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Chatter, Chatter
Understanding Incessant Talking

The Lazy Spouse
How to Get Your Partner to Help Out More

Power Parenting the ADHD Kid
The New Approach to ADHD Parenting

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Featured Article

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Greetings,

The inevitability of change is one of the only constants in life. As the saying goes, the only people who like change are busy cashiers and wet babies. Often, we find change disorienting and the source of anxiety.

Our resistance to change is evident in our thoughts such as “change is too hard,” “no change is a good change,” “if it ain’t broke don’t fix it,” or “we’re ok with the way things are.” These thoughts keep us stuck in bad habits; self-defeating beliefs; and old ways of doing things – they keep the door to “possibility” locked.

We’re proud to bring you this issue with a focus on coping with change – changing our thoughts, our beliefs about ourselves, our perspective, and even our circumstances. The tools presented in these articles will help you unlock that door and show you how to make a successful transformation in any area of life.

While it’s often difficult to see change in a positive light, change does provide us an opportunity for growth – and the greater the change, the greater the growth. When we begin to see change in a positive way, we become more willing to step into the unfamiliar. And along with the skills we’ll learn in these pages, we need only to believe that closing one door will open a better door, or multiple doors – doors leading to more than we could have dreamed for.

What do you want to change? A bad habit? A dysfunctional relationship? A belief that currently limits you? Go ahead – open the pages of this issue and step into an exciting world of change.

Blessings to each and every one of you!

J. Carol Pereyra
Editor in Chief
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Do you know someone addicted to talking? Or perhaps, is it you who blabbers on and on? And we’re not talking about the non-stop lively conversation we all sometimes enjoy – we’re referring to the kind of chatter that makes you want to jump up and shout: “Help! He’s talking and He can’t shut up!”

Incessant talking can also be a compulsion. It is usually a sign that someone is nervous, or unsure of themselves or a situation. Someone who chatters compulsively is often aware of his or her excessive or inappropriate talking – but feels compelled to keep it up anyway.

There is an old joke about people who talk a lot: "Do you know the 12-Step program for people who talk a lot? On and On Anon!" This joke recognizes the fact that incessant talking is a common addiction.

While incessant talking isn’t actually a “disorder” itself, it can certainly be a source of frustration, and nothing short of annoying to those in earshot. One common cause of non-stop talking is Adult ADHD (attention deficit hyperactive disorder). An adult with ADHD is often "on the go" or acts as if "driven by a motor." This may, but not always, include talking excessively. An incessant talker often has trouble focusing on one or two thoughts and has to process many things at once, leading to nonstop talking.

The most common and basic cause of any compulsive behavior is anxiety. A person engages in compulsive behavior not because he particularly wants to, but because he’s so anxious that he has to do something to get his mind off that anxiety. Until the compulsive talker comes to grips with whatever he or she doesn’t want to think about, the talking will continue.

For the excessive talker, silence and reflection are simply unacceptable. A pause in conversation is an emotional abyss into which they simply cannot help but throw themselves. Just as loud music or traffic noise can distract us from the task at hand, incessant chatter acts as a distraction from whatever thoughts might surface during a silent moment. Obsessive talkers need to
fill the quiet with auditory distraction, and the resulting avalanche of small talk can be excruciating to those unfortunate enough to be within earshot.

Incessant talking is often a way to connect with others when you feel alone and disconnected from yourself. Non-stop talking is about using others for attention and approval instead of giving oneself enough attention and approval. The talker is not actually offering anything to the listener. Instead, the talker, in going on and on with a monologue, is actually pulling energy from the listener. People who end up listening to a talkers rambling are often those with a “caretaker” personality, who are afraid to hurt the talker by disengaging, or by expressing their feelings of annoyance or boredom.

Talkers are often needy people who attempt to assuage their emptiness by trapping people into listening to them. For example, I've seen people telling a bank teller their life story, while the trapped teller doesn't know how to disengage without being impolite. The problem is that one of the reasons these people are without friends is that no one wants to be with them. It's draining to be at the other end of a needy person who uses talking as a way to fill themselves up.

**Healing Your Addiction to Talking**

If you are addicted to talking, perhaps you believe that you are being interesting, charming, cute or witty when you go on and on and on. However, you might reconsider this belief if you find that many people avoid you or get easily annoyed at you. Most people will not tell you the truth – that they feel tired, drained and trapped in your presence, and bored by your talking. Not wanting to offend you, they just stay away rather speak their truth. It's not that they don't like you – it's that they don't want to be used by you to fill up your emptiness.

**Practice Inner Bonding**

Have a dialogue, either out loud or in writing, with the part of you who so needs to be heard. In addition, practice imagining a loving spiritual presence holding you, loving you, listening to you and guiding you, until you no longer feel alone. You’ll soon discover that you can fill your own emptiness.

**Steps to Healing**

Imagine that you have a child within you who feels very alone. This child feels alone because you are not paying attention to him or her. Every time you trap someone into listening to you, it is as if you are handing this inner child away for adoption. You want someone else to attend to and approve of this child instead of you accepting this responsibility. The very fact of doing this is an inner abandonment and is creating the aloneness that is at the heart of all addictions. By expecting others to listen to you when you don't listen to yourself, you are giving your child within a message that he or she is not important to you.

When you do not take the time to attend to your own feelings and needs, you are creating inner neediness and emptiness. This inner emptiness is like a vacuum that attempts to suck caring from others. Yet no matter how often others do listen to you, it never really fills you. This is because only you can give your own inner child what he or she needs.

**Change Your Beliefs**

As an excessive talker, you may subconsciously believe that it is someone else's job to fill you, and that it's ok to trap others and use them to fill your self up emotionally. Instead, believe that you can fill yourself. Believe that it is loving to take care of your own inner child, your own feelings and your own needs. When you choose to take responsibility for meeting your own needs instead of abandoning yourself to others, you will never feel alone.

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**About the Author**

Margaret Paul, Ph.D., is a best-selling author of 8 books, including the life-changing *Do I Have To Give Up Me To Be Loved By You?*, Dr. Paul is the co-creator of *Inner Bonding*, a transformational six-step spiritual healing process. She is also a noted public speaker, workshop leader, chaplain, educator, and Inner Bonding facilitator. Visit her website at [www.innerbonding.com](http://www.innerbonding.com)

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**Don't cry over anyone who won't cry over you.**
Here's a fascinating secret about miracles: You can’t necessarily place an order for a miracle at will, but you can deliberately create the conditions — environment, atmosphere and attitude — that make miracles a thousand times more likely to occur.

Want to know how you can create a miracle-friendly world? By taking these practical steps, you will bring magic into your relationships, body, finances and more! Your ability to make miracles is in direct proportion to your willingness to:

1. **Tell yourself more truth about the situation you want to transform.** The more honest you are about where you're really at, the more personal power you have to realize your dreams. By aligning yourself accurately with what is real, you retrieve all of the life force you've invested in holding together false situations and relationships. This re-captured energy then attracts the goals you desire. In this universe what's congruent gets the energy. What's not congruent doesn't get the energy. Where aren't you being honest or accurate about some aspect of your life? What truth about your life do you need to acknowledge to yourself that would be liberating for you.

2. **Act “outside the box.”** All magic occurs beyond the boundaries of your current belief system. What obstacles lie between you and moving outside your "comfort zone?" Where could you let your vision for your life be more outrageous? More fun? More of what you really want?

3. **Withdraw from collective mass consciousness.** Step beyond general consensus to remove the limits of what's possible for you to have. Many people have changed society — and had fun — by doing "what couldn't be done." You can too. When you withdraw your energy field from the energy field of the collective agreement, you can create outside that agreement. Be "in the world, but not of it." Where in your life could you step a little further outside of mass consciousness thinking?
4. Use the Law of Attraction: Energize what you love with gratitude. Our magnetic field of energy is always (all ways) attracting exactly what we need to create our heart's desires. Discover the ancient wisdom of multiplying what you have with deep thankfulness. As you pour the vibration of appreciation into the love, health, prosperity and joy that you already have, this vibration will magnetize more of the same to you. It's the physics of the Universe. What aspects of your life could you right now be genuinely grateful for?

5. Experience “concrete, physical” reality as energy. When we choose to experience so-called "solid" things as the fields of energy that they actually are, these aspects of our reality become infinitely more malleable and flexible in responding to our intentions. Are you willing right now to be open to experiencing your body – and other people, conditions, animals, rocks, emotions – as an energy field (life force/flow dynamic) rather than as fixed, static, solid objects?

6. Reclaim your Personal Power. Are you energizing ideas and activities and maintaining relationships that no longer serve you? When you choose to invest in only relationships and situations that feed your dreams, you gain tremendous personal power. When you choose to call back your spirit from the people, ideas and activities that no longer serve you, you regain tremendous personal power. What are you tolerating, avoiding or denying in your life right now?

7. Relax your grip on your belief system. When you release your vise grip on the rigid, fixed beliefs you inherited from society, this leaves room for your beliefs to shift to the new, fresh, and wonderful, and opens the door for the miraculous to happen to you. What are your beliefs about how life operates? How important are these beliefs to your survival, identity, reputation (need for approval) and sense of worth? In what areas of your life could you right now relax your need to control the exact functioning of the people and events around you?

8. Build Your Chi – Your Internal Life Force Energy. Our free attention, time and energy are the lifeblood of our ability to create and attract what we desire in life. The more we consciously manage and become good stewards of these natural assets, the more we can build a reservoir and reserve of miracle-producing power. Where could you be more accessible to energy-giving situations and people? Where could you be more inaccessible to energy-draining situations and people? How can you naturally and easily "build your internal life force chi" through activities that are fun for you? What in your life are you not experiencing as an adventure?

9. Connect directly with Spirit. Your soul is in charge of your life! Where are you compromising, sacrificing or settling for something less than what you really want? Where could you invest your time, energy and attention that would really serve you?

"I've got rhythm. I've got sunshine. Yet, I feel like I should be asking for more."
Your spirit has been running the show from behind the stage curtain since the beginning of time. Open a direct line to the wonders, wisdom, support and guidance of your own brilliant soul plan. How do you mediate/pray? Is it as effective as you would like? Have you tried a moving meditation?

10. **Align your personality with your soul.** When you’re aligned with your true self, prosperity flows automatically with no effort. Align your everyday lifestyle with your soul vision and receive all the support, energy and love you need – and begin to enjoy the ride! What actions could you take that would bring your life more in accord with your life purpose? What changes could you make to be more authentic in your life?

11. **Allow yourself to receive from Spirit.** The primary joy and purpose of our spirit friends, like guardian angels and spirit guides, is to assist us to reach our life goals. Do you regularly ask for assistance, and let in love and energy from your other dimensional allies?

12. **Embrace your Shadow.** What you choose not to see, you can’t change. What weaknesses, faults, fears and shortcomings do you have – socially, physically, spiritually, romantically, financially, sexually? Are you willing to open up to your soul’s point of view on your so-called "dark side"?

13. **Hang with people who nurture you.** By your own pre-arranged conscious design, old soulmates deliver messages to you that trigger timely awareness, alchemy and awakening. What people and environments are not entirely safe, supportive or inspiring for you to be with?

14. **Listen to your body.** Our body is a natural feedback system to keep us abreast of how well we are dealing with the pressures and demands of life. What lessons are your body reflecting to you? What wake-up calls from your body have you been ignoring? What’s the weight you are carrying around? What’s your body trying to tell you?

15. **Follow the guiding signs and synchronicities Spirit gives you everyday.** Our soul is always (all ways) trying to steer us toward our goals. We live in an interactive, responsive universe that is designed to fulfill our deepest dreams – if we would only play along! Allow your intuition to guide you to the forms and vehicles that will empower your spirit to express fully. What messages and signals has the Universe been sending you that you have been ignoring, misinterpreting, or are afraid to act on?

16. **Choose to be innocent (free) of the past: Welcome surprise and serendipity.** Open the door to more magic, meaning and money in your world by learning to suspend skepticism and conditioned responses. Learn to surf through the surprises of life, instead of being swept away by them. Where could you approach your goals with more flexibility, openness and sense of play?

17. **Feng-shui your life: Give yourself a "spaceshift."** Feng-shui is the ancient art of consciously managing matter and energy within space. By intuitively re-arranging the elements of your daily life, you create the space to nurture the freedom, opportunities and effectiveness you desire. By clearing out the old, dead elements of your life, you create a natural vacuum and an unblocked channel for fresh, new energy and ideas to come into your private and professional life. How could you unblock your energy now? Where can you re-arrange the ways you live your everyday life in a fresh, new, intuitive way?

18. **Live your life as an experiment.** Consider your life as the latest and greatest experiment – one that is exciting and fun. Where can you lighten up, celebrate, and add more humor in your approach to living?

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**About the Author**

**Keith Varnum** shares his practical approach to transformation as an author, radio host and "Dream Workshops" facilitator. Keith helps people get love, money, health and spirit with his free Prosperity Ezine, free Empowerment CD and free Coaching at www.TheDream.com.

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**BONKERISM**

Sometimes the only person who can make you stop crying is the person who made you cry.
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Once you've had a depressive episode, you're susceptible to a relapse. Find out what you can do to help avoid the return of depression.

By Chris Iliades, MD

Even when depression is successfully treated, it can come back. About 40 percent of people who are diagnosed with major depression will experience a return of depression symptoms.

Relapse of depression is more common with more-serious depressive episodes. If the depression was severe enough to include serious thoughts of suicide, for instance, a return of depression should be expected at some point.

You can reduce your risk of a relapse by sticking to your treatment plan, working closely with your doctors, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Why Does Depression Return?

Return of depression is usually triggered by a change in social rhythms. This could be anything that causes a disruption in normal social routines, such as an illness or the loss of a social support system.

Changes that can trigger a depressive episode include:

- **Life-altering events.** Common triggers for a depressive episode could be the loss of a job, the end of a valued relationship, or any other new and stressful situation.

- **Other medical conditions.** Being diagnosed with a serious medical condition may cause depression in some people. The onset of a major illness may introduce new medications and symptoms that could trigger the return of depression. Studies show that one-fourth of people will suffer a depressive episode after a heart attack. A stroke or a fractured hip may decrease independence and increase isolation, which also could lead to a return of depression.

- **The illness itself.** It’s not always possible to pinpoint a trigger for a depressive episode. Just like many other diseases, depression may get worse or come back even if you are doing everything right. This is more common in older people, who may undergo changes in their brain that make depression more likely.

- **Antidepressants are not working.** Depression is treatable, but
not always easy to treat. About half of all people with depression don't improve on the first antidepressant medication. Your medications may also become less effective over time. The medication must then be changed, or a second antidepressant must be added.

Avoiding the Return of Depression

With these steps for self-care, you can be more in control of your depression:

✓ **Recognize the symptoms of a depression relapse.** Learn your depression triggers and symptoms so you can tell your doctor about them. Studies show that the best predictor of a return of depression is a change in sleep patterns. Each person should be aware of their own warning signs. Sometimes a family member may be the first person to pick up on these symptoms. Other symptoms to watch out for include loss of interest in sex, loss of appetite, irritability, and negative thinking.

✓ **Stick to your treatment.** The most important thing you can do is follow your treatment plan. That means keeping all your doctor appointments and taking your medications as prescribed. If antidepressants are part of your treatment plan, never stop taking them on your own. Antidepressants are not like pain medications. They take a long time to work completely, and starting to feel better does not mean that you are well yet. Patients who have had two or more depressive episodes may need to stay on antidepressants indefinitely.

✓ **Maintain a healthy lifestyle.** This includes learning how to deal with stress, developing a good support system, getting regular and adequate sleep, and exercising. Regular exercise affects the brain in the same way as medication does. In fact, for mild depression, exercise often works as well as antidepressants. It’s also important to eat a healthy diet and limit alcohol consumption. Studies show that two or more drinks of alcohol a day decrease the rate of recovery from depression by half.

Depression is a very treatable disease, but be aware of the possibility of a relapse. It’s important to treat all cases of depression aggressively and to continue treatment long enough to allow for maximum recovery.

You can help avoid a return of depression by working closely with your medical team; avoiding known triggers of depression; recognizing the early symptoms of relapse; and maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle.

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**About the Author**

Dr. Iliades is a full-time freelance writer based in Cape Cod, Mass. His writing has appeared in The Washington Post and frequently online. He was the Boston correspondent for Infection Protection, an award-winning online health blog.

