

## Could Keeping a Happiness Journal Lengthen Your Life?

Journaling (expressive writing) has been studied scientifically. It's considered a powerful tool to support change, overcome challenges, and accelerate goal achievement. It is often used to support therapy and medical treatment. This includes anxiety, depression, grief, and stress. It's not a gimmick. UCLA scientists in a brain-imaging study discovered that putting feelings into words produces therapeutic changes in the brain. The real news is that everyone can benefit from journaling, and the theme you might want to consider is "happiness." Journaling daily about happy moments in your life may lead to more of them, an upbeat mood, and perhaps a longer life, because happy people have been shown to live longer. *Learn more by reading "The Healing Power of Journaling" by Zoe McKay. Source: [www.newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/Putting-Feelings-Into-Words-Produces-8047](http://www.newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/Putting-Feelings-Into-Words-Produces-8047)*

## What You Forgot About Dietary Fat

Many dietary fats are healthy. They give you energy and support cell growth, but they are calorie dense, and more so than carbohydrates are. Olive oil is a healthy fat, but do you know a tablespoon of it has around 120 calories? Use it in many dishes, but sparingly—splashing it on with abandon every day can add 3,500–4,000 calories to your diet each month! When you consider that a person who weighs 155 lbs. uses fewer than 100 calories to walk a mile, you can see how consuming even healthy fats can make you put on the pounds! *Learn more: "Dietary Fats: Balancing Health & Flavor"; International Food Information Council*

## Dial 988 for Suicide Prevention

On July 16, 2022, "988," the new suicide and mental health crisis hotline, became active in the United States. (The newly named "Talk Suicide Canada" suicide prevention phone number is 1-833-456-4566.) 988 callers are connected to "a compassionate, supportive, and trained counselor" ready to give assistance to callers experiencing thoughts of suicide, a mental health crisis, and/or a substance use-related crisis. 988 is also for those concerned about someone they care about who may be in crisis. A network of over 200 locally operated and funded crisis centers across the country make it all possible. *Learn more at [www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988/key-messages](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/988/key-messages)*

## Family Goals: Making Good Stuff Happen

Helping to ensure plenty of happy, memorable moments with your family is something no one would consciously shy away from; however, most people do just that, by default. Busyness gets in the way. Time passes and it is finite, so don't let happiness be something that happens only by accident. 1) Decide what you and your partner or spouse want to do for the family. Try making weekly, monthly, and yearly goals. 2) Get everyone involved in the discussions and decisions. 3) Conduct these discussions at regular intervals as part of a larger family meeting. 4) Get things scheduled. 5) Consider scrapbooking everything so memories stick around. *Get more ideas from [www.lifehack.org/864433/family-goals](http://www.lifehack.org/864433/family-goals)*



## Chronic Pain and the Family

Chronic pain has many secondary effects. You know this already if you live with a chronic pain sufferer or endure chronic pain yourself. Pain can influence moods because of the resulting associated irritability it creates. Communication dysfunction can contribute to everyone becoming angry and snappy. Family members of the pain-impacted individual—the ones who care the most and feel helpless—become victims. But it doesn't end there. Family members also develop unhealthy coping strategies like avoidance and isolation. Household conflicts may be frequent, and even normal conversations become triggers for conflict. The pain sufferer's personality may be wrongly labeled as selfish, narcissistic, or anxiety disordered rather than simply pain affected. Change and relief begin with education about chronic pain dynamics, particularly the "mind body" connection and how pain creates mental stress and how mental stress makes pain worse. If your family or relationship is affected by chronic pain, it is not just about pain medication. It is also about education for learning how to communicate effectively with real conversations, avoiding triggers, separating the pain from the person you love, and dropping the blame game. Seek to overcome personal resistance to professional counseling with experts who specialize in the psychological issues associated with pain. Discover the life-changing positivity of self-help support groups for family members and the pain sufferer. And learn how to take care of your personal physical and mental health so you are more resilient in a relationship with the person experiencing chronic pain. *Start with a visit to your company EAP at 800-343-3822 or [www.AWPnow.com](http://www.AWPnow.com), but also review the educational resources at [www.uspainfoundation.org](http://www.uspainfoundation.org), [www.paincanada.ca](http://www.paincanada.ca), and [www.painscale.com](http://www.painscale.com)*

