



A Healthy Outlook!

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More Habits for HAPPY PEOPLE

IN OUR WINTER 2016 EDITION, we shared eight habits for happy people. Here are eight more that you can incorporate into your life to increase your happiness. It is not



always easy, but you can choose to be happy and, in most circumstances, no one can stop you except you. Here are some more habits of happy people:

- 1. Do Not Compare Yourself With Others:** Your life is unique, so do not measure your own worth by comparing yourself with those around you. Even if you regard yourself as better than your peers, that is detrimental to your happiness. You would be fostering judgmental feelings and an unhealthy sense of superiority. Measure your success based on your own progress, not on that of others.
- 2. Surround Yourself With Positive People:** The saying “misery loves

company” is true. That is why you need to choose friends who are optimistic and happy. They will surround you with positive energy.

- 3. Realize That You Do Not Need Others' Approval:** It is important to follow your own dreams and desires and not let naysayers stand in your way. It is fine to seek others' opinions, but happy people stay true to their own hearts and do not need outside approval.
- 4. Take Time To Listen:** Listening helps you soak in the wisdom of others and allows you to quiet your own mind at the same time. Intense

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Healthy Outlook TIP

WE ALL TALK TO OURSELVES. We say both negative and positive things to ourselves. Did you know that what you think can affect how you feel and act? Do you know who eats the most ice cream? Answer: The person who thinks about it the most! So, if you want to feel more positive, it is important to think more positive.

Develop a positive phrase or mantra you can repeat in your mind to help yourself think more positive.

“I CAN DO IT,” “Will this matter one year from now?” “Keep it in perspective,” and “Remember to breathe” are all positive phrases that can help you. When you notice that you are having a negative thought, just repeat one of those positive phrases to yourself to feel more positive.

YOU CAN DO IT!

More Habits for Happy People

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listening can help you feel content while helping you gain different perspectives.

5. **Eat Well:** What you eat directly impacts your mood and energy levels in both the short and long term. Whereas eating right can prime your body and brain to be in a focused, happy state; eating processed junk foods will leave you sluggish and prone to chronic diseases.
6. **Exercise:** Exercise boosts health by activating brain chemicals like serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine, which may help buffer some of the effects of stress and relieve some symptoms of depression. Rather than viewing exercise as a medical tool to lose weight, prevent disease, and live longer—all benefits that occur in the future—try viewing exercise as a daily tool to immediately enhance your frame of mind, reduce stress, and feel happier.
7. **Be Honest:** Every time you lie, your stress levels are likely to increase and your self-esteem will crumble just a little bit more. If others find out that you are a liar, it will damage your personal and professional relationships. Telling the truth boosts your mental health and allows others to build trust in you.
8. **Accept What Cannot Be Changed:** Everything in your life is not going to be perfect, and that is fine. Happy people learn to accept injustices and setbacks beyond their control and, instead, put their energy into changing what they can change for the better.

The truth is, happiness comes from within, not from wealth, perfect looks, or even a perfect relationship. This is why you need to work on yourself first, if you want to be truly happy.

Are you looking for more ways to be happy in your life? Look for More Habits of Healthy People in the summer 2017 edition.

Source: www.hungryforchange.tv Article reproduced and adapted with permission.

Upcoming Events:

Stress Management for Hectic Lives

Thursday, April 27, 2017

45 W. Gude Dr. • Aspen Room • 4:30–5:30 p.m.

DO YOU EVER FEEL STRESSED and overwhelmed from responsibilities at both home and work? Do you feel like you are constantly running from place to place? Do you have too much to do and not enough time? Attend this workshop to learn practical, quick strategies to help you de-stress in your everyday life. You will leave the training feeling refreshed and armed with practical solutions. **Seating is limited. FOR MORE INFORMATION or to register, please contact the EAP at 240-314-1040 or eap@mcpsmd.org**

Dealing with Difficult People and Situations (Lunchtime Workshop)

Tuesday, April 18, 2017

45 W. Gude Dr. • Maple Room • Noon to 1:00 p.m.

DO YOU EVER FEEL DEFENSIVE, frustrated, or helpless when dealing with difficult people or situations? Do you want to learn how to respond to people who may attack, blame, withdraw, or sabotage? If you learn these skills you can feel less drained and exhausted in these situations.