*Note: This article is for information only and is not intended to diagnose or treat.*

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**When Life Gets You Down**

Coping with Situational Depression

Life is full of events that can cause stress. When a source of stress in your life is particularly hard to cope with, you may react with symptoms of sadness, fear, or even hopelessness. This type of reaction is often referred to as situational depression. Unlike major depression, where you are overwhelmed by symptoms of depression for a long time, situational depression usually goes away once you have adapted to your new situation.

Situational depression is common and can happen to anyone — about 10 percent of adults and up to 30 percent of adolescents experience this condition at some point. Men and women are affected equally.
You’re looking for her, aren’t you? That high-pitched, British, giggly blonde in a sparkly ball gown who may or may not travel in a bubble? The one who has that magic wand you wish she’d waive over your home, job, spouse and kids – making the laundry fold itself; your kids cooperative and friendly; your work highly enjoyable; and your spouse superbly dreamy; all the while reducing you to your ideal weight, and making your skin blemish free.

Well, it’s time to stop looking for her. Here’s how you can make your own magic:

**Experiment.**
What works for your best friend or your Mom or your spouse won’t necessarily work for you. You’ll need to find your own process, and the only way to find it is by trying something new for a short amount of time, and then tweak it. Keep doing this until you can write your own personal roadmap to the finish line.

**Be Realistic.**
Big changes don’t happen overnight. You can’t expect to finish a huge project in a week, or write a long page of “To Dos” in your calendar with the expectation of them being done in a day. Be realistic and set realistic time frames to complete each of your baby steps. Why not limit your “To Do” list to a maximum of 2 tasks each day? And if you have extra time, then steal a “To Do” from the next day, or (gasp!) enjoy some down time.

**Bribery isn’t just for little kids and gangsters.**
Bribe yourself. One of my clients used to plop herself in front of the TV for hours until bedtime, but now, she uses her TV time as a reward for going into the studio and working, even for “just” 30 minutes. Besides looking forward to her reward, she’s made it a habit, and now going into her studio is just what she does after dinner each night. It’s automatic.

**Be nice to yourself.**
Seriously. Growth doesn’t have to be torturing. If you find you’re dreading a part of your process, figure out a way to make that part as painless as possible.

Apply the tips above to achieve your goal piece by painless piece, baby step by realistic baby step, and you’ll never again have to worry about turning into a pumpkin when your fairy God Mother fails to appear.
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More than 16 million Americans report some form of visual impairment even when wearing glasses or contacts. That number is expected to double by 2030 as the aging population brings rising rates of macular degeneration, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy and other eye diseases . . . But “low vision” doesn't have to mean darkness and dependence. An ever growing array of devices can help people maximize their remaining vision and in many cases, compensate for what they've lost.

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In a survey conducted by Ladies’ Home Journal, 46% of women wanted a husband who would “make the bed” compared to only 16% who wanted a husband who “performed better in bed. Women all over the world are waiting for a time in the future when men will step up to the plate and do more housework. Well, we think it should be NOW! Ladies, this article is for YOU!

The Excuse

Men seem to have a million excuses, but here are some common ones they use to avoid housework, and how we can respond.

**Excuse: I Make More Money.**
The men who have a higher income (and that number is getting smaller) may use their higher income as an excuse not to do housework. They claim that because they make more money, they should be excluded from household chores.

Counter this excuse by insisting that although he may bring home more income, you work just as hard as him, if not more. If you’re a stay home mom, while hubby works eight hours a day, you work 24 hours. So isn’t it fair that he pitch in more, to balance out the hours worked? It helps if you appeal to his sense of fair play and approach him with appreciation instead of aggression when asking for help.

**Excuse: I’m Tired and Stressed.**
Men frequently claim they are too tired or stressed to help after spending long hours at the office. They feel they need to unwind when they get home, not start preparing dinner or folding laundry!

Respond to that by saying that while you understand he is tired and stressed, you don’t think his job is any more tiring or stressful than yours. Whether you’re dealing with little clingy children while trying to clean, mop, cook and supervise older children with homework, or supervising 40 employees in your own business, your job is just as stressful as his. No matter the occupation, the fact is you both work hard during the day and therefore both should help out in the evening at home.

**Excuse: I Don’t Know How.**
Often, men will simply say they don’t know how to do housework to escape doing it. And maybe they genuinely don’t know how.

The next time your husband says housework doesn’t come naturally to him, tell him it doesn’t come naturally to anyone – men or women. Everyone has to learn to do it at some point. After clearly stating that, give him a few lessons.

**Excuse: Oops!**
Some men successfully avoid housework by deliberately messing up housework. This strategy is only effective if you are particular about how housework is done.

The solution is for you to lower your standard. Never mind if your husband doesn’t stack up the dishes properly or bathes the kids in less than five minutes. Let him do things his way. Sooner or later he’ll realize he has to do some chores whether he likes them or not.

Change Is Possible

While men’s general helplessness in household chores may seem funny at times, it can cause a strained relationship.

Women can change their husbands’ uninvolved attitudes towards household chores and parenting by understanding different types of husbands.

When it comes to household chores and parenting, many men tend to shy away from their duties. They come up with all sorts of excuses to avoid domestic work. Women can try to manage their husbands’ uninvolved attitudes by understanding their personalities.
Clinical psychologist and author of *The Lazy Husband*, Dr. Joshua Coleman, has identified different types of husbands and shared his thoughts on managing these lazy spouses.

**The Boy Husband.** The boy husband is generally needy, dependent on his wife and has no concept of what adult responsibilities mean. He probably needs his wife to wake him up in the morning, fix his breakfast, pay his bills and balance the household checkbooks. He really is like another child in the family.

To make the boy husband more competent around the house, stop supporting his behavior. Use non-judgmental language to let him know of the change about to take place. Expect some resistance but be firm about getting him to take over some household tasks.

However, don’t expect your boy husband to change overnight. If taking on these responsibilities is something he’s never done, he may truly feel terrified, confused and overwhelmed by the prospect of adding these new behaviors to his regimen. So it’s important to give some guidance and let him take over gradually.

**The Angry Husband.** The angry husband often uses his bigger size, loud voice or harsh tone to intimidate his wife when she tries to get him to help with domestic chores. In short, he escapes work by bullying her.

You’ll need to stand up for yourself and refuse to be bullied if you want to see some changes. Keep having discussions about getting him to be more involved in household chores and parenting duties. If he shouts, calmly tell him to lower his voice and speak in a more respectful tone. The angry husband will probably try to shut you down with his old tactics. But persevere, even if the discussion escalates into a shouting match. Your husband may soon get the idea that his old style isn’t working anymore.

**The Worried Husband.** The worried husband is constantly worried about things around him. He is probably reluctant to take on more household chores and parenting duties because of the fear that he may mess things up. But this also means that you end up doing the lion’s share of housework.

The solution is to show the worried husband that his behavior is irrational but avoid criticizing him. Express your concern over his tendency to worry and let him know it’s okay if he does something not exactly the right way so long as he is prepared to give it a try.

Different types of husbands avoid housework in different ways. By understanding these personalities, we can gradually change their uninvolved attitudes regarding household chores and parenting duties.

**Let the Negotiations Begin!**

When it comes to cleaning, cooking and other odd-jobs around the home, the division of chores can create conflict between couples. But what do you do when one spouse is not pulling their weight?

Relationships are negotiated and negotiations never close. So it’s never too late. Whether you’ve been married a year, two years, ten years or 30 years – you still negotiate, and re-negotiate. And one of the things you negotiate is a division of labor. Let him know what you need, what’s important, and find out what he needs and values out of what you do. Negotiate this and don’t settle for what you don’t want.
If you say you've never lied to your kid, you're probably, well, stretching the truth a little. Your fib may have been as innocuous as "there aren't any Fudgeos left" or as significant as "Fluffy went to live on a farm," but face it: The well deployed lie is as much a part of a parents' arsenal as hand sanitizer and string cheese.

We parents tend to beat ourselves up about fibbing; more than 76 percent of the readers surveyed said they felt guilty about telling their kids a lie. But the untruths that fly out of your mouth in times of duress (read: tantrum at the mall) aren't going to permanently damage your kids. Ditto for those "developmental" lies that help kids kick bad behaviors or habits ("If you don't stop sucking your thumb, it might fall off!").

In fact, sometimes, massaging the truth is the most responsible thing to do. "Part of our job as a parent is to cater what you divulge to the age and development of your child." Often, it's smarter to tell just a little part of the story rather than the whole messy truth. Saying that Dad isn't going to work because his office closed may not paint an accurate picture of how he got laid off, your finances are a mess, and you won't be going on vacation any time soon, but it gives your kid enough information to grasp why things are tense around the house.

What's more, a little dishonesty is called for if the truth would be needlessly hurtful to the listener – an important lesson in kindness to model for your kids. Telling Grandma her fruitcake is delectable may be complete hooey, but it's the right thing to do after she put her heart and soul into crafting the confection. And then there are those tall tales we tell our kids about Santa Claus, the tooth fairy, and their pals – yes, they're technically lies, but they help us create traditions that give kids a sense of wonder and joy.

Obviously, you don't want to make lies a daily part of your repertoire. Children watch their parents like hawks and eventually will catch on. In the short term, if you're caught in a small lie, your kid is a little miffed and you're embarrassed, but in the long term, being caught in repeated lies means our kids learn we can't really be trusted. Kids need their parents to be a rock of certainty, and each lie is a chip off that certainty. Plus, children of parents who fib frequently are better at deception themselves – and employ it more often. Most important, every time you lie to avoid a difficult topic, such as sex or illness, you miss an opportunity to talk openly and honestly with your children and communicate that they can always turn to you, even when what they have to say is awkward or unpleasant.

Still, don't beat yourself up for the occasional whopper – we'd be hard-pressed to find a devoted parent who didn't have a hilarious confession to share. Here are some of the best (or worst?) lies we've heard:
“When our children were younger and we were exhausted, we would set the upstairs clocks ahead an hour and start the bedtime routine early. The children never caught on, and we got some gleeful grown-up time!”

“My kids like chicken above all else. In order to get them to diversify their diet, I began serving tilapia and telling them it was chicken with a different taste.”

“I told our daughter that our dogs scared away the tooth fairy, so she left her money in our room. This was done, of course, because Mom and Dad forgot to put money under the pillow!”

“When my son was 3, we decided it was time to take away his pacifier. I gathered all his Nusks and dipped them in Tabasco sauce. That night, he sucked his Nuk a couple of times and brought it to me asking that I rinse it off. I ran it under water and handed it back to him. 'It's still yucky,' he complained. 'Oh, no,' I replied, 'I think your Nuk has gone rotten.' I told him all Nusks go rotten when a child is about to turn 3.”

“Whenever I heard the click of one of my kids unbuckling their car seat harnesses, I would pull over to the side of the road and kill the engine. My kids were convinced the car wouldn't work if their seat belts weren't fastened.”

1. **Specific:** The goal must be specific. If the goal is not specific enough it will lack clarity and meaning. Example: “I’d like to move soon” versus “I will move to New York City by August 1.

2. **Measurable:** The goal must be measurable and have a well defined outcome. Example: “I want to lose weight” versus “I will lose 15lbs by April 10.

3. **Accountability:** You must include accountability. Example: Arrange for a friend, family member, or a coach to help hold you accountable. The more people who know about your goal, the better.

4. **Desire:** The goal must be something you truly desire and want! It sounds simple, but you should get very clear on why the goal is so important to you and be very clear about the meaning behind it.

5. **Exciting:** The goal must be exciting! Don’t choose a goal that isn’t. If the goal and the action plans around it are not exciting or thrilling to you, it reduces the odds it will get done. No matter what your goal, find a way to make it exciting!

6. **Positive Feelings:** Daydream and visualize what it will be like to meet the goal. What will it feel like when you meet the goal?

7. **Negative Feelings:** Explore what it will feel like if you do not meet the goal. What will the impact be? How will you be feeling?

8. **Commitment:** Think about your level of commitment to the goal. Rate your level of commitment on a scale from 1-10. If it is not a 10, figure out what you need to do to get it to a 10.

9. **Authenticate:** What does it feel like to say the goal out loud? Does this goal really fit you? Will working on this goal honor your values and who you are as an individual? For the goal to have a powerful meaning it needs to have a clear connection with who you truly are.

10. **Action:** All the planning in the world will not mean anything if you do not take action! What specific steps will you need to take to reach your goal?

About the Author

Jeremy J. Ulmer is one of the most dynamic and requested sales coaching experts in the country. His company specializes in working with executive sales leadership, organizations, and individual sales performers to transform their sales results. Sign up for free sales tips and free sales coaching webinars at: www.SalesCoachingHabits.com
Whether traveling for business or vacation, travel can be challenging for your health. With a bit of planning you can easily make a difference in how you feel when you return home: guilty or radiantly healthy.

Radiant health is the concept of being healthy from the inside out. It is wonderful to come home feeling radiantly healthy and happy, instead of feeling guilty about an extra 5 or 10 pounds.

Anne spent months planning a trip to Egypt, a vacation she had dreamt of for many years. She had lost 30 pounds the year before the trip and did not want to gain any of it back on a two-week vacation. Anne came up with a plan for her vacation; she would enjoy tasting all of the unique foods she desired; never feel deprived; find a fun way to get her body moving; and return home feeling healthy, inside and out.

Anne promised herself that she could enjoy eating whatever she desired as long as she exercised 5 times during her trip. One day that meant walking to and from a local restaurant in Giza instead of taking a taxi. Another day, Anne jogged along the Nile in Luxor. She created memories instead of focusing on exercise.

Most of us have spent weeks planning a big vacation, without considering what actions we might take towards a healthier outcome. There are hundreds of ideas out there, but here are a few tips that you can implement to stay healthy on your next trip:

**Change your Mindset**
By creating a mindset of making healthy choices, you will begin to feel better about yourself, and want to keep making healthy choices. While traveling, choose to eat at least one healthy meal each day, and when eating your other meals, do not let yourself feel guilty about your choices. Instead, enjoy every morsel!

Anne allowed herself to enjoy tasting all the interesting foods of Egypt, but knew that she would also do something active five times during her vacation. She was able to make these activities fun, which made her feel she was in control. As a result, she felt great while she was traveling and returned home feeling fantastic!

**Be Prepared**
When you feel hungry, being prepared will give you the option to decide what you really want, instead of having to settle for junk food. Always have some healthy snacks with you if flying, driving or traveling by train. Anne took plenty of almonds and protein bars to Egypt so that she could always have a healthy snack within her reach. She walked
to a local grocery store (a fun experience in itself) to buy fresh fruit. It is easy to be prepared if you consciously decide to do so before you leave town. If you see a local treat that tempts you while shopping, buy it too . . . and enjoy it!

Drink Plenty of Water

It is true that at least 64 oz. of water a day are necessary for a healthy body to function, in fact, it is best to have one half ounce of water for each pound you weigh. For example, a person who weighs 150 lbs. needs 75 ounces of water a day. Anne was on a tour that provided bottled water, but if that is not your situation, pick up a case of water or take a container to fill as you walk out the door each day. This way you are staying hydrated and not drinking sodas.

Sleep

Do not over schedule your days. Plan to retire early some nights so that you can refresh your body. Sleeping in a hotel can be challenging for some people, so take a vacation from the TV. Instead, enjoy journaling your day or read something inspiring. You will sleep better and feel more rested if the TV stays off!

Make Good Restaurant Choices

There are many simple, healthy choices you can make while eating in restaurants anywhere in the world. Grilled or baked foods are always healthier than fried. Choosing to eat a green salad each day will help you feel better. Request sauces on the side, so you can decide if it tastes good and how much you want. Making healthy choices can be fun; by choosing a glass of wine instead of a margarita you are making a healthier choice!

It can be challenging to make healthy choices while traveling, so keep a balance between healthy choices and splurging each day. NEVER feel guilty about any of your choices! Always enjoy everything you put in your mouth. If it is not as good as you hoped or expected, choose not to eat it. If it is better than you expected, enjoy it completely!

A vacation is a time to reconnect with your inner self and explore other places. With a little planning you can support your health and return home feeling relaxed, refreshed and radiant.

Life Satisfaction

What will give you life satisfaction? Life satisfaction does not come from money nor material things. It comes from what you do and how you use what you have. It comes from a positive view of what is right in your life now.

Only you can truly answer the question “what will make you satisfied with your life?” However, most people have basic needs which bring them life satisfaction. Some of these needs are:

- Friends
- Successful relationships
- Family (provides a sense of identity and belonging)
- Feeling that you are needed and loved
- Purpose in life (a difficult one but so important)
- Having choices and options
- Having achievable goals
- Doing what you enjoy
- Feeling that you have value

(this is your self esteem)

- Having the possibility to express yourself creatively and emotionally
- Being understood and accepted for who you are.