## Renewing Relationships at Work

Does your team or employee group need to get reacquainted after its return to on-site work? Being deliberate and organized about this goal can greatly improve communication, reduce any stress associated with leaving a remote job, and rekindle trust so you are in sync with your peers. Try weekly meetings to discuss ongoing concerns about interpersonal communication and teamwork; talk about your individual roles/duties, successes, and need for support and resources as well as any issues relating to the work environment, customer stress, and growing concerns. Make honesty a tradition of this group, and follow up at the next meeting. Start the meeting and end it on time. Make it unvaryingly regular. You will quickly refresh your commitment to each other and fire up the productivity of your group.

## Don't Skip Your Health Checkups

So, you are feeling well and are without any apparent health problems? Great, but are you postponing preventive health care, screenings, and examinations because you don't seem to have any cause for concern? Don't do it, especially as you grow older. Delays in identifying and treating some medical conditions can make doing so harder or even futile later. Many detectable health conditions, like high blood pressure, diabetes, vision problems, and cancer, can be cured when they are spotted early, and you won't notice any symptoms in early stages. Postponing preventive health care might be more likely if you live alone, without someone who may urge and prod you to see a doctor because of conditions like sleep apnea. Use this month (August is National Wellness Month) as your reason for making preventive health care a routine part of your life, so you can enjoy your life longer.

## What Women Should Know About Alcohol

Men have higher rates of alcohol-related hospitalizations and deaths than women do, but unfortunately these statistics overshadow alcohol's *disease effects* on women: Illnesses associated with alcohol use claim more lives of women than of men. Women who drink alcohol face a higher risk of alcohol-related problems than men do because women, on average, weigh less and have less water in their bodies than men, so their blood alcohol concentration will be higher after the same number of drinks. Because most women do not metabolize alcohol as quickly as men do, they also are more susceptible to long-term health problems. The risk of alcohol-related liver disease, brain shrinkage, heart damage, and breast and other cancers are all greater for women, even if they consume less alcohol over a lifetime than men. *Learn more at [www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/women-and-alcohol](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/women-and-alcohol) and [www.niaaa.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/alcohol-related-deaths-increasing-united-states](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/alcohol-related-deaths-increasing-united-states)*

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# Back-to-School Safe Driving Tips

Kids in school buses, children on foot and bikes, harried parents in cars: Back-to-school days bring congestion—and an increase in potential hazards.

“This can be a dangerous time because children—as well as drivers—are adjusting to back-to-school routines,” says Alex Epstein, director of Transportation Safety for the National Safety Council (NSC).

Fortunately, a few key tips can help improve safety for everyone. Here’s what Epstein recommends that drivers be aware of, as well as some reminders for parents to share with their kids.

## Driving in the School Zone Area

- Slow down and drive extra cautiously.
- Don’t load or unload children across the street from the school.
- Don’t double park; it blocks visibility for other children and vehicles.
- When flashers are blinking, stop and yield to pedestrians crossing the crosswalk or intersection.
- Be prepared for kids to appear in unexpected places, like from between parked cars; if they’re on bikes, prepare for them to turn in front of you without looking or signaling.
- If you need to use your phone, be sure you’re pulled over safely.
- Watch for kids walking while looking at their phones. One study found that a full 20 percent of high school students cross the street while distracted.
- If possible, carpool to reduce the number of cars at school.
- Don’t ever block a crosswalk; it forces pedestrians to go around you and could put them in the path of moving traffic.

