahoma	$92	$2,803	$33,630
Georgia	$94	$2,850	$34,200
Alabama	$95	$2,900	$34,800
Utah	$97	$2,950	$35,400

HIGHEST COSTING STATES

State	Cost Per Day	Monthly	Annually
Alaska	$189	$5,750	$69,000
Massachusetts	$180	$5,463	$65,550
Delaware	$176	$5,368	$64,416
Maine	$164	$4,991	$59,892
New Jersey	$163	$4,950	$59,400

Living Alone Is Not the Only Way to Remain Independent
Maintaining independence is important to many people as they get older. It's not surprising that a vast majority of older adults say they want to age in place. However, twenty percent of adults 85 or older report that they need help or are getting help with activities of daily living (ADLs). Here's how it breaks down:

- **64% need help bathing**
- **57% need help walking**
- **48% need help getting dressed**
- **40% need help with toileting**
- **29% need assistance transferring to and from bed**
- **19% need help to feed themselves**

For those older adults who require help with the ADLs, an assisted living community could be the most practical way to remain as independent as possible.

Medicaid May Help Cover the Cost of Assisted Living, but Medicare Will Not

Most residents in an assisted living community pay for their care from their resources or the coverage provided by long-term care insurance. Quite a few states offer home and community-based waiver programs to help low-income residents afford assisted living. Check your state's Medicaid website and directory for more information.

Although your health insurance and prescription coverage will continue, Medicare typically does not pay for assisted living. ◆

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5 Home Projects You Can Do In A Weekend

Right now is the perfect time to tackle some projects around the house. From renovations you can complete in one weekend to cleaning tips for every room

Now is the perfect time to knock projects off your list that you may have been putting off to create a relaxing, peaceful oasis for your family to enjoy.

If you're nervous about D.I.Y. repairs or unsure of what you can do to spruce up your home without diving into a month-long reno project, we totally understand. Home projects can be costly and time-consuming — but they also don't have to be. Today, we're sharing some tips and tricks for completing easy home improvement projects you can in just a weekend.

Refresh your walls with paint

Painting your walls can seem like a daunting task, but with a few handy tools and a little guidance, you can get it done in a flash. It's also one of the most cost effective ways to transform a space.

Start by ensuring you have the right tools and products. You'll need painter's tape, drop cloths, rollers, a set of paint brushes and of course, primer, sandpaper and of course paint.

Prep your walls first and start by painting the edges with a chip brush. Use a roller for the bulk of the wall, painting in a zigzag pattern to achieve even coverage. Paint the trim last and ensure you make great use of that painter's tape for sharp, clean edges.

Transform kitchen cabinets with shiny new hardware

Knobs and handles are the small details that can make a world of difference. Replace dated pulls with a modern rose gold arch pull in one afternoon. Make this project super easy by measuring and buying pulls that have the same centre to centre distance as your previous pulls. This way, you can avoid having to fill in and drill new holes. All you need for this project is a screwdriver and your fancy new hardware. If you live in a small space, we recommend purchasing a tool that has multiple bits.

Update old school faucets

Sometimes you need to jump head first into a home

improvement project to realize you've been psyching yourself out the whole time. Replacing a faucet doesn't require the services of a plumber and is a task that will have a major impact on the look and feel of your kitchen or bathroom.

Make sure to have an adjustable wrench on hand, as this will be your main tool.

The easiest way to replace your faucet is by picking one that has a similar configuration to your current faucet. Start by shutting off the water supply and disconnecting the water lines using a wrench. Your next move is to remove the previous mounting hardware and anchor your new faucet. Follow instructions to reconnect to your water supply lines as directed.

Refresh your bathroom caulking

Caulking around your tub and sinks can start looking discoloured and moldy fairly quickly due to its proximity to water. Luckily, caulking is a home improvement project that even beginners can easily accomplish.

For this D.I.Y. project, you'll need a caulking gun, a caulk removal tool, painter's tape, cleaning rags and the right type of caulk. Silicone caulk is typically used for wet areas and vinyl latex caulk is preferred for dry areas. GE Kitchen & Bath Silicone II is a great choice for a durable silicone caulk that's mold and fray resistant.

Prep your area by thoroughly removing old caulk and cleaning the area with a rag soaked in rubbing alcohol. Apply two strips of painter's tape to either side of where you want to deposit the caulk. Cut the tip of the nozzle to match the space you created and apply a fresh bead of caulk. Your last step is to wet your finger and run your hand across the caulk to smooth it down. Remove the painter's tape while the caulk is still damp.

Add a photo wall

Turn a plain wall into a point of interest with a photo gallery wall. Start by figuring out the placement beforehand and marking where you want them each photo or picture hung. It's important to make use of a level at this stage so you don't wind up with a fun house wall.

