FINDING THE GOOD AND TAKING IT IN

As we get ready to close out another year and begin a new one, many of us will take time to reflect upon our lives and our direction to see if we want to make some changes. During this time of reflection, how about considering that one of your changes for 2013 be to make more of an effort to “find the good and take it in.” What do we mean by that, you ask?

Consider this:

Thanks to neuroscience research, we are learning that our brains have a negativity bias. Our “ancient circuitry” enabled our nervous system to tune in to anything that might be a possible threat to our survival. Our ancestors were on the lookout for anything negative that might trigger them to access their “fight or flight” response to keep them and their families safe.

Our brains and our bodies are still wired to be more reactive to negative stimuli than to the positive. Because of this we have to make a more conscious effort to pay attention to the positive aspects of life. By doing so, we can benefit greatly by reducing our stress and anxiety levels and increasing our sense of satisfaction about life in general.

Paying attention to the positive doesn’t mean putting on rose-colored glasses or turning away from difficult things that life can bring to us. It means nourishing a part of us can become a place of contentment and peace — “our rock, refuge, and home base” — to access when life is challenging. This can help us to be more resilient, too!

Some tips for finding the good and taking it in:

♦ Turn positive facts into positive experiences. Actively look for good news. Open up to it, and let it touch you.

♦ Pay attention to the little stuff of daily life that can bring joy and comfort like the sound of a child laughing, a compliment from a co-worker, or the joyful greeting of your cat or dog when you get home!

♦ Savor the experience. So, you find the dessert is delicious! Slow down and really take your time eating it to make the treat and the feeling of pleasure last longer.

♦ Check out this article on how to address negative thinking and worry patterns that keep us from finding the good. “How to Overcome Negativity Bias”

Article resources: http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/your-wise-brain/201010/confronting-the-negativity-bias
https://sites.google.com/site/psychospiritualtools/Home/psychological-practices/taking-in-the-good

EAP Wellness Calendars Still Available!

EAP’s annual tradition of providing employees with a FREE wellness calendar continues! The calendar is colorful and offers an array of tips for your health and well-being that will help you throughout the year. To request a copy sent via campus mail, call the EAP Office 442-5483 or click on the “Special Promotions” icon on the EAP website’s home page. http://www.albany.edu/eap/

One per employee while the supply lasts.
The EAP Committee and I wish you and your family a safe and joyful holiday season.

We look forward to serving you and continuing to support your health and well-being in 2013!

Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator

EAP Committee Members:

Kathy Gurney & Keith Kirtley (Co-Chairs)
Paul Berger
Michelle Bowen
Linda Gallagher
Jessica Healy
Pamela Moniz
Jo-Ann Moshier
Maryann Murray-Wygel
Dorota Rozycki
Marlene Williams

“Take time to gather up the past so that you will be able to draw from your experience and invest them in the future.”

~ Jim Rohn
Entrepreneur, Author, & Motivational Speaker
(1930—2009)
During the holiday season, festivities oftentimes include serving alcohol. It’s a good time to take note of a few things about drinking and our health.

Do you know what the “standard” size of an alcoholic drink is in the United States? If you guessed 0.6 fluid ounces of “pure” alcohol, then you guessed correctly! In our “super-sized” culture, it’s difficult these days to gauge accurate and healthy amounts of food and beverages.

Being able to “hold your liquor” is not necessarily something to be proud about. This ability may actually put you at risk for problems with alcohol. People who need a few drinks to feel relaxed “tend to drink more, socialize with people who drink a lot, and develop a tolerance for alcohol. As a result, they have an increased risk of developing alcoholism.” Abuse of alcohol can damage the liver, heart, and brain.

Let’s look at the alcohol content in one single drink. In its publication titled Rethinking Drinking: Alcohol and Your Health, The National Institute of Alcohol and Alcoholism gives examples of typical drinks with their alcohol content. Review the information below. Let it be a helpful guide if you are making choices about partaking in this type of holiday “spirit.”

Percentage of alcohol in one typical drink:

- 12 fl oz of regular beer = about 5% alcohol
- 8-9 fl oz of malt liquor = about 7% alcohol
- 5 fl oz of wine = 12% alcohol
- 1.5 fl oz shot of hard liquor = about 40% alcohol

How many drinks in common containers?

- 12 fl oz of beer = 1 drink
- 16 fl oz of beer = 1 1/3 drink
- 12 fl oz of malt liquor = 1 1/2 drink
- 16 fl oz of malt liquor = 2 drinks
- 750 ml of wine (1 bottle) = 5 drinks
- A mixed drink with hard liquor = 1 or more drinks (depending on the type of spirits and recipe)

**DRIVING DRUNK LAWS** - All 50 states and the District of Columbia have “per se” laws defining it as a crime to be driving with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) at or above a specified level, currently 0.08 percent (0.08 g alcohol per 100 ml blood).

For more information, check the NYS Dept. of Motor Vehicles online publication titled “You and the Drinking Driving Laws.”
One of your benefits as an employee of the University at Albany is access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAP’s mission is to provide services to support a healthy, productive workforce. Available to all employees is the voluntary, confidential Information, Assessment, and Referral Service provided by UAlbany EAP Coordinator, Brenda Seckerson.

Is there a concern or stressor that you know you need to address but just haven’t taken the time to do so? Is there an issue at home or work that is having an effect on your ability to be as productive as you need to be? Early intervention is the key! You don’t need to deal with it alone. Support is available through UAlbany EAP. Whether it is family and relationship issues, work stress, interpersonal difficulties, substance abuse or dependency, aging parents, therapist referrals, legal matters and/or financial concerns, employees can take advantage of the confidential assistance available from EAP.

