Learning to Relax

Are you able to let go and really unplug?

Do you interfere with your ability to relax without knowing it?

Consider the following:

1) You combine attempts to relax with work-related activities.
2) You feel guilty when you are trying to relax.
3) You feel annoyed by family members who want you to participate in relaxation events with them.
4) You feel unproductive, bored, or fidgety when you try to relax.
5) You often quit early when participating in any relaxation period or event.
6) When you relax, you do so with office work by your side.
7) Work feels rewarding, and the idea of needing to relax feels imposing.

If you answered “yes” to at least three of these questions, consider understanding more about the need to include meaningful relaxation in your life.

The body and mind need opportunities to relax to release stress and to rejuvenate. The Mayo Clinic identifies the benefits of incorporating relaxation into your life and offers a few techniques to consider. Making time to do things that you simply enjoy like reading, gardening, hiking, or listening to music, can promote relaxation. Unplugging from electronics and from work to experience ways of relaxing will actually enable you to be more productive when you get back to your work-related tasks. So, take the time to find the ways and means to bring relaxation into your life and see what you discover. Perhaps learning to relax will take some practice, but it will be worth it on many levels.

Resource: Frontline—Employee Wellness, Productivity & You! Frontline newsletter is courtesy of the New York State Employee Assistance Program.
Check Your Tech-Etiquette

How’s your cell/smart phone etiquette? Ninety percent of people surveyed by Intel insisted serious improvement is needed in people’s technology manners. Rule #1 is being aware of your use of technology when you are around others. Be with them, not the technology. Nearly all cell phone etiquette tips flow from this adage. We learn to keep elbows off of the table growing up. Is it time to begin to instill text, chat, and snap manners?

Who better to educate us about manners than Emily Post, right? (That is if you are old enough to know who Emily Post is!) Check out the list of “Top Ten Cell Phone Manners” on the Emily Post website. You’ll find some instructive guidelines and ideas about being conscientious and courteous cell phone users.

In this day and age when discussions about the lack of civility are on the rise, it’s easy to complain about how others are behaving and focus on someone else’s actions. It’s important to take time to reflect on how conscientious we each are being when it comes to the use of our electronic devices. If we each become more mindful of our usage and realize the potential impact of our tech behaviors on those around us, there most surely will be a positive ripple effect!

The Power of Introverts

By now you know that EAP enjoys sharing information and resources that provide you with an opportunity to learn and to contemplate. With this in mind, here’s another TED Talk to check out! This 19-minute talk is given by Susan Cain, a former corporate lawyer and negotiations consultant and a self-described introvert. Author of the book Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking, Cain explores how “our world prizes extroverts” and “makes a case for quiet and contemplation.”

“In a culture where being social and outgoing are prized above all else, it can be difficult, even shameful, to be an introvert. But, as Susan Cain argues in this passionate talk, introverts bring extraordinary talents and abilities to the world, and should be encouraged and celebrated.”

No matter where you land on the introvert/extrovert spectrum, this TED talk provides some food for thought. It definitely falls into the “ideas worth spreading” category that TED Talks promote. What do YOU think? To view the talk, go to: http://www.ted.com/talks/susan_cain_the_power_of_introverts.html
February - The Month of the Heart

Among the many important observances in February, there is one that may be overlooked as being relatively “fluffy” when actually it is the most important one of all when it comes to our relationships with other people, including those we don’t even know. That is the **Observance of (Kind) Hearts**! Beyond caring for its physical condition, using your heart emotionally, e.g., by extending random acts of kindness and thoughtfulness to others, is vital to your overall positive mental and physical health.

Need some ideas? The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation at [http://www.randomactsofkindness.org/](http://www.randomactsofkindness.org/) focuses on all types of kindness resources. The homepage draws you in right away with “Today’s Kindness Idea” which happened to be **Let Them Merge**. We’ve all felt the relief in a tight traffic situation when someone nicely slows down to let you in. That simple act probably encourages you to do the same thing when you encounter someone in a similar situation later on, don’t you agree? On the RESEARCH section of the site you’ll find an article that explores the effect of experiencing as well as witnessing kindness (by Steve Taylor, Ph.D.). Other fascinating articles include, “Can Emotional Intelligence Be Taught?” (by Jennifer Kahn), “Acts of Kindness: Key to Happiness for Children and Teens” (by Marilyn Price-Mitchell, Ph.D.), another about how gratitude and kindness can release the stress in your life (by Lauren E. Miller, a breast cancer survivor and author). And there are many more to choose from!

Did you know that there’s a **Pay It Forward Day** (PIFD)? Indeed there is, and in 2014 it happens to be on Thursday, April 24. This year’s goal is to inspire over 5 million acts of kindness around the world, involving over 50 countries. Why not plan on being part of the 5 million! Here are a few good benefits attached to paying random acts of kindness and helping someone else in need, taken from their website, [http://payitforwardday.com/](http://payitforwardday.com/):

- Doing good for others can have a powerful, positive effect on the immune system;
- By contributing towards the greater good self-worth and self-esteem improves;
- It can prevent people from becoming isolated, encouraging them to meet new people and step outside of their comfort zones;
- Chronic negativity can be dismantled in the mind as positive energy flows from giving to others. Studies have revealed that kindness helps relieve stress, which is a huge problem in many workplaces.