Believe it or not, you can hang a photo wall without any tools or wall hooks. For larger photos, use Command Large Picture Hanging Strips Value Pack and for light or medium photos, use Command Medium Picture Hanging Strips. Command strips are ideal for those who aren't confident with tools or if you simply don't want to puncture your walls. ◆

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9 MARKETING STRATEGIES TO BOOST YOUR BUSINESS GROWTH IN 2021

Once you have established your business idea and market, you need to find the right digital marketing strategy to attract potential customers and convert them. A powerful marketing strategy should encompass your business values, value proposition, and critical demographics, among other crucial elements. It should also take advantage of both online and offline strategies. Below are 15 marketing strategies to boost your business's growth in 2021.

1. Google My Business

Google My Business is a platform by Google where consumers can search for businesses through Google Search and Maps. This platform is free and should be a part of your digital marketing strategy as it helps you manage your profile across the Google platform. With this profile, your company can take advantage of the Google Business Listing and post crucial information such as your physical location, operating hours, and contacts.

Just like on a social media platform, you can share business photos and videos. The platform also has Insights that you can use to know how people find your business online and where they come from. You can also include attributes such as a URL to your website, Wi-Fi availability, or wheelchair access into your business.

2. Blogging

Creating informative content for your leads and clients is an essential part of marketing. Blogging is a vital part of any content marketing strategy with research showing that marketers who use blogs receive 67% more leads than those who do not. More importantly, marketers that put out valuable content are 13 times more likely to receive positive ROI.

A business blog allows you to add your personality to the material you roll out. Blogs also form part of other digital marketing tactics because they provide content that leads back to your site. As you generate backlinks to your blog, you increase the traffic to your website.

3. Social media marketing strategies

Social platforms contribute highly to your overall digital marketing strategy because you can grow your fan base and increase your sales. You can advertise your new products, share information, and communicate directly with your customers on a social media account, and save time using handy tools to manage all your social media accounts. In this case, a social media account serves as a marketing tool and a sales platform.

Popular platforms include: Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Reddit. The platforms you choose to include in your social media marketing strategies depend on your target audience. If your marketing is photography-based, Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest should be part of your social media marketing strategies. However, if your digital marketing strategy is blog-based, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Reddit will work better.

Facebook is the undefeated king, with more than 2 billion monthly users. Using Facebook Ads is an excellent option for social media marketing because you can target your ads for a specific audience. Instagram follows with 500 million monthly users, and social engagement rates 58% higher than Facebook.

4. Search engine optimization

Optimizing the content shared on your website, blog, or YouTube channel helps search engines direct your content towards a user's search result page. SEO enables you to grow organic traffic for your website and rank higher up on search results. There are three types of SEO you should focus on:

On-page SEO focuses on the use of keywords, long tail keywords, titles, metatags, SEO-friendly URLs, title modifiers, among other page elements.

Off-page SEO concentrates on the backlinks linking to your website. Guest blogging is an effective way to create backlinks for your blog and improve your search engine rankings.

Technical SEO refers to the act of improving the technical aspects of your website to improve its rankings on a search engine. Search engines crawl the web and present websites based on their ease of use to a user. Therefore, optimizing your website to become crawlable, fast, and secure will improve your marketing strategy.

5. Email marketing

An email marketing campaign is crucial to your cold outreach marketing strategy. Since consumers receive several emails per day from marketers, you should create a plan that stands out from the rest

and convert your leads into customers. First, the emails should be personalized for every recipient and have a responsive design that is legible on both desktops and mobile devices.

Thanks to online tools, you can create an effective email drip campaign and send emails to hundreds with ease. With the right tools, you can access analytics, and find out how many people subscribe to your email list, read your emails or unsubscribe.

6. Sales productivity tools

Marketing goes hand-in-hand with sales productivity tools to reduce downtime and increase efficiency. Different tools serve various purposes from enabling video calls, conferencing, and webinars, lead generation, email outreach, and CRM. An example of a sales engagement platform (SEP) is Salesforce which is crucial for email tracking and CRM. The purpose of SEPs is to help your sales team deliver high-quality interactions and consequently, market your band.

However, optimizing your sales productivity tools should come with meticulous calculations. You can achieve this will a sales productivity formula. Though no constant formula exists to measure your sales productivity, there are several measurements you can use to verify if your b2b marketing strategies are working.

For example, conversion rates are an excellent measure for your sales productivity formula. Knowing your conversion rates, you can identify the marketing strategies that are generating your best leads and those that need more work or abandoning. Lastly, remember to focus on your salesforce forecasting to estimate your future sales. The best sales forecasting software will help you redirect future resources to generate more revenue.