## Driving Safely When You See a School Bus


- Most of the children who lose their lives in bus-related incidents are four to seven years old and on foot, according to the NSC. They’re hit by the bus or by a motorist passing a bus that’s stopped to load or unload children—something that’s illegal in all 50 states.
- If you’re driving behind a school bus, allow a greater following distance than if you were driving behind a car—at least three car lengths.
- Stay alert for flashing lights on a bus, which warn drivers of an impending stop. Treat yellow flashing lights the same as a yellow stop light and decrease your speed. Stop when you see red flashing lights.
- The area 10 feet around a school bus is the most dangerous for children; stop far enough away to allow them space to safely enter and exit the bus.

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# Back-to-School Safety Tips

## Staying Safe When Taking the Bus to School

- Take your time and pay attention every time you get on and off the bus. If a hand railing is available, use it.
- Always wait for the bus at the spot where it arrives. And wait until the bus is completely stopped—with its stop arm extended—before you approach to board or stand to exit.
- If seat belts are available, buckle up.
- Never cross in front of the bus. If you must, walk at least 10 feet in front of it and make sure any drivers can see you. Make eye contact and wait for them to wave you on before crossing.

## Riding a Bike to School

- Always wear bright-colored clothing and a helmet that's fitted and secured properly.
- Ride single file on the right side of the road; come to a complete stop before crossing streets and walk the bike across.
- Watch for opening car doors and other hazards.
- Use hand signals when turning.

## Walking to School Safely

- Don't walk to school with headphones in your ears or while looking at your phone.
- Walk on the sidewalk; if there's no sidewalk and you must walk in the street, walk facing traffic.
- Before crossing the street, stop and look left, right and left again to see if cars are coming.
- Always cross the street at crosswalks. If no crosswalk is available, cross at intersections; never in the middle.
- Remember that there's safety—and visibility—in numbers. Whenever possible, walk in groups rather than alone.
- If a stranger approaches you and offers you a ride home, don't answer—run away. Head into a store or restaurant if you're not near a safe spot like your school. And if you feel like you're in danger, yell for help.

source: [www.geico.com/living/driving/auto/car-safety-insurance/safety-spotlight-school-buses/](http://www.geico.com/living/driving/auto/car-safety-insurance/safety-spotlight-school-buses/)

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# The Wellness News

Tips and resources for living well

August 2022

## Advocating for Causes You Believe In

According to Six Dimensions, advocacy is defined as public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy. Advocacy falls on a spectrum and can be done on a large or small scale.

There are three different kinds of advocacy – self-advocacy, individual advocacy, and systems advocacy.

- Self-advocacy is an individual's ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate, or assert their interest, desires, needs, and rights.
- Individual advocacy is when a person or group of people focus their efforts on one or two individuals. An example would be speaking out on another's behalf or advocating for a person or group of people.
- Systems advocacy involves working to change policies, laws, or rules that impact how someone lives their life.

Whatever type of advocacy resonates with you the most, it is important to advocate for a cause that you believe in. A huge part of advocacy is being a part of a community and connecting with others who share the same belief and passion for the cause.

**Here are three ways that you can get started advocating for your cause:**

1. **Fully understand the issue** – Even if you feel you already know everything about the issue at hand, there is always more to learn. Be sure you come prepared with research. Make it your goal to gain a deeper understanding of not just the problem, but the counterargument as well.
2. **Provide education about the issue** – Educate others on the issue. Build a social media page, website, or group of advocates for the cause and talk about the issue regularly, as well as ways you can combat the problem. Provide fact sheets, Q & A, and media resources.
3. **Community Organizing** - Successful advocacy requires connecting with others who believe in the same cause. There is strength in numbers, so make sure you build your force. Talk to the community that is affected, hear their concerns, and come up with a plan of action to address those concerns.

*source: [3 Ways to Advocate for a Cause That You Believe In – Six Dimensions, LLC](#). | [Public Health Consulting \(sixdims.com\)](#)*



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## Psoriasis Awareness

**Take Action Against Psoriasis This August.** The month of August is a time for awareness and resilience. Stress, pressure, and fear are common emotions that affect your bodily wellbeing, which includes your skin. They can trigger and even worsen conditions such as psoriasis, eczema, acne, rosacea and skin rashes. The good news is there are many ways you can take action.