**What can you do?**

- Pay for someone’s cup of coffee
- Get the next person’s food, toll, gas, etc.
- Help someone out in need
- Befriend the lonely person
- Introduce yourself to your neighbors
- Make extra copies of photos and send them to the people who are in the images
- Do nice things and don’t tell anyone about it

An act of random kindness you might not be aware of is being a “Coupon Fairy.” That’s the name given to someone who has a coupon they don’t intend to use, so they leave it on the item it’s meant for. What a nice surprise when another shopper looking for that item discovers it! It might be just a minor financial gain, but on the other hand, the recipient won’t forget how it made them feel, which is priceless.

It’s easy to come up with ideas by simply putting yourself in the other person’s shoes and imagining how you would feel if someone did for you the kindness you extend to them. As all of the research on random acts of kindness shows, it is *always* a win-win situation. If you would appreciate some other non-traditional, heart-warming ideas, check these out on Pinterest, at [http://www.pinterest.com/sjserbinski/random-acts-of-kindness-ideas/](http://www.pinterest.com/sjserbinski/random-acts-of-kindness-ideas/). People post such creative ideas, and you will be inspired!

~Article contributed by Kathy Gurney, EAP Committee Member, CSEA Representative
Sometimes an issue at home or work can have an effect on your ability to be as productive as you need to be. You don’t have to deal with it alone. Support is available through UAlbany’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The mission of UAlbany EAP 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. Take advantage of this confidential assistance available as an employee benefit.

Here are just a few of the concerns or stressors that might prompt an employee to reach out to EAP for information and support:

- Family, parenting, and relationship issues
- Work stress and conflict
- Substance abuse or dependency
- Elder Care
- Psychological Concerns (e.g., depression, anxiety)
- Legal and/or financial concerns
- Grief and loss
- Therapist referrals

**Early intervention is the key! Contact EAP.**

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

**Brenda Seckerson,**
**UAlbany EAP Coordinator**

Call 442-5483
or email bseckerson@albany.edu

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.

“**When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.**”

~ Victor Frankl, Austrian Psychiatrist & Holocaust Survivor (1905—1997)
CPR/AED Certification

Help Save Lives!

This 3-hour training will provide participants with a 2-year certification. Renew your certification or use this as the opportunity to finally get certified.

NOTICE: EAP has had a great response to offering this training! Both sessions are currently filled. We will try to offer more training ASAP. Stay tuned for more details.

Training provide by Five Quad.

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Assembly Hall, Campus Center
Friday, February 14
OR
Monday, February 24

Save the date!

Tuesday, March 11
12:00—12:45 pm

We’ve set the date for the next EAP Art Break at the University Art Museum. Attending this lunchtime event is a great way to get energized during your work day and connect with others who are interested in the arts and in learning about UAlbany.

If you have never been to the Art Museum, take advantage of this opportunity to explore new territory on campus!

The current exhibition is titled American Playlist: Selections from The University at Albany Art Collections.
Getting Along with Your Co-Worker

Does a fresh start in 2014 with a coworker with whom you were in conflict in 2013 sound like a good idea? Repairing the relationship may improve your mood, bring workplace fun back, and prevent you from going home feeling tired and tense. Being straightforward and admitting it’s your fault is the most powerful fix-up strategy, along with expressing the desire to start over. Before rejecting this idea, realize most conflicts are fueled by both parties. Admitting fault can “reboot” your relationship. You may get an almost immediate reciprocation with instant relief—you will both feel as though you’re freed from a cloud of tension. When you do this, you’ll need to be sincere and not allude to your coworker’s contribution to the problem. Implementing this idea may have you looking forward to a better year.

How to Make a Decision

Since decisions can have life-changing consequences, it’s worth studying the mechanics of how to make a good one. There is a lot of advice out there, but most tough decision making involves common “pieces” in the process. They include:

⇒ weighing the information and the choices,
⇒ examining potential outcomes,
⇒ paying attention to your feelings and your instincts as you go through the process,
⇒ and stepping away from the pressure or urgency (if possible) to ensure that it is not interfering with making a good choice.

To gain better control over information, pressure, choices, and risks, give each element its own mini-examination. Focus on information, what’s known, and what else can be known. Focus on choices. Consider their outcomes—expected and unexpected, short term and long term—and the risks and value of each choice. Consider feelings and what they’re telling you. Ask whether this decision can or should be delayed, or whether it’s best to decide now. If all these steps still have you stumped, try the following exercise. Fill in the blank: “If I did know what I should do, it would be ______.” Engaging in this mental prompt exercise can tap into a deeper awareness of what the decision should be. Deep down, you may really know.