7. Video marketing

Video is a fast and effective way to share content with your audience. It shows your clients exactly what your product can do for their business. Research by the Aberdeen Group shows that companies that use video for their marketing strategy experience an annual 49% growth in revenue compared to those without video. The results are for both B2C and B2B marketing strategies.

As video grows into an essential component of content marketing strategy, your business should also take advantage. Other than YouTube, platforms such as Drift video now accommodate B2B video marketing strategies by supporting video and chats at the same time.

8. Search engine marketing

After growing your organic traffic through SEO, you can invest in search engine marketing (SEM). With 35% of product searches happening on Google, it is crucial to leverage search engines to show up on the results page. Before investing in a Google Ad campaign, ensure you have the right SEM tools to guide you. Some of the best SEM tools are SEMRush, Google Trends, Google Ads Keyword Planner, and Spyfu.

9. Podcasts

Podcasts are a great way to gain insight into marketing strategies, but to also roll out information on your business's products. The content you or a business representative feature in a podcast is another way to explain the solutions you provide. The best part about contributing to a podcast is that you take advantage of other people's audiences while still marketing your business. You also receive verification from different audiences and establish your online authority. ◆

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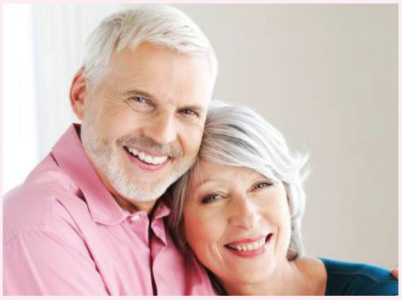

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from the Editor cont.

IMPOSSIBLE. GOD OUR ONLY PERFECT FATHER, WON'T LEAVE US HIS KIDS ESTRANGED IN ANY HUMAN SITUATION. HE IS RIGHT THERE TO LOVE, TO PROTECT, TO DELIVER AND TO GUIDE. AND HE'S GOT ALL THE POWER NEEDED…

For You made the parts inside me. You put me together inside my mother. I will give thanks to You, for the greatness of the way I was made brings fear. Your works are great and my soul knows it very well. My bones were not hidden from You when I was made in secret and put together with care in the deep part of the earth. Your eyes saw me before I was put together. And all the days of my life were written in Your book before any of them came to be.

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT. THAT MAY SOUND LIKE SOMEBODY'S ADVERTISEMENT, BUT WITH GOD ALL IS POSSIBLE. HE KNOWS ALL THE RIGHT MOVES TO GET US FROM ANY SITUATION TO OUR DESTINATION. WITH HIM WE ALL CAN BE MORE THAN OVERCOMERS.

WHAT IS THE USE OF RUNNING? HE KNOWS US INSIDE AND OUT BETTER THAN WE KNOW OURSELVES.

WE ARE ALL SEALED WITH "HAND MADE BY GOD" WE GOT HIS APPROVAL. DARE TO BE ALL YOU ARE MEANT TO BE AND DO ALL YOU ARE PREDESIGN TO DO. THAT IS FULLFILLMENT!

Your thoughts are of great worth to me, O God. How many there are! If I could number them, there would be more than the sand. When I awake, I am still with You.

AS WE GET CLOSER AND CLOSER TO HIM, WE BECOME BOLDER AS WELL. (I DIDN'T SAY PERFECT BUT CLOSER)

Look through me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. See if there is any sinful way in me and lead me in the way that lasts forever.

THIS IS MY PRAYER FOR 2021. I HOPE YOU WILL MAKE IT YOURS AS WELL.

If you don't know Him as your Father start today, He is with you and around you, waiting for your acceptance…Let's Pray Aloud!

Lord, I do believe that Jesus of Nazareth took my place in the Cross. Lord, I am sorry for all my sins against you and against my own life, please forgive me. I believe Jesus was raised on the third day for my justification. Jesus, I receive you as my Lord and Savior. Your Holy blood cleanses me right now and God gives me a new heart and eternal life. Now my name is written in the book of life, guaranteed by the following written law:

"That if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" *Romans 10:9-10*

If you made this prayer, email me at: icarepublications@gmail.com.

I would love to share your joy and send you material for balanced growth in the grace of the Lord. Also, send this letter to anyone you know as a testimony of your faith.

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from the Mayor cont.

In spite of the global pandemic and local tragedies, good things continued to happen in Port St. Lucie in 2020, with economic development being a real highlight especially under the circumstances. If you missed my State of the City Address in late January, I encourage you to watch it at www.cityofpsl.com. It highlights many of those good things and provides a big picture update on PSL entitled "The State of Port St. Lucie--Resilient and Still Growing in the Face of Historic Challenges and Generational Opportunities".

Wishing you and our community a healthy and prosperous 2021.

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