These needs will help you clearly define areas of your life that may be holding you back from your own life satisfaction.

How can you become more satisfied with your life?

- be focused on what you want
- learn to say no and be more assertive
- be less self critical
- stop negative thoughts
- concentrate on what you have now and what is good
- plan to take small steps to achieve what you want and reward yourself on each completed step.

About the Author

Adele Good is a speaker, trainer, author, health coach and founder of The Skinny on The Skinny, a company specializing in personal health improvements and empowerment. With over 20 years of training and speaking experience, Adele helps groups and individuals maximize their inner strengths and potential. Adele has personally and naturally released over 130 pounds, without surgery, drugs or dieting. She is the author of The Skinny Diary, Your Guide to Radiant Health. To find out more about her speaking and coaching, please visit www.TheSkinnyOnTheSkinny.com or call 214-526-7770.

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60 SECOND SELF
Does this sound like your family? You’re a type A personality – driven, intense and focused on your career. You tend to look at yourself as having to be perfect, are impatient with those who are slower than you or who don’t share your passion about their work and careers.

Of course, these personality traits carry over to your home life as well. You get impatient and easily irritated at your teens, who don’t have that kind of passion about school, sports, or anything in their lives, except their friends or video games.

Most likely, your spouse is a Type B, and does not share your personality traits. It’s what attracted you to them. They may be a people pleaser, “yessing” you and accepting you because he/she loves you. You predicted that you would be happily married, partly because it would be unlikely that your spouse would compete with you and therefore, you would always be in control in the relationship.

Or perhaps your spouse, or one of your children, is just as competitive as you, so there’s a constant power struggle going on within the family. Whatever the case, unresolved or insensitively managed conflict will negatively impact the family on multiple levels.

You can learn how to skillfully resolve conflicts. You may even find that these conflicts can be a platform for enhancing the love and warmth within your family. The following is a three-step series of behavioral prescriptions for assessing and implementing a conflict resolution program at home:

Rx #1. USE A THOUGHT STOPPING TECHNIQUE

Whenever you get angry at a family member, it is never what that family member says or does that gets you angry; rather, it is your interpretation (based on your internal dialogue) of what that family member says or does that always determines your emotional reaction.

Internal Dialogue. The key to analyzing your vulnerability to being provoked into confrontations is to understand when your automatic thoughts, including your assumptions and conclusions, are distorted and cause an emotional reaction within you.

Examples of automatic thought distortions are:

✓ “My teenager should respect my rules, even if she doesn’t like them.” (using should, must, and have to in judging your actions);
✓ "My husband is selfish and doesn’t care about my needs.” (reading your spouse’s mind about what he must be thinking and feeling);
✓ “I will never be happy because these kids will never learn to clean up after themselves.” (catastrophizing or fortune telling about what negative things will happen to you in the future);
✓ “I’m a failure as a parent” (negatively labeling yourself instead of describing your behavior as unproductive).

Thought Stopping. Once you learn about the distortions that are part of your automatic thinking, you can learn how to stop them in their tracks, challenge them and develop more rational, alternative thoughts. The end result is dissolving negative emotions and engaging in a healthy, more reasonable outlook, despite the situation.

Rx # 2. IDENTIFY YOUR TYPICAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT HABITS

People resort to behavioral habits when experiencing conflict with others. These reactions include:

Non-productive behaviors, such as: confronting, dominating, defending, using sarcasm, hostile
humor, repressing emotions, insisting on being right, stonewalling, and blaming.

Neutral behaviors, such as: avoiding, cooling off, apologizing, and giving in or backing off to avoid confrontation;

Positive behaviors, such as: active listening, empathizing, disarming, inquiring, and using “I feel” statements.

The goal is to eliminate non-productive and neutral behaviors and practice positive behaviors until they become new habits. On the average, with practice, these skills really can become habits in only 21 days!

Rx #3. USE THESE POWERFUL SKILLS TO REDUCE CONFRONTATION

Active listening: The key to all interpersonal communications is genuine listening, as opposed to defensive listening, where you internally plan your response while the other person is talking to you. In order to really listen, paraphrase what the other person says in your own words, without judging, agreeing or disagreeing. Listen to and reflect the content, needs and feelings of the other person.

Next, ask for feedback to determine if you have correctly interpreted what they are saying. If you have not, ask for clarification. Continue this process until you are sure that you have heard what the other person is saying and how he or she really feels emotionally.

Once you are certain that you understand the message and feelings expressed by the other person, respond. The other person then listens and paraphrases for you. This process continues until you have both clarified your positions and are certain that you really heard and understand each other.

Empathizing: This involves putting yourself in the other person’s shoes and trying to see the world through his or her eyes, taking into account the age and experience of the person with whom you are in conflict.

Disarming: The fastest way to defuse an argument is to find some truth in what the other person is saying, even if you do not agree with the basic criticism or complaint. For example, saying “I can understand why you feel angry with me since you believe that I violated your trust by sharing our conversation with dad” acknowledges and validates the angry person’s feelings without actually agreeing with what was said. This opens the door to clarification, feedback and reconciliation.

Inquiring: By asking for clarification of ideas, needs and feelings, you signal respect for the other person and can then work toward mutual understanding and compromise.

“I Feel” statements: This is a primary skill in interpersonal communications. Expressing yourself with such statements as, “I feel angry because you seem to be defying me at every turn” is much more productive than the accusatory, “you make me angry and it’s your fault that I’m always upset around this house.” In the first scenario, you take responsibility for your own feelings and share them; in the second, you escalate the confrontation by blaming the other person.

Moreover, using “I feel” statements enables you to then tell the other person specifically what you need that will make you feel good or what can be done to improve the relationship and avoid further misunderstandings and confrontations. Example: “I feel angry because you seem to defy me at every turn. I want to know that even if you don’t like or agree with a rule, you will discuss it with me, instead of developing an attitude.”

Interpersonal conflict within families is normal. Accepting the fact that family members look at the same events from the perspectives of their different personalities will enable you to employ these three powerful prescriptions to manage conflicts in your family.
Power struggles occur in every type of relationship – spouses, family members, co-workers, boss/subordinate, business competitors, and sometimes even strangers. They occur because something is in limited supply. This scarce resource may be tangible, like money; space; equipment; or benefits; or intangible, such as being right; having things done a certain way; or having needs met first.

Power struggles create distance and hostility instead of closeness and trust. They also foster resistance and rebellion (or compliance with lowered self-esteem). But you can learn how to diminish those power struggles and turn them into a double win.

**HOW TO DIMINISH A POWER STRUGGLE**

**Broaden your perspective.** Open your mind to other's viewpoints. By taking in more of the total panorama, you gain the ability to appreciate differences as normal, legitimate, non-threatening, negotiable, and even complimentary.

**Agree on the problem.** Reach a definition of the problem that all parties agree on. Two people, with different styles, opinions, and needs, can begin to find a mutually-agreeable resolution by clearly identifying the issues that each person feels are important. Hurrying to get out of the discomfort of the situation or agreeing to things you don't really believe in, will only result in more resentment in the future. Making requests for change before the problem has been fully identified is premature and will usually lengthen and/or doom the process.

**Make a concrete action plan.** Proposed solutions should be specific and concrete. Describe suggestions for what could be done differently in order to improve the situation. In addition, request changes that involve positive behaviors rather than avoidance techniques. In other words, it is not enough to request that the other party stop doing something – also describe what you want them to do instead.

Setting aside a power struggle takes maturity. A person who thinks maturely is able to look for existing similarities and mutual agreements. For instance, there may be a shared goal of accomplishing a given task, or perhaps you both share a goal of nurturing your family. When two or more people are grown-up enough to acknowledge that they have both contributed to the power struggle, they take an important step toward being able to work together.

Relationships are a constant give and take, allowing both people to get at least some of what they need and want. By continuing to attack the problem together, instead of attacking each other, the parties can reach an agreement that is workable, or at least identify a plan that may be revised as time goes on.

When we learn to appreciate the differences between ourselves and others, we can then develop the habit of creating mutual wins, and open the way for exciting growth.

**About the Author**

Beverly Smallwood is a licensed psychologist who has worked with Fortune 500, healthcare, and other organizations around the world for over 20 years. Her specialties are leadership development, employee retention, and personal resilience. She's often featured in such national media as MSNBC, USA Today, Chicago Tribune, FOX, and New York Times. To contact her about speaking, consulting, or coaching, call 877-CAN LEAD (226-5323) or visit her website www.MagneticWorkPlaces.com, where you can also sign up for her free email newsletter.
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The Money & Happiness Connection

Understanding the Psychology of Money

By Sheila Alers

Ever wonder how some people seem so happy even though they don’t appear to have a lot of money. Yet others, seemingly wealthy, don’t seem happy at all. Why is it that money seems to work so well in some people’s lives and such a struggle for others?

Money is a very complex topic. Those who don’t have it, wish they did. Those that do, want more.

It seems that those with money seem to want more – more money, more real estate, more vehicles, more trips, the latest designer goods, more trappings of success. It becomes a merry-go-round of things controlling them. Those with less money seem to be more content with themselves and their lives.

As a CPA, I confront money issues every day. I have seen very well-educated, professional, intelligent people fail to set financial plans or even budget; company presidents who make multi-million dollar decisions in the board room with ease but struggle with their own finances and end up making terrible personal financial decisions; finance executives who set minimal future financial goals for themselves and their families; parents who give everything to their children but never teach them to save, plan and budget. What is wrong with this picture?
Controlling It

The basic principles of money management are designed to give us the power to control it. These are:

1. Begin with your financial goals in mind both short and long term;

2. Set up a budget to manage your income, plan you expenses and set aside savings;

3. Expect the unexpected - Add an emergency fund;

4. Set up a plan of investing for your savings: and,

5. Evaluate your financial plan, goals and budget on a periodic basis.

Sounds simple right? Herein lies the trouble – money is a limited quantity. So we do have to be very judicious as to how we decide to spend it. That is why living by a budget makes a lot of sense. Of course, we may have those moments where we make purchases outside of our budget. In those cases we must carefully analyze whether the expense is justified. People who are truly happy with themselves have learned to deal with these moments very effectively. They realize that decisions about possessions are small decisions in their lives that will not bring them joy in the long term. The personal decisions we make speak to the very heart of our psyche and our own ability to realize our financial goals.

Noted German Philosopher, Frederich Nietzche once said “I
want nothing, I need nothing, I am free.” Mr. Nietzsche has a significant point here regarding money. Applied to money we can say that if our needs are basic and our wants are minimal to the point of being almost non-existent, we can feel free because we will truly be in control of ourselves. This is hard to do yet some people have achieved this state of self-control and confidence. It is financial self-actualization.

Self-actualizers are so confident and content with themselves that they truly do not have many wants beyond the basic needs. They have learned how to control their money and limit their expenditures (without stress) to what is necessary. They have come to the conclusion that things can never define them and that they are the ones who give value to what success looks like. They define the trappings of success as confidence, piece of mind and healthy respect for money.

Hierarchy of Needs

Famed psychologist, Abraham Maslow, related our primary drivers and motivations to our psyches and where we are on the Hierarchy of Needs. The Hierarchy is sequential and one can only move up by mastering the levels starting with physiological needs.

Many people live somewhere between Belonging-Love and Self-Esteem, which can create great havoc on most budgets. These needs may be manifested in purchases made to boost egos, or to prove a sense of belonging, or even cater to a misplaced sense of self. The extent to which we are able to recognize, control and manage these urges gets us closer to self-actualization.

Many of us know what we should do, but need the tools to fight off the inner “spending” demons that seem to whisper in our ear every time we try to gain financial control.

Here are some tips for fighting those inner demons:

1. Decide whether something is truly a need or a want.
2. Take a break from the financial end of the decision, and analyze whether the purchase really makes sense for you, at this moment in your life.
3. Look at your budget and analyze the impact that your decision will have on you or your family.
4. Decide whether this purchase is consistent with your long-term goals.
5. Analyze if this decision is something that will benefit you in the long term.
6. Consult with an independent expert if necessary.

And the best tip of all: Realize that in the grand scheme of our lives, things that we may want today will not matter tomorrow. What will matter is being happy with who we are, spending time with family and friends, having financial peace of mind, reaching financial goals, and gaining control of your money.

About the Author
Sheila Alers is a Certified Public Accountant working in New York City. She graduated from New York University, Stern School of Business, and holds an MBA in Finance and Accounting. After the financial crisis, she became part of an elite team of accounting and operational risk experts that advise and examine the largest banking organizations in the metro New York area. She has also founded a number of community groups including Dollars and Sense Financial Literacy Group and the Group Sky teen mentoring program. She is currently Mrs. New York International and she teaches Financial Literacy. She also serves on two local boards as financial advisor. She is a marathon runner and an Olympic distance triathlete. She is married and blessed with two great children.
As the parent of a child with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, your parenting skills are challenged every day. You may often find yourself feeling tense, never knowing when your child is going to behave disruptively. Your child’s ADHD symptoms, such as being inattentive, impulsive, stubborn, and unable to sit still, can leave you frustrated and, though it’s hard to admit, angry and even resentful.

Ease Your Emotions

Not only might you feel isolated from other parents whose children do not have ADHD, but you may even feel envious of them. The good news is that there are strategies to help you feel less alone and overwhelmed. Parenting a child with ADHD doesn’t have to be so emotionally exhausting.

What You Need to Know

Children with ADHD generally have deficits in executive function: the ability to think and plan ahead, organize, control impulses, and complete tasks. That means you need to take over as the executive, providing extra guidance while your child gradually acquires executive skills of his or her own.

Although the symptoms of ADHD can be nothing short of exasperating, it’s important to remember that the child with ADHD who is ignoring, annoying, or embarrassing you is not acting willfully. Kids with attention deficit disorder want to sit quietly; they want to make their rooms tidy and organized; they want to do everything their parent says to do — but they don’t know how to make these things happen. Having ADHD can be just as frustrating as dealing with someone who has it. If you keep this in mind, it will be a lot easier to respond to your child in positive, supportive ways. With patience, compassion, and plenty of support, you can manage childhood attention deficit disorder while enjoying a stable, happy home.

Recharge!

Here are important tips for parents who feel frustrated, alone, and angry.

Keep a positive attitude. As a parent, you set the stage for your child’s emotional and physical health. You have control over many of the factors that can positively influence the symptoms of your child’s disorder. Your best assets for helping your child meet the challenges of ADD/ADHD are your positive attitude and common sense. When you are calm and focused, you are able to connect with your child, helping him or her to be calm and focused as well.

Change your perspective. Instead of seeing ADHD as a “disability,” change your perspective and see how special your child with ADHD is. Children with ADHD are often very imaginative and creative — don’t hesitate to nurture your child’s gifts.

Keep things in perspective. Remember that your child’s behavior is related to a disorder. Most of the time it is not intentional. Hold on to your sense of humor. What’s embarrassing today may be a funny family story ten years from now.

Look for the good. Reframing your child’s symptoms can be a great way to start changing your point of view on ADHD. For every negative trait associated with ADHD, there is a way to frame it as a more positive trait. You can view disorganization as being spontaneous, for example, or stubbornness as tenacity. This outlook not only boosts your child’s self-esteem, but also helps offset your frustration.

Don’t sweat the small stuff and be
willing to make some comprom-
ises. One chore left undone isn’t a
big deal when your child has com-
pleted two others plus the day’s
homework. If you are a perfection-
ist, you will not only be constantly
dissatisfied but also create impossi-
bile expectations for your ADHD
child.

Believe in your child. Think about
or make a written list of everything
that is positive, valuable, and
unique about your child. Believe
that your child can learn, change,
mature, and succeed. Reconfirm
this belief every day as you brush
your teeth or make your coffee.

Make a plan. Have a written plan
in place to deal with problems that
are likely to arise. You’ll automatic-
ally feel more in control and less
worried. And it doesn’t matter if
one plan fails; simply come up with
a new plan until you find one that
works.

Get the facts. Do you know what
to expect from your child at differ-
et developmental stages? How
will medications effect them differ-
etly? Worrying usually comes
from a lack of information, so talk
to your pediatrician and ask for
resources to learn more about
ADHD.

Don’t worry alone. Talk to a friend,
your spouse, your child's pediatric-
ian, or your own doctor. Sharing
your feelings helps you release
steam and feel less resentful.

Lose yourself in laughter. 
Surround yourself with people who
can laugh. It is important to be able
to regain a perspective that allows
you to see the humor in parenting.