All month long, the National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) is boosting their efforts to create awareness and generate action around psoriasis through research funding, spreading information, hosting events, and more. Psoriasis, as a disease, affects 125 million people worldwide and 8 million in the US. Unfortunately, there is currently no universal cure for psoriasis, but individuals that work with specialists can often find relief with various remedies.

While psoriasis appears on the skin, it is an autoimmune disease. This means the body's immune system becomes overreactive and attacks its healthy cells, which can appear outwardly through the skin. There are a few lifestyle factors that could initiate developing psoriasis. They include a family history of psoriasis, stress, anxiety, obesity, smoking, alcohol, and skin injuries.

Symptoms include itchy, scaly, red, irritated skin, and stiff or swollen joints. Most individuals with psoriasis see a rheumatologist, dermatologist, or other specialists to determine if there is an individualized root cause and actionable therapy treatment.

Therapies include:

- Steroid creams
- Topical creams
- Light therapy
- Injected medicines
- Salt baths
- Oral medications
- Reducing stress
- Healthy diet

It's important to note that psoriasis is not contagious and cannot spread through skin-to-skin contact. Given how this disease affects one's outward appearance, it can be overwhelming for those who struggle with it. Through compassion and support for the NPF, we can find a cure and end the shame around this disease.

*source: [Get Ready for Psoriasis Action Month in August - HealthLink Dimensions](#); [August is Psoriasis Action Month | SignatureMD](#)*

We know it is not always easy to juggle everything & realize simple tips can help provide a different approach.

*Here for you as life happens*



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## National Dog Month

National Dog Month, celebrated in August, is a time to celebrate our furry friends for all they do for us. There are many health benefits of owning a pet. According to the CDC, studies have shown that the bond between people and their pets is linked to several health benefits, including:

- Decreased blood pressure, cholesterol levels, triglyceride levels, feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and symptoms of PTSD
- Increased opportunities for exercise and outdoor activities; better cognitive function in older adults; and more opportunities to socialize

The heart foundation asserts the health advantages of a dog are not limited to people who have a dog at home. In the 1860s, Florence Nightingale found animal companionship beneficial to her patients. Since then, dogs have been used in many capacities to help people recover from and manage illness, disability, and other conditions. Today, there are many animal-assisted therapy programs in prisons, schools, and hospitals that benefit many people.

A service dog is trained to perform tasks to assist an individual with disabilities. It has the ability to perform observable tasks, on command, that distinguishes a service dog from an emotional support dog, therapy dog, or other working dog. Some examples of tasks are balance and support, retrieving dropped objects, fetching medications, and summoning assistance when needed. The Foundation for Service Dog Support (FSDS) trains service dogs for individuals with mobility challenges, medical needs, hearing impairment, and PTSD.

If you or someone you love has any of these challenges and would benefit from having a service dog, contact FSDS

- by email at [info@servicedogsupport.org](mailto:info@servicedogsupport.org) ;
- or find out how to apply for a service dog on their website at <https://servicedogsupport.org/dogs/>.

## Strawberry-Chocolate Greek Yogurt Bark

32Savings

### Ingredients

- 3 cups whole-milk plain Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup pure maple syrup or honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 ½ cups sliced strawberries
- ¼ cup mini chocolate chips

### Directions

1. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper
2. Stir yogurt, maple syrup (or honey) and vanilla in a medium bowl.
3. Spread on the prepared baking sheet into a 10-by-15-inch rectangle.
4. Scatter the strawberries on top and sprinkle with chocolate chips
5. Freeze until very firm, at least 3 hours. To serve, cut or break into 32 pieces

### Nutrition

- **Serving Size:** One 1 3/4-by-2 1/2-inch piece
- **Per Serving:** 34 calories; protein 2g; carbohydrates 4g; dietary fiber 0.2g; sugars 3.5g; fat 1.3g; saturated fat 0.8g; cholesterol 2.8mg; vitamin a iu 19.7IU; vitamin c 4.6mg; folate 2mcg; calcium 27.7mg; iron 0.1mg; magnesium 3.1mg; potassium 44.8mg; sodium 7.6mg; added sugar 2g.