Bring your lunch and join us for an interactive workshop to learn practical strategies on how to deal with situations and people that “press your buttons.” **Seating is limited. FOR MORE INFORMATION or to register, please contact the EAP at 240-314-1040 or eap@mcpsmd.org**

Caregiver Support Group

45 W. Gude Dr. • 4:15-5:30 p.m. • Ongoing

MCPS EAP offers a Caregiver Support Group designed to provide helpful resources and establish connections among the caregivers within our community. Guest speakers present on important topics related to caring for a loved one. All are welcome to attend. **FOR MORE INFORMATION or to register, please contact the EAP at 240-314-1040.**

Want to IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP?

- ♦ **Ensure** adequate exposure to natural light. Light exposure helps maintain a healthy sleep-wake cycle.
- ♦ **Establish** a regular relaxing bedtime routine.
- ♦ **Associate** your bed with sleep. It is not a good idea to use your bed to watch TV, listen to the radio, or read.
- ♦ **Avoid** eating large meals within a couple of hours of bedtime.
- ♦ **Keep** your bedroom quiet, cool, and dark.
- ♦ **Limit** screen time 30 minutes prior to bed and put your smartphone on Night Shift.

For more information, visit <https://sleepfoundation.org/>, or check out Shawn Stevenson's book *Sleep Smarter*.

COFFEE!

Do you feel like you cannot seem to start the day without a cup of coffee? Caffeine, the stimulant that gets you going, is one of the world's most widely used drugs. It has been a part of our



diet for centuries. Coffee is the chief source of caffeine, and soft drinks run a very close second. Here are some facts about caffeine:

- ♦ **Contrary to popular belief, a cup of coffee cannot help sober up a person who has been drinking.**
- ♦ **Noncolas are not necessarily caffeine free. Be sure to read the label if you are trying to cut down on caffeine.**
- ♦ **Caffeine is an ingredient in more than 1,000 over-the-counter and prescription drugs.**

For most people, moderate amounts of caffeine cause no physical harm. However, excessive amounts of caffeine can cause anxiety, insomnia, headaches, or stomach irritation. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms and you think caffeine may be the culprit, contact your doctor or a registered dietitian.

If you want to limit your caffeine consumption, keep in mind that it is contained in a growing number of foods. Along with coffee, tea, and colas, caffeine is also found in—

- ♦ **noncola soft drinks like root beer and orange soda**
- ♦ **energy drinks**

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IS THERE A CONNECTION Between Bipolar Disorder and Alcoholism?

Answers from Daniel K. Hall-Flavin, M.D.

Bipolar disorder and alcoholism often occur together. Although the association between the two is not clearly understood, the following factors likely play a role:

- ♦ **Inherited traits.** Genetic differences appear to affect brain chemistry linked to bipolar disorder. These traits may also affect the way the brain responds to alcohol and other drugs, increasing the risk of alcoholism and addiction to other drugs.
- ♦ **Depression and anxiety.** Some people drink to ease depression, anxiety, and other symptoms of bipolar disorder. Drinking may seem to help, but it makes symptoms worse in the long run. This can lead to a vicious cycle that is difficult to overcome.
- ♦ **Mania.** This upswing from depression usually is characterized by intense elation (euphoria and hyperactivity). Usually, it causes bad judgment and lowered inhibitions, which can lead to increased alcohol or drug abuse.

Bipolar disorder and alcoholism, or other types of substance abuse, can be

a dangerous combination. Each can worsen the symptoms and severity of the other. Having both conditions increases the risk of mood swings, depression, violence, and suicide.

Someone who has both bipolar disorder and alcoholism or another addiction is said to have a dual diagnosis. Treatment may require the expertise of mental-health-care providers who specialize in the treatment of both disorders.

If you have lost control over your drinking or you abuse drugs, get help before your problems become worse and harder to treat. Seeing a mental health expert right away is especially important if you have signs and symptoms of bipolar disorder or another mental health condition as well.

If you think that you or someone close to you has these symptoms and do not know what to do, please contact the EAP at 240-314-1040.