Look for support. Start a support
group of your own or join the local
chapter of Children and Adults with
Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity
Disorder (CHADD).

Support your child's interests. 
Rather than always fussing over
disappointing grades and other
shortcomings, put your energy into
supporting your ADHD child’s
strength, whether it's drawing,
playing soccer, or coming up with
creative inventions.

Love your child. Love is the single
most powerful tool you can use to
draw out your child’s strengths.
With your love, trust and patience,
the strengths of your child with
ADHD will continue to grow and
evolve.

Coach your child to name and feel
ok with all their emotions. Kids act
bad when they are mad, sad or
scared. When you coach your child
to tell you what she feels, her bad
behavior will heal.

Look inside yourself. Sometimes
kids act out unexpressed conflicts
of their parents. Are you struggling
with depression, anxiety, rage? Get
help for yourself and your kids will
shape up.

Be a coach. Your job is to coach
your child to success in social,
emotional and educational settings.
Sometimes the answer is practice,
practice, practice. Don't get dis-
couraged if you have to repeat
yourself over and over again.

Ask yourself: If my child’s most
frustrating behavior was meant to
teach me something, what would it
be? Many parents find themselves
half distressed and half impressed
at their child's indifference to peo-
ple pleasing. Sometimes this is just
the lesson parents need to learn in
their own lives – many parents
have become imbalanced in attend-
ing too much to seeking approval
from others.

Forget about the competition. 
Your child can still strive to be out-
standing without it being about
comparisons to other children.
ADHD and spirited children are
sensitive to tension produced by
parents' competitiveness, and the
fear based motivation inhibits
them.

Keep yourself alive! It takes a lot
of energy to keep up with ADHD
kids. You need to become your own
energy source. Feed your own pas-
sions. If you are married, work to
increase your intimacy with your
partner.

Honor the tidbit of self-reliance
hidden in all acts of defiance. 
Every time your child doesn’t do
what you asked them to do, ask
them for an explanation. Honor
their independent thinking and con-
sider what part of it you can incor-
porate into your discipline.
Continue to insist that your child
respect your rules, but show respect
for their own rhythm and logic.

Practice preventative medicine.
Many times children's bad behavior
is a misguided attempt to get some
precious attention. Fuel your child
up with the highest octane energy
you can early in the day. Spend a
few minutes being entirely present
with your child. Look them in the
eyes, touch them lovingly and listen
closely to your child. This intense
presence will give them what they
need and head off desperate pleas
for attention. Sometimes just a few
minutes will prevent large energy
draining hassles.

Daily Life with the
ADHD Child

Children with ADHD are more like-
ly to succeed in completing tasks
when the tasks occur in predictable
patterns and in predictable places.
Your job is to create and sustain
structure in your home, so that your
child knows what to expect and
what they are expected to do.
Follow a routine. It is important to set a time and a place for everything to help the child with ADD/ADHD understand and meet expectations. Establish simple and predictable rituals for meals, homework, play, and bed. Have your child lay out clothes for the next morning before going to bed, and make sure whatever he or she needs to take to school is in a special place, ready to grab.

Use clocks and timers. Consider placing clocks throughout the house, with a big one in your child’s bedroom. Allow enough time for what your child needs to do, such as homework or getting ready in the morning. Use a timer for homework or transitional times, like between finishing up play and getting ready for bed.

Simplify your child’s schedule. It is good to avoid idle time, but a child with ADHD may become more distracted and “wound up” if there are too many after-school activities. You may need to make adjustments to your child’s after-school commitments, based on their abilities and the demands of their particular activities.

Create a quiet place. Make sure your child has a quiet, private space of his or her own. A porch or bedroom can work well too, as long as it’s not the same place as the child goes for a time-out.

Do your best to be neat and organized. Set up your home in an organized way. Make sure your child knows that everything has its place. Role model neatness and organization as much as possible.

Set clear expectations and rules. Children with ADHD need consistent rules that they can understand and follow. Make the rules of behavior for the family simple and clear. Write down the rules and hang them up in a place where your child can easily read them. Children with ADD/ADHD respond particularly well to organized systems of rewards and consequences. It’s important to explain what will happen when the rules are obeyed and when they are broken. Finally, stick to your system: follow through each and every time with a reward or a consequence. Important enough to repeat—follow through each and every time – don’t give in, or waiver from the pre-determined rule, reward or consequence.

Praise and offer positive reinforcement. As you establish these consistent structures, keep in mind that children with ADHD often receive criticism. Be on the lookout for good behavior – and praise it. Praise is especially important for children who have ADHD because they typically get so little of it. These children receive correction, remediation, and complaints about their behavior – but little positive reinforcement. A smile, positive comment, or other reward from you can improve the attention, concentration and impulse control. Do your best to focus on giving positive praise for appropriate behavior and task completion, while giving as few negative responses as possible to inappropriate behavior or poor task performance. Reward your child for small achievements that you might take for granted in another child.

Physical activity can help your child with ADD/ADHD. Children with ADD/ADHD often have energy to burn. Organized sports and other physical activities can help them get their energy out in healthy ways and focus their attention on specific movements and skills. The benefits of physical activity are endless: it improves concentration, decreases depression and anxiety, and promotes brain growth. Most importantly for children with attention deficits, however, is the fact that exercise leads to better sleep, which in turn can also reduce the symptoms of ADD/ADHD.

Better sleep can help your child with ADD/ADHD. Insufficient sleep can make anyone less attentive, but it can be highly detrimental for children with attention deficit disorder. Kids with ADHD need at least as much sleep as their...
unaffected peers, but tend not to get what they need. Their attention problems can lead to overstimulation and trouble falling asleep. A consistent, early bedtime is the most helpful strategy to combat this problem, but it may not completely solve it. Help your child get better rest by trying out one or more of the following strategies:

✓ Decrease television time and increase your child’s activities and exercise levels during the day.

✓ Eliminate caffeine from your child’s diet. Cola drinks and chocolate have significant caffeine.

✓ Create a buffer time to lower down the activity level for an hour or so before bedtime. Find quieter activities such as coloring, reading or playing quietly.

✓ Spend ten minutes cuddling with your child. This will build a sense of love and security as well as provide a time to calm down.

✓ Use relaxation tapes as background noise for your child when falling asleep. There are many varieties available including nature sounds and calming music. Children with ADHD often find "white noise" to be calming. You can create white noise by putting a radio on static or running an electric fan.

**Help your child eat right.** Food can and does affect your child’s mental state, which in turn seems to affect behavior. Children with ADHD are notorious for not eating regularly. Without parental guidance, these children might not eat for hours and then binge on whatever is around. The result of this pattern can be devastating to the child’s physical and emotional health. Instead, schedule regular, healthy meals and snacks for your child no more than three hours apart. Physically, the child with ADD/ADHD needs a regular intake of healthy food; mentally, meal times are a necessary break and a scheduled rhythm to the day. Get rid of the junk foods in your home, and make sugary foods off-limits.

**Connect with your child's teacher.** Research has shown over many decades that your child’s educational outcomes are very closely linked with how much the teacher likes your child and how much they expect from your child. This is why you need to advocate for your child at the same time as you connect with your child’s teacher. Show enormous respect for your child’s teachers and try to forge a close alliance with him or her. They will go the extra mile for your child. If your child is having difficulty focusing on homework due to ADD/ADHD, there is an incredibly helpful program out there called The Total Focus (www.trytotalfocus.com) The program is developed by Dr Robert Myers, a child psychologist with over 25 years of experience working with children and adolescents with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and learning disabilities.

**Teach your child how to make friends.** Children with ADHD often have difficulty with simple social interactions. They may struggle with reading social cues, talk too much, interrupt frequently, or come off as aggressive or “too intense.” Their relative emotional immaturity can make them stand out among children their own age, and make them targets for unfriendly teasing. It’s hard for children with ADHD to learn social skills and social rules. You can help your child become a better listener, learn to read people’s faces and body language, and interact more smoothly in groups.

Life with a child with ADD/ADHD can be frustrating and overwhelming, but as a parent there is actually a lot you can do. The symptoms of ADD/ADHD can be controlled and reduced. You have the power to help your child meet his or her daily challenges and channel his or her energy into positive arenas—and at the same time bring greater calm and order to your family home. Children with ADD/ADHD can and do succeed. The earlier and more consistently you address your child’s problems, and make a shift in your own attitudes and behaviors, the more likely their success.

**About the Author**

Lara Honos-Webb, Ph.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist. She is the author of *The Gift of ADHD: How to Transform Your Child’s Problems into Strengths*, the forthcoming *Gift of Depression: How Listening to Your Pain Can Heal Your Life*, and more than twenty-five scholarly articles. Her work has been featured in *Newsweek*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Publisher’s Weekly* as well as newspapers across the country and local and national radio and television. She specializes in the treatment of ADHD and depression and the psychology of pregnancy and motherhood; she speaks regularly on her areas of expertise. Honos-Webb completed a two-year postdoctoral research fellowship at University of California, San Francisco, and has been an assistant professor teaching graduate students. She offers telephone psychotherapy and coaching. Visit her website at [www.visionarysoul.com](http://www.visionarysoul.com).

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Find A Cure
Most of us don’t walk around with a pout on our face, but that doesn’t mean we aren’t pouting. Pouting is an internal pity party, and many times, while we may not plan the party, we certainly show up and become the belle of the ball. We make a grand entrance, stay and chat with ourselves about the reason for the party (negative internal dialogue), and sometimes even over-stay our welcome (wallow in it).

It’s a fact: Things don't always go the way we want them to. We don't always hear what we want to hear. People don’t always do what we want them to do. Favors aren’t always granted. Dreams don’t always come true. Life doesn’t always run smoothly . . . but hanging around pouting at your pity party is not the best option for moving forward.

LOSE THE POUT
Drop by the pity party briefly if you must, but leave the party quickly and come back to the present moment. The present offers us:

- Opportunities to learn
- Opportunities for change
- Opportunities to see our world in new ways

Staying in pouting mode closes the door to all of these opportunities because we don't see them — we are too busy thinking about how the circumstance affects us. Take a moment and look for any positive aspect of the situation, no matter how small. After you find one, look for another.

GET YOUR POUT OUT
To capture the opportunities in the present we have to get our pout out. Here are some ways to do that:

Acknowledge your feelings and move on. Give yourself permission to feel bad. You have one minute, starting now. Then let it go, get on with life and the situation you are in.

Hear the opportunity knocking. Remind yourself of the opportunities you may find in the situation, even if this isn't where you would prefer to be. Have you ever gone somewhere you didn't want to go and were surprised at how much fun you had? That could happen again in this situation. Be open to the opportunity.

Listen more completely. One of the best ways to become more present is to listen more carefully to those around you. Pay close attention. Listen for ideas and perspectives that interest you.

Observe more closely. You never know what you might miss. You never know what you will learn. Look for new directions, ideas, and consciously observe the situation from different perspectives.

Staying present, even in tough or challenging situations is true growth. Moving past the pouting moments give us a chance to find enjoyment, experience growth, and even improve our relationships, in situations that might not have seemed that favorable at the start.
Who are you? It’s the most fundamental of human questions. Are you the type of person who plays the baseball game; or the one who creates a sense of community by coordinating the game; or the one who watches and cheers from the comfort of an air-conditioned sky-box?

Our personalities are endlessly fascinating. As a highly social species, humans have to navigate among an astonishing variety of personalities. But how did all these different permutations come about? And what purpose do they serve?

The Five Factor Model slices temperaments into the major factors (Extraversion, Conscientiousness Neuroticism, Agreeableness, and Openness) and demonstrates how our genes and brains dictate which factors and facets each of us displays. Are you a Nervous Nelly? Your amygdale is probably calling the shots. Hyperactive Hal? It's all about the dopamine.

The Science
Scientists now believe that your personality is stable from Day 1. Traditionally, psychologists felt that genes were responsible for 50% of your personality, and the environment the rest. Increasingly, they see that genes dictate the type of environment a person will seek out. In other words, an extraverted child born to introverted parents will happily set forth, make new friends, and seek adventure. A conscientious person born to parents who are addicts or spendthrifts will still most likely emerge as a responsible member of society with high moral values – because they’ll do everything to avoid their parents’ influence.

Each of the five major personality types have six sub-types of their own, but this is great progress in classification, as there are roughly 17,000 words in the English language to describe personality traits. The last three types seem to overlap, but science contends that they are distinct. Finally, most people will identify with parts of each, but an extreme personality will overwhelmingly identify with one. They are:
NEUROTICISM. This is marked by a tendency to feel anxious, hypersensitive, and/or prone to depression. This personality type strives to avoid conflict and risk – which, for them, could range anywhere from scaling a wall to eating yesterday’s cold cuts. Scientists believe that too much serotonin, a chemical in the brain that has long been known to contribute to anxiety and depression, is responsible for the all-encompassing version known as neuroticism.

EXTRAVERSION. This type is marked by impulsivity, optimism and a desire for new experiences – which all sound great but also put one at risk for addiction and other behaviors that feel good in the short-term but have deleterious effects in the long. Neurologically, extraversion is marked by surges of dopamine – the brain’s pleasure chemical – that are more aggressive than the norm.

AGREEABLENESS. Someone who has an abundance of oxytocin, the bonding chemical that’s most often triggered after sex or when a woman gives birth, will be agreeable to the point of martyrdom. They are more apt to be taken advantage of at work, at home, by friends and are more likely to be gullible. But these people are also very cooperative, sympathetic and highly moral. (Psychopaths rank at the low end of the agreeableness spectrum.)

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS. This is an incredibly self-disciplined type who is able to take the long view in life. They are prone to financial stability, good health and nutrition and a love of order. They tend to be morning people. Here too, dopamine is a factor – but it’s the number of receptors, not so much the chemical itself.

OPENNESS. People who rank high here tend to be intellectual, creative and politically liberal. Studies point to a highly refined hippocampus, the small part of the brain that is the locus of learning and memory. It’s believed that these people may have a higher number of dopamine receptors in that specific area – and here, they’re different than other dopamine receptors in the brain.

Can you Change Your Personality?
The problem with the theory that we’re born “this way” is that it doesn’t really acknowledge the ways in which science has also proved that the human brain is quite capable of rewiring itself, expanding and creating new neural pathways. For example, learning how to play an instrument in adulthood will re-wire your brain, and the benefits extend to logical and interpretive thought – one may find they are solving problems more quickly, or approaching them from new angles.

Exercise actually changes the structure of the brain too, protecting against dementia by enlarging the hippocampus, which is also the seat of long-term memory. Cognitive behavioral therapy and meditation have also been shown to change the wiring and structure of the brain.

So, are we born this way or not? The answer seems to be “yes” – though if we work hard enough, we can change that.

Going Bonkers Magazine. Copyright 2011
Breaking up is hard to do – and expensive. That's why some couples choose to stay together, long after romance is dead, in a state of matrimony that can best be described as the "nondivorce."

Though the situation varies, a couple in a nondivorce usually remain living together under one roof, more like passionless roommates than spouses. There are no hard statistics, but some divorce experts say they're seeing more of this unromantic phenomenon, driven by three big financial factors: the high cost of legal fees in divorces; the expense of setting up two households; and the difficulty in obtaining adequate health insurance, especially if one spouse has a pre-existing condition.

In the past, couples stayed together because divorce carried a social stigma or was forbidden by religious teachings. But along with finances, there's another driving factor in today's not-quite-a-divorce arrangement: Many couples, turned off by their friends' bitter breakups, would rather stay together than endure the messiness, or inflict it upon their children.

The Non-Divorce: Pros and Cons
Breaking up a marriage is frightening, expensive and unsettling. That's why some couples choose to stay together even though there is no romance.

Pros: If you are living in a non-divorce, you live together like roommates instead of spouses. You meet and greet and do your own thing. There are no costly legal fees, no bitter divorce turmoil in your life which absorbs your time; the children are in tact as a family and you maintain your status in the community. In other words, no messy divorce, you just coast.

Cons: A non-divorce might come with hidden costs and rob you of health and happiness. Your passionate life turns to stone; you wear a mask, and you are not reaping the health benefits of a good marriage which boosts your immune system and improves your cardiovascular system. You may feel stuck and stressed because you settle for so much less.

A Practical Decision
Spouses who decide to stick together consider themselves "realistic people. Sometimes the arrangement allows parties to discreetly date other people while keeping up an illusion of marriage to children and the community. And finances significantly stay intact. They believe they are making pragmatic, businesslike decisions for their marriage.