Confidential support, information, and referrals are available to assist you in finding a way to address your concerns.

Employee Assistance Program-sponsored events and services are open to UAlbany and Research Foundation faculty, staff, family members, UAS employees, GSEU members, and retirees.

To schedule an appointment for an Information, Assessment & Referral session, contact

Brenda Seckerson,
UAlbany EAP Coordinator
Call 442-5483
or email
bseckerson@albany.edu

“The thing that is really hard, and really amazing, is giving up on being perfect and beginning the work of becoming yourself.”

~ Anna Quindlen
Novelist & Columnist
(1952 - )
STAY HAPPY AND HEALTHY ALL WINTER LONG!

It’s that time of the year again. Are you wondering how you can take care of yourself this winter? Not to worry. A better diet, a little more exercise, and some self-motivation can help make this process easy and rewarding. Successfully surviving the winter months does take some extra care, so by applying the daily lifestyle tips below you can be good to yourself this winter and all year long. Enjoy!

Winter Wellness Tips:

♦ Enjoy the benefits of yogurt. It can help prevent osteoporosis and reduce your risk of high blood pressure.

♦ Help holiday heartburn. You can still enjoy your favorite foods but in moderation. Try to stay away from too much sugar and fats. Reach for carbs like veggies and whole-wheat breads.

♦ Kiss holiday cold sores good-bye! If you are prone to getting cold sores (also called fever blisters), take these steps:

  • Get plenty of sleep and watch stress levels.
  • Wash your hands frequently.
  • Don’t share food or drinks.
  • Don’t overdo it with sweets and alcohol. Maintain a healthy diet as much as possible.
  • And don’t kiss anyone with a cold sore or let anyone near yours!

♦ De-stress with meditation. Repetition is at the heart of meditation’s soothing power. The act of banishing thoughts, focusing on your breathing, and repeating a single word or phrase, fires up your body’s natural relaxation response.

♦ Participate in winter workouts with family. Try walking together. It’s suitable for young or old, with a pace that’s sedate or speedy.

♦ Eat Locally. Organic food may be today’s healthy-eating watchword. A head of locally grown lettuce, for example, may be more nutrient-dense than one shipped coast to coast. So, eat locally and organic, when you can.

♦ Try these 3 simple diet & exercise tips:

  Go Slow: If you cut just 200 calories a day you’ll see slow (and easy) weight loss.

  Start Small: Switch from potato chips to low-fat popcorn, for example, or toss a carrot into your brown bag lunch.

  Just Show Up: Don’t feel like working out today? That’s fine, but chances are good that once you’re dressed, you’re also motivated and ready to go!

♦ Invest in your health – literally! Whichever healthy steps you take this year – eating better, exercising more, saving -- remember they’re an investment in you and your future.

http://www.webmd.com/balance/features/8-winter-tips-healthy-living

~Article submitted by Tenasia Rampersant, EAP Office Work Study Student
Black Friday and Cyber Monday have passed, but there are still many more days of holiday sales ahead! It’s still not too late to make measured decisions about how much money to spend this holiday season. The Better Business Bureau outlines five tips that can help you and your wallet. Why not be proactive and avoid having those New Year financial regrets — and debt! It’s all about budgeting. What a concept, right?

- Step One: Consider your income
- Step Two: Add up regular monthly expenses
- Step Three: Estimate extra holiday expenses
- Step Four: Revisit, evaluate and revise your budget along the way
- Step Five: Reward yourself!

For details about each of these steps, check out the Better Business Bureau’s article in their holiday issue.

HEAP may help you or those you know pay for Electricity, Propane, Natural Gas, Wood, Oil, Kerosene, Coal, or any other heating fuel.

For all of the details about the various programs available and the income guidelines, go to: http://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/
What's Cooking?

UAlbany has a lot of great resources available to its employees. To keep you informed about the array of dining offerings and specials available on campus, EAP will be sharing information from UAS in the monthly E-News. You’ll find out “what’s cooking” and be informed of events that might be of interest. Here’s what’s on the menu, so to speak, for the month of December!

*Other exclusive dining specials and FREE items are offered by going to the UAS Facebook and/or Twitter page.

**Like or Follow UAS today for the most current dining information, specials and contests at:

   facebook.com/usalbany

   twitter.com/usalbany

Click here for online monthly menus and venue hours of operation.
Shoot for the moon and if you miss you will still be among the stars.

~ Les Brown
Big Band Leader & Composer
(1912-2001)

Harvest Sweet Potato Pecan Pie Tarts
Healthy Holiday Appetizer — 89 calories each

Ingredients:
- 1 cup mashed cooked sweet potato
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup chopped toasted pecans
- 1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon dark corn syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 egg white
- 2 (2.1-ounce) packages mini phyllo shells

Preparation:
⇒ Preheat oven to 350°.
⇒ Combine sweet potato, granulated sugar, cinnamon, and salt, stirring well.
⇒ Combine pecans, brown sugar, syrup, vanilla, and egg white, stirring well.
⇒ Spoon about 1 teaspoon sweet potato mixture into each phyllo shell, spreading to edges. Spoon about 1/2 teaspoon pecan mixture over sweet potato mixture. Place filled shells on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes. Cool completely on a wire rack.


Disclaimer: The material and links in this newsletter are presented for educational and informational purposes only and do not serve as any endorsement by EAP. This information is not intended to replace the advice of your qualified health professional.

The New York State Employee Assistance Program is a joint labor/management program and a negotiated benefit. EAP Coordinators are a confidential and neutral resource for employees. The use of EAP is on a voluntary basis.