source: [Strawberry-Chocolate Greek Yogurt Bark Recipe | EatingWell](#)



# Balanced Living

August 2022



As more Americans live longer, millions of middle-aged adults find themselves caring for their aging parents. It's not an easy task, especially for those with children still living at home. "Caregiving can be so overwhelming, it's almost impossible," says Donna Cohen, Ph.D., a professor in the department of aging and mental health at the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute at the University of South Florida. "But it can be done if you develop specific skills and tailor them according to your parents' needs and your family's circumstances." The following is a framework designed to help you provide care more effectively.

## Don't Parent Your Parents

As your parents age and become frail or ill, resist the urge to regard them as children. Instead, think of caregiving as a family business and yourself as an executive with problems to solve.

"Treat your parents as having a legitimate role. This empowers a partnership," Dr. Cohen says. "Your role will be to take control, but it's not with the same authority you use with your children." For example: Your mother can't see well anymore but insists on driving. Instead of taking away her car keys, sit down with her and begin a dialogue. Say, "Mom, I'm worried about you. Aren't you worried about your driving?"

## Kinds of Care

The kind of care your parents need depends on their level of dependence. This is something you can determine in conjunction with your parents and their health care provider: Do they need to be in a nursing facility? An assisted living arrangement? Can they continue to live on their own, but with some outside help? A variety of government programs are available for the elderly. You can find more information on them by looking in your local phone book under Aging Services.

## Don't Do It Alone

Because every family is different, there's no one right way of caring for aging parents. "But there are wrong ways, and the worst one is to do it alone," Dr. Cohen says. The demands of caregiving can become so immense that they can affect your health, leading to illness and depression.

"Half of all caregivers get depressed in the course of caregiving," Dr. Cohen says. "In turn, depression takes a toll on their physical health, affecting their job performance and can even lead to the abuse of the parents they're caring for."

To manage caregiving effectively, seek help and advice from professionals and your siblings. For example: Consult a financial planner or attorney regarding your parents' estate, living wills and other legal matters. Work with physicians to understand your parents' health problems and the treatments they're getting. Talk to a pharmacist to learn the potential side effects of their medications and to make sure those medications are compatible.

Meet with your siblings over breakfast, not at the end of the day when everyone's tired. Describe the problem you're facing and share your feelings about it with them. Let them do the same.

"Besides determining what's workable for your parents, your goal should be to find the best way for everyone to work together," Dr. Cohen says.

## Stay Optimistic

Unlike caring for children, caring for aging parents, particularly ill ones, involves the reality that their deaths are approaching. Nonetheless, "let yourself be guided by a tempered optimism," Dr. Cohen says. "Don't let your hope for the future die too fast."

Within limits, there are things you can do now to maximize comfort and improve your parents' quality of life. "You can convey support and show affection by giving your mother a new chenille throw because you know she'll enjoy its softness and warmth," she says. "Even holding someone's hand is a powerful way to ease pain and loneliness."

All told, "caring is more than loving," she says. "It's a series of discreet skills that involve listening to your parents, making decisions about their needs and taking action, if necessary. And it has mutual benefits. Through caring, we can learn more about ourselves."

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Reducing outside interruptions is crucial to premium performance at work. But what can you do if phone calls, visits from co-workers and rambling meetings waste hours of your work time every day? "You can defend yourself by learning simple techniques that will help you manage time-wasters," says Stephanie Winston, president of The Organizing Principle, a management consulting firm in New York, and author of "The Organized Executive." "And you can establish greater control without being rude or shutting yourself off from others' needs." The following suggestions will help you gain control of your worst time-wasters:

- **On the phone**

- ▶ Keep calls brief. Get to the point immediately when you're making or returning a business call. Develop strategies for dealing with long-winded people, such as beginning calls with, "This is Mary. I have a meeting in 10 minutes. What can I do for you?"
- ▶ Consolidate call-backs. Return all your calls at a given time each day. Begin with priority calls and work down the list.
- ▶ Return calls when people are less likely to chat. For example, call right before lunch or near the end of the day.
- ▶ Develop a message-tracking system. If you're disorganized, you may spend more time looking for your messages than returning them. Avoid putting message slips under a paperweight or in your in-box; they tend to get lost. Instead, use an old-fashioned desk needle or add important calls that must be returned to your master to-do list.