Susan and her husband have been together for 26 years, but disagreements over their children's education strained their marriage about six years ago. The couple considered divorce but ultimately decided against it.

"Neither of us makes that much money, and if we had to separate, it would be a hardship for us," says Susan. The couple come from different socio-economic backgrounds and fought "like cats and dogs" when their daughter and son were in high school. Susan grew up...
middle class and wanted the children to take college-prep courses and attend top-ranked private universities. Her husband, from a lower-income background, didn't see the need and insisted they take classes at a less-prestigious city university. Susan decided divorce wasn't a good idea because split households would further the problem. "I didn't want him to influence the children," she says. "I felt if we were to stay married, I'd have more control over the outcome."

Though the outcome was a compromise – their daughter attended a city college but their son is enrolled in a private school – the battle wounds remain. Divorce, however, isn't in the picture. "We do love each other – it's just not as deep of a love that we had before," Susan says. "We are really, really good friends. And we trust each other. We're probably both scared to find new partners." At this point, the pair, both in their 50s, "are sticking together," she says. "It's not that severe of a case where we need to change our lives."

**Holding Out Hope**

Some spouses, of course, practice the nondivorce in the eternal hope that the relationship will eventually work out.

Lynn lives in the Midwest and has been married for 29 years but estranged for the past six years, although she and her husband occasionally travel together "like brother and sister." The couple has two adult children, and she hopes that someday she'll be in a happy marriage. "In my mind, I am still married and hope and pray for a miracle," she says.

There's been no infidelity, drugs, alcohol or physical or verbal abuse – just a falling out of love. For now, the two maintain separate households, and her husband pays the majority of the expenses, which she worries would change if they ever got a divorce. She describes her situation as "reasonable insanity." Though not happy, she's reluctant to dissolve the marriage because of finances; the effect it might have on their children; and the concern over breaking wedding vows. "It is not how I dreamed my marriage would end up," Lynn says. "I fell in love with him when I was young, and I still love him today, but in a different way."

**Opening Pandora's Box**

Psychologically, you may be opening a Pandora's box. Emotions run deep, even when a couple lead separate lives. Infidelity, in particular, can create bitterness. A couple wishing to stay married when the romance is gone should really think twice, for many reasons.

One question to ask yourself: Will you be leading a full life if you remain with your partner, with only the title of marriage, when there's nothing below the surface? Only you can answer this for yourself.

**Legal Considerations**

Some couples craft postnuptial or separation agreements, which divide assets while keeping the marriages technically intact. But it's not always easy to come up with an ideal legal solution. Legal action might be a better plan for a couple seriously considering divorce, but aren't ready to take the final step.

If you are considering divorce, but aren't positive yet, but know you can't stand to be together or need space, an initial step might be to resolve child support, custody and spousal support in family court, which can be accomplished even if there's no divorce petition pending. After that, you can decide what to do. Typically, couples who practice the nondivorce hash things out, informally, on their own. Avoidance of legal fees, after all, is one of the reasons they're staying together. But here are some legal options to consider:

- Resolve child support, custody and spousal support issues in family court. You can go to family court without an attorney – it's common – and get these issues resolved while married.

- Obtain a legal separation, which divides property and debt, and outlines custody and support issues while leaving the actual marriage intact. You can get creative in the separation agreement – it can be whatever arrangement the two of you agree on.

- Consider a postnuptial agreement, which outlines the division of financial accounts and assets. The postnup, less respected than prenups by the courts, can't strip a spouse of his or her marital rights. Some states don't recognize postnups, although they are becoming more popular.

**About the Author**

Colleen DeBaise is a reporter/writer on a variety of issues including, health care and retirement planning, and work/life balance. She has been interviewed on television and radio, including MSNBC, Fox Business News, CNBC, CBS and NPR. She was the winner of the Newswomen's Club of New York's Front Page Award for specialized writing. She has a master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University and a bachelor's degree in English from St. Lawrence University.

Note: This article is for information only and is not intended to give legal advice.
A man is dining in a fancy restaurant and there is a gorgeous redhead sitting at the next table. Suddenly she sneezes, and her glass eye comes flying out of its socket toward the man. He reflexively reaches out, grabs it out of the air, and hands it back. 'Oh my, I am so sorry,' the woman says as she pops her eye back in place. 'Let me buy your dinner to make it up to you,' she says. They enjoy a wonderful dinner together, and afterwards they go to the theatre followed by drinks. They talk, they laugh, she shares her deepest dreams and he shares his. After paying for everything, she asks him if he would like to come to her place for breakfast in the morning. They had a wonderful, wonderful time. The next morning, she cooks a gourmet meal with all the trimmings. The guy is amazed. Everything had been SO incredible! "You know," he said, 'you are the perfect woman. Are you this nice to every guy you meet?' "No", she replies, you just happened to catch my eye.

Once a captain on his ship was disturbed by his assistant telling him, "Sir! Sir! There are 5 enemy ships on the horizon." The captain tells the man," Get my red coat and prepare for battle!" The assistant runs without question to get the captain's red coat and prepares for battle. After their victory the assistant asks the captain why he wanted his red coat. The captain tells the assistant "If I was shot you would not be able to tell I'm bleeding and you would keep fighting." The assistant thought this was a great idea. The next day the assistant came to the captain, "Sir! Sir! There are twenty enemy ships on the horizon!" The captain was stunned. He looked at the assistant and told him "Go get me my brown pants!"

A wife went to the doctor and complained of insomnia. The doctor gave her a thorough exam and found nothing wrong. "Listen," said the doctor, "if you want to cure your insomnia, you have to stop taking your troubles to bed with you." "I know", said the wife, "but my husband refuses to sleep on the couch.

A guest in a fine hotel called room service and ordered two eggs, one runny and one overcooked, burnt bacon, cold toast, frozen butter, and very weak coffee. "That's a complicated order," room service replied. "It shouldn't be too difficult," the man replied, "that's what you gave me yesterday!"

A police recruit was asked during the exam, "What would you do if you had to arrest your own mother?" He answered, "Call for backup."

A frog telephones the Psychic Hotline and is told, "You are going to meet a beautiful young girl who will want to know everything about you." The frog says, "that is great! Will I meet her at a party?" "No," says the psychic, "Next semester in her biology class."

An old man wobbles into an ice cream shop. He has a hard time walking. He is hunched over. He goes up to the counter and says, "banana split, please." The lady at the counter replies, "crushed nuts?" The old man says, "no, arthritis."

Why are married women heavier than single women? Because single women come home, see what's in the fridge, and go to bed. While married women come home, see what's in the bed, and go to the fridge.
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It's the dreaded four-word phrase: “Can we be friends?” It's a classic break-up line, but it's also an issue that must be faced when a relationship hits the rocks. In reality, the questions ought to be "should we be friends?" And, if so, "how will we define that relationship?"

Below are some points to ponder when you’re considering whether to transition from lovers to friends, or whether to make a clean break.

**Evaluate your intentions**

Did you ask to be friends to simply soften the blow or was it genuine? Was it an easy way out? Take time to truly understand your motives for pursuing this relationship. If your motive is to seek closure, or you’re holding out the hope of rekindling your romance, then it’s best to let more time pass before you consider a friendship. If you are truly friends, time will not diminish that connection. Don’t rush into something that is unhealthy or dysfunctional.

**Assess their value**

It’s important that we fill our lives with people who bring value to our existence. Make a list of pros and cons to nurturing a friendship with your former partner. Realize that the same reasons that led to the break up may still exist in the friendship – they still have those habits that drove you nuts. Be prepared to acknowledge the fact that someone who was a critical part of your past may not have a place in your future.

**What will the nature of the friendship be?**

Remember what defines a friendship: conversation, connection, support and mutual interests. Will you remain close or does “Let’s just be friends” mean you’ll simply be pleasant when you happen to bump into each other? There are different types of friendships: friends you go out with, friends you see only on occasion, friends in whom you confide everything. Which category will your ex fall into?

**Can you take passion out of the equation?**

You've seen each other naked. It's difficult to bring a relationship back to its normal state after having been intimate with someone. You will always have an image of that person naked, and memories of the trysts will always be triggered by a spoken word, or a glance. As the old saying goes, sex changes everything. Relationships end, but that doesn’t mean attraction falls by the wayside. Watch out for leftover lust; it can send your move from passionate to platonic, and your new relationship, up in smoke.

**What about other romantic prospects?**

After a breakup, dating might seem like the last thing you want to do. But eventually it will happen. And staying friends with your ex could sabotage a future romance. Most people are far from keen on the idea of you fraternizing with a past lover. In fact, it breeds jealousy and distrust in new relationships. Another key question to ask yourself: How will you feel when your ex starts dating?

**Can you confide in each other?**

Once you break up, it can be hard to know what’s OK to discuss and what’s too personal to disclose. As a friend, can you really share and
tell your ex that you’re so excited about the hot date you had last night, or that you’re taking your new lover on a steamy getaway?

**Do either of you have any hidden bitterness or jealousy?**

Since breakups are rarely one-sided, one party likely feels resentment or bitterness toward the other. Even if your ex is feigning friendship, they may not sincerely be your friend. It’s human nature to be jealous or resentful when our ex finds a new person to cuddle up to, even if your feelings have faded. It becomes a race of who will find the new lover first, a challenge especially brought on by the person who was dumped. Even for the person who did the breaking up, the thought of someone else taking your place in the memories that you and your ex shared is hard, and sometimes extremely painful to fathom. Are you ready to confront those issues up close and personal?

**What will you get out of the relationship?**

When your ex offers to be friends with you, they may just be dangling a carrot. If they are the one who ended things, they know you still love him/her. Instead of letting you go, they’re stringing you along for their own selfish reasons. Being friends with you is the perfect way of breaking up s-l-o-w-l-y, so they don’t have to feel any pain. Your ex gets to see you, talk to you, email and text you - perhaps even still hang out with you. They get all the social and emotional benefits of having you around, but without any of the problems that were present in your relationship. You, on the other hand, get to pretend that you’re happy with this arrangement. It’s basically friendship or nothing, so you put on a happy face and agree to pull up a front row seat in the dreaded friend zone. As a “friend,” you listen supportively as they tell you about their new and wonderful relationship, but you secretly wish it were you.

**What’s your motive?**

Do some soul searching and ask yourself what your real motive is for wanting to remain friends. Are you keeping the connection, sort of on stand by – on the hope the romantic relationship will rekindle? Are you looking for a security blanket? Remaining friends seems to provide us with the security blanket that the person who has been in our life will still be there. We feel like we’re not actually giving up anything by ending the relationship. Be honest with yourself and your ex about your motives.

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**How To Be Happy**

Stop thinking about how to be happy in life. Instead, take the steps that are sure to bring you happiness.

**Simplify Your Life:** We make our lives complicated with busy schedules and too much stuff. When in doubt, choose less and simple.

**Be Satisfied:** Practice to be satisfied with what you have and what you can do instead of continuously asking for more.

**Be Cheerful:** Be cheerful and smile. Say kind words to a friend feeling down and you will be surprised by how it will uplift both of you.

**Go to Sleep:** One secret to a happy life is to be well-rested. This will help keep bad moods at bay.

**Hang Around Happy People:** Happiness is contagious.

**Learn How to Say No:** Say “no” if you don’t need it, don’t have time for it, or it will make you feel pressured, crowded, or rushed.

**Laugh:** Give laughter a try; laugh often and loud.

**Tolerate Your Own Mistakes:** Learn from your mistakes and stop blaming yourself.

**Forgive Yourself:** Forget the bad things you did in the past; forgive yourself and move on.

**Be Optimistic:** Expect good things; expect abundance.

**Look for a Hobby:** Involve yourself in sports or exercise. Physical fitness promotes happiness.

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By www.selfimprovementtips.com

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We frantically search for our "lost" keys that are lying in plain sight on the kitchen counter. We don't see the keys. Why? Because we already decided "the keys are not there." And once we make that decision, we create a blind spot in our awareness. The result is that we don't see the keys where we don't expect them to be.

If we miss seeing keys out in the open because we decide the keys aren't there, what else could we be missing because we decide it's not there? Could we be "blind" to other possibilities and opportunities that are right under our nose?

**What's New, Pussycat?**
A mind-blowing scientific experiment reveals how the early physical environment of kittens determines what they are able to see – and not see – as they grow up. Two-week-old kittens are placed in a room with walls painted with vertical stripes and kept there as they mature. Almost from the moment they are able to see, the kittens live in an environment of vertical stripes. Later, the cats' world changes. They're removed from their vertically striped surroundings and placed in a room painted with horizontal stripes. Surprisingly, our furry felines don't see the horizontal stripes. Bang! They run right smack into the walls painted with horizontal stripes, again and again. Why? Scientists discovered that because the cats don't have horizontal stripes in their environment as they grow up, the brains of the cats don't develop the neurons that recognize horizontal stripes. So when elements they've never been exposed to appear in the cats' world, their brains don't register the new elements in their environment. Yikes!

**What'd You Say?**
Studies with babies reveal how the early auditory environment of babies determines what they are able to hear – and not hear – as they grow up. Research shows that young babies have the ability to hear the full range of vocal sounds produced by the speech of all the human languages in the world. But then, babies are raised hearing only the narrow range of speech sounds within their social environment. Eventually, because they hear solely the speech sounds found within one culture, babies lose their ability to distinguish the full range of vocal sounds found in all human cultures.

This helps explain why, in everyday life, we're not able to recognize – or "hear" – concepts that we weren't exposed to in our upbringing.

**Casting a Spell of Limitations**
We all grow up in families and societies where we are only exposed to a limited view of life – like kittens only viewing vertical stripes and babies only hearing speech sounds from their social environment. Our "stripes" consist of a limited range of cultural patterns of sights and sounds.

Growing up in a limited environment has a comparable effect to being hypnotized. For example, when people are hypnotized, they can be told that certain elements exist or don't exist in their environment. With hypnotic suggestion, a person can be told that there are no red books in a bookstore. And, although many of the books are red, the person won't see any red books. The hypnotic suggestion creates a blind spot, or filter, in the person's perception of the world.

Similarly, we're hypnotized by our parents and society to see certain aspects of reality – and not to see other aspects. Then, as adults, we only see the range of possibilities that we were exposed to as we grew.
up. We don't recognize any alternatives outside of the range of viewpoints presented to us in our youth. By the very nature of how we're raised, we develop blind spots. And these blind spots often prevent us from seeing – and taking advantage of – opportunities that are life-enriching and valuable to us.

"The Way Life Is"
When we're young, we learn a lot about "the way life is" by observing the adults in our lives. And these adults can, for the most part, only pass along their limited views of life.

For example, did you grow up being instilled with the viewpoint that "people work at jobs they don't like to pay the bills?" If you were exposed solely to this narrow perspective about work, you might not recognize the available option that people work at jobs they love that also pay the bills, or that many follow their passion and start their own business.

When you were young, perhaps you noticed that "many adults compromise and sacrifice in order to make a relationship work." Spell-bound by watching this model of how partnerships function, you might not be able to see another viable alternative in which "adults find ways for relationships to be easy, fun and mutual."

If all you saw as a child was that "people become more stubborn and opinionated as they grow older," then you wouldn't have it in your realm of possibilities that "people become more flexible and allowing as they grow older."

When our role models demonstrate that it's "normal" to have jobs without passion or relationships without mutuality, we don't see other options when we become adults. When our elders aren't open and adaptable, we find ourselves accepting rigidity and narrow-mindedness as normal.

Unfortunately, the cats keep bumping into horizontal stripes for the rest of their lives. Likewise, many of us keep bumping into our "invisible" limits too. But we don't have to.

**Intuition Saves the Day**
There's a way around the fact that our mind is programmed with limitations. We've got intuition! Using intuition, it doesn't matter that our brain doesn't see or hear new life opportunities. Only the mind is restricted by the narrow options of childhood. Only the mind is hypnotized. Our intuition doesn't have these limitations.

Using intuition, we have a natural ability to see into our blind spots. Although the brain doesn't develop neurons to recognize "horizontal stripes," intuition can detect them. Although the mind is hypnotized not to discern red books, intuition can discern them. Not being brainwashed with limitations, intuition can see options the mind doesn't see. Intuition can lead us to options that didn't exist in our childhood environment.

If we truly desire to discover fresh options, our intuition will guide us all the way – there are lots of other fulfilling alternatives out there. We just don't always see them. The more we stop looking with our minds and start listening to our intuition, the more opportunities we'll see for happiness and prosperity.