Based on article from the U.S. National Library of Medicine. For more information go to <https://medlineplus.gov/bipolar disorder.html#cat47>

GENERATIONAL Viewpoints

ACCORDING TO Nancy Grunnet, MS, RODP, in a recent issue of *Journal of Employee Assistance*, generational differences affect how we deal with many aspects of work. In terms of views of authority and rules, she notes the following:

- ♦ **Traditional** (born 1945 or earlier). They are respectful of authority figures and follow rules without question.
- ♦ **Baby Boomers** (born 1946 to 1964). They are respectful of authority figures. They question the system versus calling out individual authority.
- ♦ **Generation X** (born 1965 to 1980). They are not impressed with authority nor “antiquated rules.” Wary and distrustful, they question rules and authority openly.
- ♦ **Generation Y/Millennials** (born 1981 to 1997). To them, rules become outdated, fluid, and change over time (think tech influence). They need information to make their own choices and decisions, and they seek guidance and direction in order to do so. An authority figure is not the same as an authentic figure.

The descriptions above are generalizations and will not apply to everyone. However, it is useful to consider the effect of generational differences at your school or office and how they affect staff interactions, communication, feedback, rules, and authority. If differences exist, how do they get addressed? All generations are represented at our workplace. So, it is best to figure out how to work with each other.

COFFEE

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- ◆ hot cocoa
- ◆ chocolate and coffee-flavored candy

Hot cocoa and chocolate have very small amounts of caffeine compared to coffee. Make the switch to less caffeine by recognizing how much you consume, slowly tapering down your intake, and drinking water in place of some of the coffee.

Research shows that coffee is the most popular food consumed at breakfast in the United States. With millions of us jump-starting our day with coffee, are there any health risks to drinking caffeinated beverages? Caffeine acts as a mild stimulant to the central nervous system, and both regular and decaf coffee can irritate the stomach. Caffeine also can act as an analgesic and may help protect against gallstones, cavities, type 2 diabetes, and Parkinson's disease, but more research is needed before caffeine can be proclaimed a "disease preventer."

How much coffee is too much?

Your caffeine sensitivity depends on the amount you drink, the frequency, your weight, your physical condition, and other factors. For most healthy adults, 200 to 300 milligrams of caffeine per day—about two to three cups of coffee—poses no physical problems.

Article adapted from <http://wellnessproposals.com/>. Printed with permission.

Ask the EAP:

Q. Am I required to sign a release of information regarding my involvement in the EAP?

A. No. It is always up to you whether or not to sign such a form. However, there may be times when it is in an employee's best interest to sign a release of information. For example, when an employee requests and is approved for work time to attend an EAP appointment. With a signed release of information, we can confirm to your supervisor that you attended the appointment so you can account for your time.

Do you have a question for the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?

Send your questions to Jeff Becker at Jeffrey_Becker@mcpsmd.org or via the Pony mail.

ARE YOU AFFECTED by someone else's problem drinking?



THE AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP is a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems. Members do not give direction or advice to other members. Instead, they share their personal experiences and stories and invite other members to "take what they like and leave the rest." In other words, determine for themselves what lesson they could

apply to their own lives. The best way to learn how Al-Anon works is to attend a meeting in your community. To find a meeting, visit www.al-anon.org/find-a-meeting or call 1-888-4AL-ANON (1-888-425-2666).

Retrieved from www.al-anon.org.

*"Unless someone like you
cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get
better. IT'S NOT."*

~ DR SEUSS, THE LORAX

*"The more that you read, the
more things you will know.
The more that you learn,
the more places you'll go."*

~ DR. SEUSS, I CAN READ
WITH MY EYES SHUT!



A Healthy Outlook!

To help employees with
troubling issues before they
become overwhelming.



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Important Notice: Information in *A Healthy Outlook!* is for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional. For further questions or help with specific problems or personal concerns, contact your employee assistance professional.

You may contact us or send your questions and comments to Jeffrey_Becker@mcpsmd.org

Please note that e-mail is not necessarily confidential.

Published by the Department of Materials Management
for the Employee Assistance Program

0788.17 • EDITORIAL, GRAPHICS & PUBLISHING SERVICES • 3.16