- **Drop-in visitors**

- ▶ Interoffice visits are a part of office life. The following strategies can help you regain control if you're constantly interrupted:
- ▶ Send a clear message. Close your office door or post a note on the entrance to your cubicle saying you're busy until a certain
- ▶ If your desk faces the door or a corridor, reposition it so a passerby can't easily catch your eye.
- ▶ Consolidate visits. Limit appointments to a specific block of time each day or week.
- ▶ Set time limits. Limiting spur-of-the-moment sessions without being rude requires tact, but it can be done. When someone asks if you have a minute, you can respond with, "Could it wait until this afternoon? I'm really swamped right now."
- ▶ Confer in colleagues' offices. When co-workers want to discuss projects with you, offer to meet in their offices. "It's much easier to excuse yourself than to ease someone out of your office," Ms. Winston says

- **Endless meetings**

- ▶ Eliminate unnecessary meetings. Before calling a meeting, ask yourself if the issue could be handled by a memo, telephone call or informal conference.
- ▶ Distribute an agenda in advance. List the topics to be discussed and note any papers, figures and information people should bring.
- ▶ Set time limits. Try to schedule meetings just before lunch or quitting time. Doing so will curb a tendency for attendees to ramble on.
- ▶ Take control. If you're the moderator, limit the discussion to topics on the agenda. Unstructured meetings are usually unproductive.

"By learning to define your time as your own," Ms. Winston says, "you are then free to enthusiastically speak and meet with co-workers, clients and other contacts without compromising your own productivity."

As the summer months wind down and more and more students return to campus or start attending classes for the first time, it's easy to feel anxious about what the new school year will bring for you and your classmates. The COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted the academic experience for many students in the past few years, and the off-campus impacts, including financial difficulties, housing issues, and the challenges of just maintaining one's emotional equilibrium, play a role in how you may be feeling about life and your studies right now.

It's okay to feel anxious about the school year ahead. It's okay to feel uncertain about the future. You are not alone if you are still trying to cope with everything that has happened over the last few years. It's important to remember that the future is unwritten, and you have time to make the changes that will bring your goals, your focus, and your energies back into alignment. If you're unable to do that right now, do what you can, while focusing on the positive habits that will continually support you, instead of falling into the negative habits that will only help to keep you distracted or unfulfilled.

The recommendations below will help you quickly find balance and reduce your anxiety as the next quarter or semester begins.

### **Get organized.**

While the school year is just beginning, you have an opportunity to start organizing your life. Start with your day, mapping out a schedule of events and tasks that need to happen, including when you're going to wake up, study, exercise, find time for some relaxation, and finally go to bed at night. From there, plan out a week of activities and try to stick with your schedule.

### **Start strengthening your weak points.**

Are you easily distracted? Do you have trouble expressing yourself? Do you tend to avoid interactions or moments that draw attention to yourself? Do you have habits that frequently interrupt or prevent you from meeting your responsibilities as a student, an employee, or a partner? If you recognize that you have areas that need improving, the start of a new school year is the best time to focus on developing the skills, attitude, and mindset that will keep you in control of your life.

### **Give yourself time.**

There has been so much for you to adjust to over the last year that it can easily feel as if you're overwhelmed by all the changes. Changing everything in your life all at once to accommodate a new school year may only add more anxiety and frustration to your life. Ease yourself into this transition and pay attention to your thoughts, feelings, and physical responses as you work through the process. If you ever feel as if there is too much going on or that you have reached the point where you feel overwhelmed, reach out to a friend, a loved one, or a trained counselor for professional advice that you can use to reduce the stress that may have accumulated in your life.

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