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**About the Author**

Keith Varnum shares his practical approach to transformation as an author, radio host and "Dream Workshops" facilitator. Keith helps people get love, money, health and spirit with his free Prosperity Ezine, free Empowerment CD and free Coaching at www.TheDream.com

"I’m getting treatment for refusing to go to my Avoidance therapy class."
Have you lost your job? If so, you’re not alone. Despite the news reports that we’re coming out of the recession, companies are continuing to cut back jobs, downsize and restructure operations, causing many people to be faced with the reality of lost employment.

As you face the uncertainty of the future, you may wonder: How will I pay my bills? What is going to happen to my family? How do I define myself when people ask me what I do?

Fran knew how it felt to lay employees off. She worked twenty-four years in human resources, and she sometimes had the unpleasant job of firing a worker. Then, in October, Fran herself was fired. She had just finished training her new assistant, a much younger woman with an advanced college degree. Fran was stunned and angry. She felt cheated and lied to by her superiors.

Like Fran, it’s natural to respond to an involuntary loss of a job with feelings of:

- Anger and betrayal
- Sadness or depression
- Shock and denial
- Longing for the old job
- Embarrassment

**Emotional Effects of Job Loss**

A job loss can be one of the most devastating events in life. The psychological toll can be as important as any of the financial problems that may result. As far as stressful events go, losing a job ranks just slightly behind the death of a loved one and a divorce.

We have an emotional investment in our jobs that can cause pain when we are asked to leave before we’re ready. The loss of work is much like other losses in our lives – it causes considerable grief and suffering. All job losses sting. The amount of sting depends on how critical the job was to your identity. Some people define themselves by what they do for a living, while others treat work as a required activity with no connection to their “real” lives. For that reason, emotional reactions to job loss can range from moderate disappointment to depression.

Individuals who over-identify with their jobs often blame themselves when they are laid off. They turn this hostility inward, experiencing it as depression. Others blame everyone but themselves, focusing their hostility outward on the company, a supervisor, even their parents or upbringing.

**If You’ve Been Fired**

Call it what you want – being fired, getting laid off, being asked to leave, terminated or downsized. No matter how you cut it, getting the proverbial pink slip is devastating to not only your bank account, but to your morale and ego as well. First of all, don't beat yourself up. Getting fired can happen to the best of us. Don't dwell on it. Instead, focus on the here and now.

**Don’t Panic.** It’s natural to have a million worries after being laid off, but if you panic, you are essentially...
giving in to all of them. Instead of letting fear and panic get the better of you, stay calm and take things one day at a time.

**Address Your Feelings and Seek Help.** Acknowledge and accept your feelings. There is no “wrong” way to feel during this difficult time. Find a support group that focuses on helping those who have lost their job. If a group is not available, find someone with whom you can share your concerns.

**Coping with Your Anger.** Talk it out. Whether it’s a best friend or a life coach, it’s important to talk about what happened, how it happened and how you feel about it. You feel angry, right? So say it. Don’t shove that feeling down; give a voice to that anger.

**Moving On.** As hard as it may be, and it is hard, you need to get over getting fired and move on. You need to be able to convince employers that, regardless of what happened in the past, you are a strong candidate for the position and can do the job. Focusing on the skills and experience you have, rather than the firing, will help sell you to the employer and will help you get the job.

**Coping Day to Day**

Now is the time to sit down and get organized and centered. Start by making a big gratitude list -- just say ‘Here are all the things in my life I am very thankful for.’ This realization will help keep you centered.

Next, take practical actions steps to better cope with the stress of losing your job:

- Recognize you have a temporary job; it is to find a job. Get up each day, get dressed, and follow your plan.
- Seek wise counsel who will help you honestly and candidly address and evaluate your strengths and weaknesses. Recognize this evaluation has the potential to make you more marketable. Address any weaknesses and make a plan (i.e. improve your computer skills, volunteer at an organization where you could expand your skills, etc.).
- Make a schedule for contacting companies and develop a follow-up plan.
- Attend events in your industry as a way of getting job leads and developing new contacts.
- Pursue a variety of options so when one resource fails, you still have others available.
- Care for your emotional, physical, and spiritual well being through regular exercise (a stress reducer), eat well, avoid excessive caffeine and sugar, and focus on the positive.
- Network, network, network. Contact ten to twenty people a day. Each person you meet has the potential of knowing 250 people you don’t know. Networking expands your opportunities to hear about job openings not listed to the public. Watch for networking opportunities in all situations.

**Addressing the “Firing”**

How do you list “fired” on your resume? You don’t. Your job search written correspondence must be positive. Don’t mention that you were fired in your resume or in your cover letters. During the interview, explain why you were fired (downsizing, merger) if it wasn’t your fault. If it was your fault, tell the interviewer you learned a lesson and explain how you benefited from the experience. Take the negative and turn it into a positive. Take time to prepare answers to questions about being fired so you know exactly how you are going to answer.

**Legal Issues**

As you begin a job search consider where you stand from a legal perspective.

Are you eligible for unemployment benefits? If you were fired for misconduct you may not be eligible, but, don’t presume that is the case. Apply immediately for unemployment benefits.

Was your firing legitimate or could it be considered wrongful termination? If you feel anger, it may be because you feel you were unfairly fired. But just because you were fired unfairly may not mean you were wrongfully terminated under the law.

It is unlawful for an employer to fire you because of race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, age, or pregnancy, or in retaliation for reporting any of these protected traits. But it’s not unlawful if you were fired because your personality clashed with your boss – it’s unfair but not unlawful. In many ways, the law protects employers, even when they act unfairly.
If you were fired unfairly, or feel you are soon to lose your job, it is a good idea to seek the advice of a lawyer who can determine if your case constitutes wrongful termination – but do this immediately, as there is a relative short time period that you can bring legal action.

If you are fired by your employer, you may be offered a severance package. It is in your best interest to review the severance package with an attorney to protect your rights with respect to the terms of the severance being offered; issues such as continuation of insurance coverage; amount of compensation you’ll receive; and other valuable benefits that you may be entitled. But because this is such an emotional time for you, you should not sign such an agreement without taking several days to thoroughly review it.

You Are Not Your Job

Start to adjust to this new reality by knowing that you are NOT your job. You are still the same talented, capable, lovable person you were before you lost your job. Remember, no matter the role you play, or hat you wear, or the income your earn, the real “you” and your talent remains unchanged.

People suffering from schizophrenia, delusional disorder, or other psychotic disorders sometimes pass their symptoms along to those close to them.

The medical literature on shared psychotic disorder consists almost exclusively of anecdotal cases with virtually no statistical data, but there are some patterns.

Married couples and siblings are most likely to share psychoses, with sisters being more common than brothers. Ninety-five percent of cases occur within a nuclear family. The person with the root disorder, who usually experiences more severe symptoms, is often emotionally or financially dominant. The pair frequently lives in geographic, linguistic, or social isolation.

Shared psychotic disorder was first identified in France in 1860 by Jules Baillarger. It has been known at various times as communicated insanity, contagious insanity, and folie à deux (“madness of two”). It comes in several varieties. The most widely reported is folie imposée, when an affected person passes his symptoms to someone who has never shown signs of psychological problems. The recipient’s condition usually improves without medication when the pair is separated. If it doesn’t, the case is diagnosed as folie communiquée. Less common is folie simultanée, where two previously healthy individuals simultaneously develop symptoms.

Not all doctors consider this a true shared psychotic disorder, since it lacks the classic dominant-subservient relationship component, and it’s impossible to tell whether the two patients would have developed symptoms on their own.

Like other contagious diseases, psychosis can become something of a mini-epidemic. There have been reported cases of folie à trois, folie à quatre, and even folie à famille, in which one person – almost always the father – drives his entire nuclear family to mental instability.

So the next time you hear someone declare that their spouse is driving them crazy, they just might be right!

"You're retaining water and holding a grudge."
Sitting at the counter with my friend, drinking my favorite chocolate milkshake, life changed for me that afternoon. That was many years ago, but I remember it like it was yesterday.

I sat silently as my friend, George, reached over and arrogantly took the waitress's tip that was left by the neighboring customer, and proudly slipped it into his pocket. Right in front of me! Maybe I was stunned, I don’t know, but I didn’t speak up. I just sat there, silently.

George was the son of the guy who owned the bank in town. He lived in the house with the pool. He had maids and gardeners. He got that red convertible on his 16th birthday. He was that guy that everyone wanted to be close to but secretly resented, and he was my friend. He liked me, so therefore I was cool and I got to ride in that car.

He didn’t need the $1.20 tip that was left on the counter. But he took it, and he gave me a smile that ruptured my belly, and yet I stayed silent. The waitress came by to pick up the dishes on the counter next to us. She looked for her tip, and then without a pause, she went about her business.

When she was out of ear shot, I asked George what made him take her tip. He smirked and said, “It was there.” That was it. Somewhere in there he jumped off his stool and said, “Gotta go.” He left as I silently finished my milkshake.

I often studied in the public library that was across the street from the restaurant. When I left the library that night, I saw our waitress waiting for a bus on a bench across the street, counting her change. Out of her uniform she looked different. I noticed her worn shoes and her tired eyes. I could hardly swallow. She saw me watching her and she shyly looked down. I didn’t say anything. I just walked.

I never rode in George’s convertible after that. We rarely spoke. I don’t know if that afternoon changed him, but it definitely changed me. To this day, I always leave a little extra tip. Also, I have given myself permission to speak my truth. I vowed never to be silent again. But more importantly, I discovered compassion.

I am thankful to the waitress and the price she paid for helping me open my heart so I could feel the suffering of others, and for helping me open my mouth so I can now speak out when I see injustice. I also want to thank George. He helped me discover how deeply I care for others; that there is more to life than riding in a red convertible; and that there are many ways of going through this life – we can either create disturbance or create loving. It’s a choice. Thanks to George, I know what I’m choosing. Which do you choose?
EYE OF THE BIRD
An ancient Indian sage was teaching his students the art of archery. He put a wooden bird as the target and asked them to aim at the eye of the bird. The first student was asked to describe what he saw. He said, "I see the trees, the branches, the leaves, the sky, the bird and its eye." The sage asked this student to wait. Then he asked the second student the same question and he replied, "I only see the eye of the bird." The sage said, "Very good, then shoot." The arrow went straight and hit the eye of the bird.

Moral: Only when we focus on our goal, can we reach it.

THE SMILE
It costs nothing, but gives much. It enriches those who receive it, without making poorer those who give it. It takes a moment, but the memory of it sometimes lasts forever. A smile creates happiness in the home, fosters good will in business, and is the countersign of friendship. It brings rest to the weary, cheer to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad, and it is nature’s best antidote for trouble. Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed, or stolen, for it is something that is of no value to anyone, until it is given away.

Moral: Some people are too tired to give you a smile, so give them one of yours, as no one needs a smile as much as the person who doesn’t have one.

THE MOUSE TRAP
A mouse looked through the crack in the wall to see the farmer and his wife open a package. He was devastated to discover it was a mousetrap. Retreating to the farmyard, the mouse proclaimed the warning: “There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!” The chicken couldn’t be bothered with such news. The pig sympathized with the mouse, but said there was nothing he could do but keep the mouse in his prayers. The cow replied, “it’s no skin off my nose.” So the mouse returned to the house to face the mousetrap alone. That very night a sound was heard throughout the house – the sound of a mousetrap catching its prey. In the darkness, the farmer’s wife reached for the trap to dispose of it, and did not see it was a venomous snake whose tail the trap had caught. The snake bit her. The farmer rushed her to the hospital and she returned home with a fever. Everyone knows you treat a fever with fresh chicken soup, so the farmer took his hatchet to the farmyard for the soup’s main ingredient. But his wife’s sickness continued, so friends and neighbors came to sit with her around the clock. To feed them, the farmer butchered the pig. And as her illness continued, and even more people came, he slaughtered the cow to provide enough for all of them. The mouse looked upon it all from his crack in the wall with great sadness.

Moral: When someone is facing a problem and you’re tempted to think it doesn’t concern you, remember: when one of us is threatened, we are all at risk. We are all together in this journey called life. Each of us is a vital thread in another person’s tapestry.

A poor fisherman and a wealthy businessman were both sitting near the seashore, under the shadow of a tree, relaxing. The business man inquired as to why he was sitting under a tree, instead of working. To fisherman replied that he had caught enough fish for the day. Hearing this the rich man asked, “Why don’t you catch more fish instead of sitting here?” The fisherman asked, “Why should I catch more fish?” The business man explained, “Well, you could catch more fish, sell them, and earn more money. Then you could buy a bigger boat, and go fishing in deeper water, and earn even more money. Then you could buy more boats and employ more people. You’d be rich, and then you could afford to relax!” The fisherman replied, “but I’m relaxing now.”

Moral: You don’t need to be rich or powerful to enjoy life. Life is this moment – enjoy it fully.
Have you ever heard the expression, 'It's not what you're saying – it's how you're saying it'? If you're not winning the dates or jobs you think you deserve, you might want to take a closer look at what you're saying – not just verbally, but nonverbally. While you might be saying, “I’m the one for you,” your body might be saying something very different.

Words are only a small part of communication. The most influential parts of communication are nonverbal. True communication goes beyond words, and great communicators use every tool they have to deliver their message. When you have control of your nonverbal language, you can communicate confidence with passion, persuasion, credibility, and candor – factors that will help you soar above your competition, both personally and professionally.

Here are some important Nonverbal DOS and DON'TS:

DON'T fill the air with um, ah, uh, and you know. It is natural to pause when you speak – it gives you a chance to breathe. What's not natural is to fill the silent pause with um, ah, uh, you know, and other sounds. Verbal pauses are distracting and muddle what you are trying to say. The listener sees you searching for the next words. Meaningless extra words make you look less intelligent. Your message will be more effective once you eliminate them. This takes practice. Practice often means saying a verbal pause and noticing that you did it. If you catch yourself doing it less often, then you are making progress. Eventually, the silent pause will replace the verbal pause. Remember, you don't have to fill every minute of airtime with noise.

DON'T use the fig-leaf pose. By placing your hands to cover the groin region, you're making yourself look visually smaller. Your body says, 'I'm harmless,' or 'I'm afraid.' It's not exactly the way to convey confidence.

DO use hand gestures systematically. When we use only words to convey our message, we make it necessary for our audience to pay very close attention to what we say. Using hand gestures, especially when giving directions or teaching, makes the listener less dependent on what you're verbally saying. The visual reminder created by gestures allows the listener two ways to remember: auditory and visual, and it increases the likelihood that they'll remember what you said.

continued next page
DON'T put your hands in your pockets. Thumbs hanging off the pockets and hands deep in both pockets both say "Geez, I hope you like me." Hands deep in the pockets jingling change say one of two things, depending on context: "Geez, I'm nervous and hope you like me," or, "Geez, I'm so bored. Is this ever going to be over?" Pockets and waistbands can convey multiple meanings depending on where the hands or thumbs are placed. thumbs tucked in the waistband usually say, 'I am staking my territory,' which is a gesture of power, not influence. Thumbs displayed while the hands are tucked in the pockets say, 'I know I am superior and I believe I have dominance.' Pockets and waistbands are not a good place to rest your hands in business situations. You want to convey to those you work with, or hope to work, with that you are confident in yourself and those around you.

DON'T hide your hands behind your back. Depending on the situation, grasping your hands behind your back can be interpreted as meaning, "I hope you like me," or, "You better fear me." Neither interpretation leaves a very good impression of you. This can be a tough movement to break because it feels so comfortable and natural. People often don't know what to do with their hands, so they will start with the fig leaf, and then when they realize where their hands are, they will quickly move their hands behind their backs. The best way to break yourself of this habit is to practice being comfortable with your hands straight down by your sides – after all it is the natural place for them to be. Take notice of when you use this move-}

ment. Once you know what kind of situation elicits this motion, you can begin to consciously break yourself of the habit.

DON'T cross your arms. This stance is most frequently understood to indicate upset or discomfort. In business, it says, "I am not open to discussion," or, "I am annoyed." People habitually cross their arms over their chests when listening or waiting, so this gesture can be a hard one to overcome. Those who know us well may look at our arms across our chest and make nothing of it, thinking, Oh that's just what John does when he listens. Since the crossed-arms gesture is one of the most misinterpreted nonverbals, don't do it. Why give others the chance to misunderstand?

DO know when to put your hands on your hips. This is a ready-to-take-action gesture – think gunfight in the old west. It makes most people appear bigger, because they are actually taking up more space. Yet, it is often given negative labels by others, such as meaning you are annoyed, closed, or won't listen, similar to placing your arms across your chest. You have to be careful when you place your hands on your hips, because it is interpreted differently depending on the situation. It might be a great way to convey to a potential employer after an interview that you are ready for the challenges ahead. But use it during a difficult conversation with a family member, and he might think you are nonverbally voicing your annoyance with him.

DO stop fidgeting. Unintentional gestures are emotional reactions, or the result of the body's desire for physical comfort and are often lovingly called fidgets. Even though fidgets can calm us, those pesky, jerky movements or anxious behaviors often make others uneasy. Because they often become habits, they can be difficult to stop, so people usually try to disguise them – adjusting a cuff link, rubbing an earlobe, and picking lint off clothes are just a few examples of the infamous fidget. The quickest way to calm yourself without a fidget or two is by pushing your own internal fidget reboot button – breathing. Since you're nervous – and fidgeting is so automatic – it can take a bit more effort to be aware you are doing them. If you know

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you will be entering a 'fidget' situation, make an effort to become consciously aware of, and control your breathing. Once you are aware, breathe with low, full abdominal breaths. The purpose is to bring the carbon dioxide and oxygen levels back in balance. Remember to maintain low, slow abdominal breathing.

When it comes to inspiring and influencing others, we can say all the right words, but if our nonverbal language sends a different message, that is what others will understand and take away.

When you learn to communicate not only through what you say but also through what your body says, you can build stronger relationships, and receive enthusiastic responses from family members, friends, potential employers, and colleagues. You will start coming through loud and clear!”

### The Verbal Pause-Busting Cheat Sheet

It is natural to pause when you speak – and take a breath. What's not natural is to fill the silent pause with *um, ah, uh, you know,* and other sounds. These verbal pauses are distracting and muddle what you are trying to say. Here's how to eliminate them:

- Keep breathing. Maintain low natural breathing.
- Fill the silence with a gesture and/or smile.
- Use shorter sentences.
- Eliminate the reasons for audible pauses, which include lack of familiarity with the topic, discomfort with silence, nervousness, habit or shallow breathing.
- Practice beforehand. Record yourself and listen for your favorite verbal pause fillers.

The *ums, ahs, uhs,* and *you knows* are warning signs that you need to breathe. When you run out of oxygen and your brain starts feeding unintelligible words to your mouth, stop talking and start breathing!

### The Confidence-Boosting Cheat Sheet

The most influential parts of communication are your nonverbals. Your nonverbals can actually destroy or produce the results you want. When you are trying to display self-confidence, your nonverbals are especially important. Here's how you can use them to show you are a confident power player:

- Move with intent. Weight evenly centered over hips whether moving or not.
- Use more eye contact than you normally do. Limit blinking.
- Be slow to smile.
- Use side palm hand gestures to punctuate what you are saying.
- When not speaking, hold arms either at your sides or parallel to the ground.
- Use the connection voice for personal relationships and the credible voice for business:

  **Connection voice:** This voice pattern is used to seek information, soften news, and create an emotional connection. To achieve it, use clear articulation and pacing of words. End each statement with the voice going up. Lightly bob your head as your voice flows up and down in a rhythmic pattern.

  **Credible voice:** This is the voice pattern to use when stressing or sending information and working with issues. To achieve it, maintain clear articulation as well as distinct pauses and controlled pacing of words.

- Use clear articulation and pacing of the words – a calm cadence.
- Use short pauses between segments of statements and a longer pause at end of each statement.
- Maintain low natural breathing.

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### About the Author

Sharon Sayler, MBA, is author of *What Your Body Says (and how to master the message): Inspire, Influence, Build Trust, and Create Lasting Business Relationships.* She teaches people how to speak and present to be remembered. As a certified group dynamics and behavioral coach, Sharon trains, counsels, and coaches professionals to become stronger, more influential communicators and leaders. Sharon is an active contributor to SelfGrowth.com, has, for the past two-and-a-half years, written the weekly blog *Best Impressions,* and is host of BlogTalkRadio’s *Beyond Lip Service.* Visit Sharon online at [www.WhatYourBodySays.com](http://www.WhatYourBodySays.com)
Some people lure romance to them. Some folks magnetize riches. Others attract bugs. What's the difference? Consciousness! The third group has "bug consciousness." If you attract more bugs than love and money – at least sometimes – then read on!

Forget the Swat Team

Flies flock around you, but steer clear of the person standing next to you. Mosquitoes bite you through gobs of repellent. Yet, there are other times when you forget to apply your protection and mosquitoes leave you alone. What's going on here? What makes some people irresistible to bugs and others immune? Why do mosquitoes have you for lunch one day and leave you alone the next?

Your Vibes Magnetize

To get a clearer picture, let's look at attraction between people. When we meet a group of strangers, how do we tell which people we want to get closer to? We know. We "feel" them. We sense who's relaxed and who's angry, who's happy and who's sad, who's open and who's closed. We are drawn to certain people by the vibration they transmit. Tuning into the state of people's energy is a natural ability all people have.

Bugs have the same innate ability. Insects are magnetized to certain people. Bugs are attracted by the quality of energy people radiate. The pesky pests can detect the emotional state of a person. And bugs' favorite emotions? Anger and irritation! Bugs adore us when we're feeling bugged! When we're frustrated, we're the nectar du jour.

"Grasshopper," you might exclaim, "you've gone a few jumps too far!" I understand your reaction. I didn't believe this explanation either – at first.

I heard about the dynamics of "bug consciousness" from Eastern masters and shamans. Curious about how this rather bothersome state works in practical terms, I conducted my own research – on myself! While experimenting, I came up with a simple process I call, Find It, Feel It, Free It.

"Which Came First? The Bug or the Anger?"

The experiment began when I found myself surrounded by a bunch of buzzing bugs. The critters were driving me bananas! They were really annoying and made me angry.

So, I posed the question, "Which came first – the bugs or the anger?" Could it be that first I felt irritated and then this agitated energy attracted the bugs? Are the insects letting me know I'm carrying around some upset I'm not aware of?

Find It – What's Bugging You?

To find out if bugs do reflect people's suppressed feelings, I asked myself questions about my life that mimic the relationship between me and my insect harassers, "What issue is buzzing around that I'm trying to brush away?" "What person's getting under my skin?" or "What situation is itching for a resolution?"

I discovered that when I'm bugged by insects, I do have upsets and irritations that I wasn't previously aware of. Sometimes the suppressed unconscious feelings are about a car that cut me off in traffic, a hassle at the supermarket, or by the fact that I overate . . . again! Sometimes I don't realize that I'm mad at my boss, friend or parent. Or that I'm worried about paying a bill or losing my job.

I realize now that bugs are our allies! These winged messengers are letting us know that unresolved emotions are still festering inside, draining our energy, creativity and joy.

Feel It – Move the Energy of Irritation

Once some degree of stuffed emotion is discovered, the next step is to release it.

One tool that helps dislodge the energy of emotion is our breath. Controlled breathing helps break up the dense, thick, stuck energy of heavy emotions. Then the dislodged stress and uncomfortable feelings can be released through a relaxed exhale. The more you welcome and accept your feelings, instead of repressing or pushing them away, the more the energy has room to
move and shift. And when emotions start moving, it may feel like lightness or spaciousness – or like tingling electricity or waves moving through the body.

Free It – Shift Your Vibration

When your feelings about a situation are fully experienced, the energy around the situation shifts and transforms. We gain a fresh outlook around the issue; our attitude changes; and we feel more grounded, connected, real, peaceful, open and happy. We’re free! And once the irritation is gone, the bugs bug out! You are no longer creating a "buzz" for the bugs to be attracted to.

Bug-B-Gone

The next time you’re being bugged by bugs, instead of crushing the critters, realize they have a magnetic crush on you. They’re under your spell. To repel the pests, you can choose to shift out of bug-attracting consciousness. Try your own experiment with Find It, Feel it, and Free it. When you change your vibration, your pesty buddies will go find a new friend. 😊

About the Author

Keith Varnum shares his practical approach to transformation as an author, radio host and "Dream Workshops" facilitator. Keith helps people get love, money, health and spirit with his free Prosperity Ezine, free Empowerment CD and free Coaching at www.TheDream.com.
Your Best Life

How can you live your best life? These 5 tips will get you on your way:

1. **Don't compare your life to others.** One of the best secrets to living your best life is to be your own person. This simply means that your best life doesn't have to be patterned on somebody else's. Live it the way you want it to be. Seek the things that will make you happy.

2. **Keep yourself healthy.** Being sick brings a lot of misery not only physically but also emotionally and socially. Make it a point to give a huge emphasis on your health. It’s a simple formula – eat wisely; exercise or move; get enough rest; and drink plenty of water.

3. **Maintain a good financial life.** Debt equals stress. You can have control over your finances. Avoid using credit cards, and if you have debt, make a plan to pay it off. Save, save, save – at least 20% of your salary each payday.

4. **Avoid being so controlling.** Accept the fact that there are so many things you have no control over. You don’t know the future, and you can’t control every outcome.

5. **Get rid of Toxins.** Life is filled with toxins, including toxic people. Toxins are a barrier to your best life – work to get them out of your life.

A Power Struggle

**Q:** I have been married for two years and have not worked since I got married. I thought I would enjoy the “tennis life,” but I am bored and find my husband, “the breadwinner,” to be very controlling with the “bread.” He decides everything from movies to groceries to investments. What do I do about my anger and resentment? How do I change the life he thought I agreed to?

**A:** You have identified two important issues. One is your boredom and apparent need to add interest to your personal and professional life. The other issue relates to your husband and your “rules” about money management.

For many couples in our society, money equals power. Since work outside the home typically pays better, the spouse at home usually has less money and often feels less power about decisions requiring money. Of course, it does not have to be this way nor is this the best arrangement. Healthy relationships are based on mutual respect and a balance of power. The one-up-one-down relationship fosters resentment and blocks intimacy.

I encourage you to discuss your feelings with your husband and propose what you would like to see happen regarding decision-making. Try to get clear in your own mind what you want first. It may be joint decision-making, alternating who makes the decision (such as this week you decide the movie, restaurant, etc., and next week he decides) or dividing up areas of primary responsibility.

It is clear, however, that after two years the “rules” (written or unwritten) of your relationship need to be reviewed. This is actually a very positive step. Many people so not realize that relationship rules and expectations should and do change over time. A relationship review and personal inventory can be a productive and healthy way to start the next year for most people.

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Dr. Janet Greenwood is a licensed Marriage & Family therapist, specializing in relationship issues in her private practice for over 20 years. For more information about Janet’s Couple’s Programs or an immediate download of her E-book, "Rescue Your Marriage In 5 Hours: An Imago Guide For Couples In Crisis," please visit www.marriagehealers.com.
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A growing body of research has found a connection between couples and weight. Not only do women and men who live together tend to gain weight at similar times, they also are more likely to achieve better results if they tackle weight loss as a couple. You put on that marital-bliss belly together, and now it’s time to take it off as a team.

Here are strategies to ensure that getting hitched isn’t the end of healthy living – together, you can eat better, exercise more, and fight fat.

Make time for sleep
Getting adequate sleep is super important to achieving – and maintaining – weight loss. Missing out on shut-eye can impair your metabolism and upset the body’s natural appetite signals. It increases ghrelin, a hormone that increases appetite, and decreases leptin, a hormone that tells us when we’ve had enough to eat. Messing with this killer combo is a surefire way to overeat. To help each other hit the hay, create a wind-down routine. This can include anything from setting out your clothes for the next day to doing a few relaxing stretches before slipping between the sheets. Stay away from talking about your to-do list or other stressful conversation topics right before bed.

Display your fittest pics
Which activity would you rather remember: the time you bicycled across the big bridge, or the time you stuffed yourself on Thanksgiving? Displaying photos of you being active as a couple acts as a constant reminder of how you plan to live your life together. When you see yourself being active, you’ll be inspired to plan your next trip or weekend adventure.

Keep a couple’s calendar
A calendar offers more than just inspiration to plan ahead – a crucial habit for healthy eating and making time for fitness (and each other). It’s also a great place to keep track of daily and weekly goals. Having your milestones out in the open keeps you honest and gives partners an opportunity to track progress and celebrate success. Turn your calendar into a weight loss tool by color-coding different types of activities. Keep track of mealtimes using a green marker, exercise and opportunities to be active with a red marker, work and other obligations in blue marker. This is a visual reminder to make sure you have a balanced week that incorporates both work and play.

Get more cooks in the kitchen
Even if one person tends to be the chef in the family, there are plenty of other jobs to go around when it comes to preparing meals and keeping healthy snacks at the ready. Shopping and stocking the fridge for whatever recipe is on the menu, cutting vegetables or fruit for healthy grab-and-go snacks, and organizing the pantry so smart choices are in front are no-cook jobs that couples can share. Making healthy foods available can be time-consuming for just one person, but having a partner in food prep leaves more time for fun.

Accept your dietary differences
Sharing is caring, but it’s unlikely the two of you need the same calorie counts to lose or maintain your weight. You should have an equal partnership, but your portions likely won’t match. There’s nothing...
more wonderful than sitting down to eat together, but that’s challenging when one is a speed-eater who inhales a meal. Try to keep pace with each other. This practice will help the partner who’d normally finish first to avoid going back for seconds.

Take a walk and talk
Instead of plopping in front of the TV after dinner, take a romantic walk around your neighborhood. In addition to burning off that extra serving of pasta, you’ll be able to enjoy some time to yourselves: no entertainment, no work, no chores, just the evening air and a little conversation. And street clothes are fine. The intent is not to go out and exercise – it’s to add activity and enjoy time together.

Discover a different type of date night
Planning an evening that revolves around eating won’t bode well for your waistlines. Instead, make sitting down to dinner the date’s final destination, and spend the first half of your night exploring the neighborhood surrounding the restaurant. Or, ditch date night for date day. A daytime date busts you out of the dinner-and-a-movie rut, and opens the door to activities like hiking, kayaking, and bicycling (weather permitting). And eating isn’t out of the question – lunch menus usually offer lighter fare in smaller portions so you can dine without derailing your diet.

Get Fit, Be Flirty and Have Fun – Together.

We love the idea of staying fit as a couple – not just for the obvious health benefits, but also for the bonding experiences. Here are a few that will keep you fit:

Take a dance class together
Take the romance up a notch by learning to salsa, tango, waltz, even tap-dance. Not only will you burn a few hundred calories per session, but your friends will be so impressed the next time they see the two of you bust a move.

Wash the car
Don't think of car-washing as a chore. Winter's over, so take advantage of the sunny weather to have a little flirty outdoor fun. Who knows what kinds of shenanigans you can pull with a hose, wet clothes and a bucket of sudsy water!

Walk, hike, explore
Walk and explore your nearest state park with your partner. Bring a picnic basket (full of healthy food, of course!) for when you need to cool down.

Fly kites
If you're feeling particularly artsy, make the kite together before taking it out on a windy day.

Bike instead of drive
Google Maps has bicycle paths now, so why not? Switch up your weekend routine by biking to your favorite cafe. Afterward, go explore nooks and crannies that you can't access by car.

Split a dessert
Can't resist the chocolate fudge sundae? Find a healthy alternative with yogurt and save the money and calories by sharing. You'll feel like teenagers on a first date all over again.

Go to the beach
Ban your beach-body shyness by exercising out on the sand. Jog up from one end of the beach to the other. Take a surfing class together. Play volleyball. Go snorkeling! Just keep each other from lounging around in the sand for too long.

Dine at home
Cooking makes for a great joint activity, so experiment with some low-fat dishes together. If anything, focus less on what you're subtracting from your diet and more on what you're adding. For instance, if he's bummed about giving up brownies, get him excited by a yogurt berry parfait.

Have a pillow fight
Feeling frisky? Gauge your partner’s mood, and if nothing seems amiss, lightly throw a pillow and hope for a playful response. While silly and playful, it may lead to a better, intense, calorie-burning evening.

No matter what activities you choose to do with your partner, keep in mind that your most important goal, aside from staying healthy, is being supportive. Set goals together and plan out rewards for meeting milestones, like a couples massage or a romantic weekend getaway.

About the Author

Robyn Sabes is a research writer and staff writer for Going Bonkers. Copyright Going Bonkers Magazine. All rights reserved.
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I can be a role model for my kids

How I finally lost 60 lbs without pills or surgery

Janet W. got a wake-up call when her son’s teacher asked him what she does and he answered: “Mommy is fat for a living.” Apparently, even though she works full time, that’s all he ever heard her talk about, she says.

Janet weighed more than 200 pounds when she started eDiets Glycemic Impact Plan. Since then, she’s lost an incredible 60 pounds and 5 sizes!

“eDiets changed more than just me; it’s changed everyone around me, my perception of myself and things that I can do,” Janet says. The main exercise she got before was walking to the refrigerator—now she goes running most days. The best part? Her son has a proud, new answer: “My mom’s a runner!”

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© 2010 eDiets.com, Inc. All rights reserved. *Restrictions apply. See Web site for details. Offer expires 2/28/2010. †Janet lost 60 lbs in 43 months on the Glycemic Impact Plan. The generally expected weight loss for active eDiets members is 2 lbs/week for the first 5 weeks. Promotional discounts were received.
If you had access to a powerful tool that would enhance your self-esteem and allow you to reach your full potential, would you use it?

In 1957, Earl Nightingale, speaker and author, recorded his classic motivational record *The Strangest Secret*, which sold over one million copies and made history in the recording industry by being honored as the first gold record for the spoken word. Nightingale, known as the "dean of personal development," concluded that life's "strangest secret" is that we become what we think about all day long.

### Your Belief System

Your belief system, like your computer, doesn't judge or even question what you input; it merely accepts your thoughts as the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Think thoughts of defeat or failure and you're bound to feel discouraged. Continuous thoughts of worry, anxiety and fear are unhealthy and are likely to manifest in your body as stress, panic attacks and depression.

At the core of Earl's message, he reveals the incredible power of positive self-talk, belief and expectation. What you vividly imagine and hold in your subconscious mind begins to output as your reality. Your belief system not only defines your reality, it also shapes your character and determines your potential.

### Power of the Mind

A perfect example of the ability of the mind to shape our outcome is the placebo affect. This occurs in medical trials where doctors give patients sugar pills, but tell them they will cure their illness. Often it does, even though the pills contain nothing of medical benefit. The only thing of value in these medical trials is the patient's own *belief* that the sugar pills will cure them. It's the power of the patient's belief and expectation alone that produces the improvement in health.

### The Power of Affirmation and Positive Self-talk

A good way to create positive self-talk is through affirmations. An affirmation is a positive statement that represents your desired condition or outcome. Interesting enough, your subconscious mind doesn't know the difference between a real experience and a vividly imagined "mental" experience.

When he was a struggling young comedian, late at night Jim Carrey would drive into the hills overlooking Hollywood and yell at the top of his lungs "I will earn ten million dollars a year by 1995." When 1995 finally
arrived, Jim was the star of the movie "Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls", for which he was paid twenty million dollars!

World-class athletes understand the value of affirmation and recognize the impact of their mental preparation on their physical performance. They use the power of positive affirmation to reduce anxiety and increase their expectation of achievement.

To be of maximum benefit an affirmation must be simple, encouraging and stated in the present tense. By repeating an affirmation over and over again it becomes embedded in the subconscious mind. To be effective your affirmation must be stated aloud and:

✓ In a positive manner, with the focus on what you want. When you catch yourself saying or thinking something negative about yourself, counteract the negative self-talk with a positive affirmation. Start your affirmation with words like "I am..." or "I already have..." Example: "I close sales with little or no resistance."

✓ In the present tense. Your subconscious mind works in the present tense, so avoid words such as can, will, should or could. Example: "I love doing my work and I am richly rewarded creatively and financially."

✓ With strong emotion and conviction, and repeatedly. Read your affirmations each morning upon awakening and again each night just before falling asleep. Close your eyes and picture the end result. Feel the emotions associated with the affirmation.

Here are some favorite affirmations:

✓ "Everything comes to me easily and effortlessly!"
✓ "I love and appreciate myself just as I am!"
✓ "I now have enough time, energy, wisdom and money to accomplish all my desires!"
✓ "Infinite riches are now freely flowing into my life!"
✓ "I am relaxed and centered!"
✓ "I feel happy and blissful!"

Do affirmations really work and can they be used to propel a person to achieve greatness? As a young boy growing up in Louisville, Kentucky, 12-year-old Cassius Marcellus Clay dreamed of someday becoming the heavyweight boxing champion of the world. When working out in the gym, Clay would continuously affirm to all within earshot that he was indeed the greatest boxer of all time! While many felt he was brash and boastful, few people actually took this 89-pound youngster seriously.

Watch your thoughts, as they become words. Choose your words, as they become actions. Understand your actions, as they become habits. Study your habits, as they become your character. Develop your character, for it becomes your destiny.

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About the Author

John Boe presents a wide variety of motivational and sales-oriented keynote and seminar programs for sales meetings and conventions. John is a nationally recognized sales trainer and business motivational speaker with an impeccable track record in the meeting industry. To have John speak at your next event, visit www.johnboe.com or call 877 725-3750. Free Newsletter available on website.

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"Don’t throw the stick too far. If you do, your expectations of retrieval will be farfetched."
You are negotiating all the time. Whether you’re discussing a purchase, deciding vacation plans, or arguing about sex or the kids, you are negotiating with your partner. Learning how to negotiate removes pressure, stress and friction from your relationship. Negotiating is like chess – if you don’t know how to play you will be intimidated by the activity, especially if your opponent knows the game.

Do you and your spouse have a difficult time negotiating differences? Are you unsure on how to negotiate? These guidelines will help you avoid the three most common negotiating mistakes couples make:

1. Failure to prepare before the negotiation with your partner;
2. Caving in too quickly to avoid tension or to keep the peace; and
3. Stubbornly pushing too hard for your own solution.

Why Learn to Negotiate with your Partner?
Conflict is inevitable for growth in your relationship. Many people are frightened of conflict because they can’t negotiate. Once you learn to negotiate you won’t be so afraid of conflict. Good negotiation leads to acceptable solutions that work for both of you and will strengthen your relationship. Your communication skills automatically improve as you develop good negotiating skills.

The Difference Between Negotiation For Couples and Other Negotiations
Negotiation with your partner can feel especially risky, because the amount of emotional self disclosure required is much higher for couples than in business. Also, the result may have life-altering consequences (like negotiating where to live).

Skills Required For Negotiating With Your Partner
Effective negotiation for complex problems requires openness, honesty, curiosity about your partner’s issues, and emotional risk. It also takes listening really well!

Some Things Cannot Be Negotiated
Core values, integrity, spirituality, feelings, attitudes and trust can not be negotiated. Do your best to separate interests and concerns from values. You can negotiate your interests but not your core values or integrity. For example, it doesn't work to say, "I'll give up my spiritual beliefs for you."

The Only Things You Can Really Negotiate Are Behavior And Decisions
You can negotiate what action someone will take and when they will do it, or you can negotiate a solution to a problem of disagreement.

How To Prepare To Negotiate
Ask yourself how you aspire to be during the negotiation. For example: calm, open, flexible, honest, understanding, curious. By following the guidelines you set for yourself, you will more easily reach a successful outcome. This is an often overlooked aspect of negotiation. Staying conscious of your own guidelines will help keep you centered and focused. Write your guidelines on a piece of paper and keep glancing at them during the negotiation. You will come across like an experienced negotiator simply by staying consistent with your own guidelines.

Before you start the negotiation, quietly reflect on the following questions:
✓ What do I want? Why do I want it and why is it important?
✓ How important is this to me?
✓ To get what I want, what will I need to do and what will my partner need to do?
✓ If I get most of what I want, what is the positive and negative effect on my partner?
✓ How can I make it easier for my partner to say yes?
✓ It may be difficult for my partner to give me most of what I want because________.
✓ I may be able to increase the benefits to my partner by________.
✓ I may be able to decrease the downside to my partner by________.

Add other relevant information that has not been suggested here.

You don't need to answer every question and complete every statement sequentially in a dialogue with your partner. But as you get mentally clear about these issues it will make it easier to conversationally express your concerns and desires.

Start By Stating the Area of Disagreement
It is important to describe the issue as a disagreement instead of as a problem. It is very difficult to say "The problem is__________., without blaming your partner or yourself. This implied blame leads to a defensive reaction from one or both parties. The negotiation then begins to slip like a house built on loose gravel.

State the disagreement in the form, "We seem to disagree about__________." Then take turns expressing what your concerns and desires are about the disagreement.

Describe Concerns About the Subject
One person goes first and expresses all their concerns while the other listens without rebutting or defending anything. The response is simply to recap and check for understanding. It may also be necessary to ask questions for clarity.

Avoid leading questions that sound like Perry Mason, "Did it ever occur to you that...?"

Brainstorm Solutions
After each person has expressed all their concerns and desires, and each of you feels understood, then it is time for brainstorming solutions. Think of several possible solutions.

One partner proposes a solution. Make the suggested proposal in the following format:
✓ Honey, what I suggest is__________.
✓ This suggestion works for me because__________.
✓ This suggestion might work for you because__________.

The Rationale For This "Formula"
It encourages being a good self advocate. Simultaneously it forces you to consider your partner's perspective and helps prevent the possibility of only stubbornly pushing your own desires.

The Other Partner Responds
If the partner agrees with the whole suggestion, then recap why it works.

✓ The part that does work is__________.
✓ The part that doesn't work is__________.
✓ So my alternative suggestion is__________.
✓ This suggestion works for me because__________.
✓ And it might work for you because__________.

Add value to your offers. Keep finding ways to make it easier for your partner to say yes.

Remember. This negotiation is only an experiment. Nobody is locked into a permanent solution. It is only for a period of time to see what if anything needs adjusting.

Repeat suggestions until agreement is reached.

Take Action
If action is appropriate, decide who will do what by when. Decide for how long you will try this solution.

Evaluation
After the action phase come back and evaluate the results. If things are fine, continue for another block of time.

Round Two, Three, Etc.
If it didn't work out as well as
hoped, each person begins by saying, "Honey, it didn't work the way I hoped, but here is what I could have done differently." Don't start by stating what your partner should have done differently.

Then repeat appropriate steps above.

Don't be discouraged if your first attempts at this negotiation strategy are awkward. This is challenging territory for most couples. Keep trying, and you'll improve.

Learning how to successfully negotiate the sticky issues in your relationship can bring the two of you closer together. Work as a team. Respect one another's feelings and listen to each other's suggestions. With a little practice, the two of you can become better at negotiating. Good luck, and may all your disagreements lead you to more lively collaboration.

**Let’s Focus!**

Have you ever had those days where you just can’t seem to focus? Even the simplest tasks make you feel overwhelmed. You seem scattered in thought and action. Distraction is usually caused by chaotic surroundings, scattered thoughts, or lack of a clear plan. When you’re distracted, you are not working at an optimal level.

**How to deal with distraction:**

The best way to deal with it is to stop and find a quiet place to think and plan. Grab a notebook and pen and make a list of the things you really need to get done as soon as possible. Try to organize your thoughts by putting them down in written form (this alone helps immensely!).

If your distraction is caused by chaotic surroundings you may need to find a quieter place to work, or if that’s impossible you might simply use headphones or earplugs to blot out as much noise as possible. Most important is to simply have a plan of action; a clear idea of what you need to get done and how you're going to go about completing it.

**Stopping Your Bully**

A bully is a person who intentionally seeks to harm, threaten or frighten other people through verbal, physical or emotional assault. Bullies often target people they perceive as being physically or socially inferior to them.

Largely shaped by environmental factors, bullies learn to use these troublesome behavior patterns to their advantage in childhood. Statistics conclude that many bullies come from abusive homes where aggressive behavior is modeled before them. Additional characteristics common in bullies include:

- Inflated attention requirements
- The need to be accepted by peers
- The lack of remorse when causing harm
- They may be described by others as “having a temper”
- They feel they must dominate every situation.

**STOPPING BULLIES.** Whether dealing with a bully in office politics or the pushy neighbor, here are some tips:

- Bullying is often acted out for the benefit of an audience. An adult victim of bullying can and should confront their perpetrator in a private setting and in an assertive manner. Sometimes this is all it takes to let them know that you refuse to be run over by them anymore.

- Consult policy. Some forms of aggression are illegal.

- In the case of workplace bullying, witnesses are important. Keep a record of criticisms, underhanded statements or hurtful innuendos as well as a record of who was around when the statements were made.

The most important asset a person can have in their arsenal of defense against a bully is a healthy sense of self-worth and the ability to stand up for themselves with confidence.
For most of her life, Lori Wengle battled with her weight – and though she finally found her "skinny" – she said the physical change didn’t happen until she made a mental one.

"People like to focus on numbers, as in the number of pounds they need to lose in order to feel better," she said. "For me, it wasn’t about a number on the scale; it was that feeling of fitness and strength. Many times Americans either live in excess, eating too much, or not eating enough and looking too skinny. The truth is neither of these types of people actually feels good. They are focused on the image in the mirror. I want people to realize that it's not about how you look, but rather, finding that feeling of fitness. When you're fit, you just feel good, and it may have less to do with the number on the scale than it does in the feeling in your heart."

Wengle, now a personal trainer said she feels fit at 133 pounds even though the scale tells her that 120 pounds is where she should be. Her journey of losing 107 pounds and then keeping it off for 8 years and counting is how she came to the conclusion that people shouldn’t pay attention to the numbers.

"Finding your 'skinny' is a personal thing," she said. "It’s not the same for everyone, and it shouldn’t be dictated by numbers and arbitrary goals. At the end of the day, we make these goals so we can feel better about our bodies and our lives, so why let the numbers dictate that goal? We should be focused on the things that make us feel fit and healthy, which is why we need to discard all the static from the one-size-fits-all fitness gurus. We need to chart our own path."

Wengle’s tips for finding your "skinny" include:

✓ **Change your Perspective.** It's not a number on the scale. A University of Pennsylvania study on healthy habits included data on four women – two of them were 120 pounds, but did not work out and were essentially couch potatoes. Two women were 180 pounds, but they worked out 4 days a week. Which set of women are healthier? Of course, the two women who work out. If people eat healthy, exercise, perform cardio and live their lives, the weight will come off. They may never weigh 120lbs, but they will find THEIR skinny.

✓ **Don’t be Fooled by Quick Weight Loss Schemes.** If you lose one to two pounds a week, that’s extreme weight loss. A lot of other companies pushing pills and powders and expensive equipment will say otherwise, but just about any doctor will tell you differently. The quick weight loss schemes don’t take into consideration that losing the weight is only one goal – keeping it off is the ultimate goal. Working at a pace of one to two pounds per week enables your body to adjust to healthier habits and you’ll have a far better chance of keeping the weight off once you lose it.

✓ **Weight Training Can Reshape Your Body.** Resistance or weight training will sculpt your body, tighten certain areas and make cellulite less noticeable or cause it to disappear completely. For every pound of fat in your body, you can only burn one calorie when you’re body is at rest. One pound of muscle developed through weight training will burn 35 calories per day when your body is at rest. Moreover, you will continue to burn calories for up to 72 hours after weight training. That’s how your body changes shape.

"I didn’t know where I was going when I started my journey – and I made a lot of bad choices throughout – but when I arrived, I knew it, because it felt right," Wengle added. "And it had nothing to do with the number on the scale. It was all about how I felt."
My grandfather had a habit of honking his horn each day as he came home from work. My grandmother would immediately, upon hearing the honk, open the garage door. He would swing around a sharp corner and drive straight into the already-opened garage. My grandmother was consistent in her door-opening habit, but one day she failed to hear the car horn. Grandpa swung around the sharp corner, up the driveway, through the closed doors, through the back wall and into the vegetable garden.

Journalists were interviewing my neighbor, a 103-year-old woman, 'Tell us, what do you think is the best thing about being 103?' the reporter asked. She smiled and looked straight at the reporter and simply replied, 'No peer pressure.'

On the last night of our childbirth classes, our teacher took us to see the maternity center. We were gathered by the door when a woman clearly in labor, and her nervous husband, came rushing in. When he saw our group of pregnant women, he panicked: "Oh, my God. Look at the size of that line!"

My sister's eldest boy liked nothing better than to sit on grandpa's knee and have stories read to him. One day after a story about Noah's ark, and how Noah led pairs of animals to the safety of the ark, my nephew asked, “Granddad, you’re very old, were you in Noah's ark?” “Gosh no,” said Granddad. My nephew inquired, “Then how come you didn't drown when the flood came?”

One day while leaving work I saw the security guard for our building, looking confused, standing in the parking lot. I asked what the problem was, and she replied that her car was missing. Suddenly she recalled that earlier in the day she had ordered a car towed from the reserved parking area. It was her car.

"What is that sound?" a woman visiting our nature center asked. "It's the frogs trilling for a mate," I explained. "We have a pair in the science room. But they've been together for so long, they no longer sing to each other." The woman nodded sympathetically. "That's what happens after so many years together -- the trill is gone."
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