Resource for Articles: Frontline—Employee Wellness, Productivity & You! Frontline newsletter is courtesy of the New York State Employee Assistance Program.
Do you want more joy in your life?

Do you want more fulfillment in your life?

If you answered YES, then this EAP Lunchtime Wellness Program is for YOU!

Join us as we’ll learn about:

- the importance of identifying your top passions,
- the three elements that are necessary in creating the life you want, and
- the secret that will guarantee you to live a passionate life, and the most important prerequisite to being able to live a passionate life.

**Presenter:** Louise M. Finlayson, Ph.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Transformational Life Coach, and Certified Passion Test Facilitator

**Program Host:** Linda Gallagher, EAP Committee Co-Chair, UUP Representative

**To Register Contact:**
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu

**CALL 442-5483 OR REGISTER ONLINE**

http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm

**12:00 - 1:00 PM**

**EAST Campus**

Wednesday, Feb. 26
Room 100A
School of Public Health

**UPTOWN Campus**

Friday, Feb. 28
Terrace Lounge,
Campus Center
Recognizing Early Signs of Dementia and the Importance of Living a Brain Healthy Lifestyle

This interactive workshop will separate myth from reality and address commonly-held fears about Alzheimer’s in America. The warning signs of Alzheimer’s disease are often dismissed as side effects of normal aging. If you or someone you know is experiencing memory loss or behavioral changes, it’s time to learn the facts.

**In this program you will learn:**
- How to tell the difference between Alzheimer’s and typical aging
- Steps to take if you recognize a warning sign in yourself or someone you know
- Brain-healthy lifestyle strategies

**Presenter:** Gretchen Moore Simmons, Professional Development Specialist, Alzheimer’s Association Northeastern New York

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**To Register Contact:**
Brenda Seckerson,
EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu
call 442-5483 or register online

http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm
Learn Origami

To Register Contact:
Brenda Seckerson,
EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu

CALL 442-5483 OR REGISTER ONLINE
http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm

Wednesday, February 19, 2014
12:00 pm – 12:45 pm
Room 375, Campus Center
Register by February 18

Program Host: Pamela Moniz,
EAP Committee Member,
M/C Representative

Please join us for a special presentation of the traditional Japanese art of paper folding called Origami. If you have always wanted to learn this amazing art, now is your chance! Our very own Susanna Fessler, from East Asian Studies (with her son Max) and Kanako Sumida, from the Office for Research, will show us how it’s done.
As our parent(s) age, we as adult children deal with the emotional uncertainty about this stage of life. There ARE some practical tools that can help us assist our parents age more successfully. But how do we prepare for and start conversations on such matters as legal issues, estate planning, housing, home safety and more? Getting the conversation started in a good way, can be a wonderful gift to our parents and to the entire family.

Join us for this informative EAP lunchtime program and gain some practical tools that will help you to get the conversation started with your parents.

**How to Communicate with Your Parents About Aging**

**Presenters:** Melonie Pratt, Senior Housing Advisor with Choice Connections and Jennifer LaPorte, from Wynwood of Niskayuna

**Wednesday, March 5**
**12:00 - 1:00 pm**
**Room 375**
**Campus Center**

**Registration Deadline:**
**Monday, February 3**

**To Register Contact:**
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu
call 442-5483
or register online
http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm
6-Hour Defensive Driving Class

This 6-hour class can help to reduce your insurance fees or deduct points from your license. **NYS requires attendance for the full 6 hours to receive credit.**

**Course Fee: $22.00**

Paid at time of registration

**Registration deadline: Friday, February 28**

Make check payable to: NTSI

Send to MSC Room # 200

**Tuesday & Thursday**

**March 4 and March 6**

5:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Standish Board Room

Science Library

Instructor: Sharon Simonik

To Register Contact:
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator

bseckerson@albany.edu

CALL 442-5483 OR REGISTER ONLINE

http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm
SafeTALK

Become a **suicide alert helper**. Attend this 3 hour training to learn the SafeTALK steps. Safe **Tell**, **Ask**, **Listen** and **KeepSafe** (SafeTALK)

This informative training prepares anyone over the age of 15 to identify persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to the suicide first aid resources. Most people with thoughts of suicide invite help to stay safe. Alert helpers know how to use these opportunities to support that desire for safety. As a SafeTALK trained suicide alert helper, you will be able to:

- move beyond common tendencies to miss, dismiss, or avoid suicide,
- identify people who have thoughts of suicide, and
- apply the TALK steps to connect people with suicidal thoughts to suicide first aid and intervention caregivers.

Powerful video clips illustrate both non-alert and alert responses. Discussion and practice help stimulate learning. Learn the steps that contribute to saving lives.

**Training Facilitators:** Lynn Keyes and Katie MacVeigh, NYS Dept. of Health/ HRI/OMIG EAP Coordinators

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**To Register Contact:**
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator
bseckerson@albany.edu
CALL 442-5483 OR REGISTER ONLINE
http://www.albany.edu/eap/event_sign-up.htm

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A **New Website** for Your Health and Well-Being

*A new wellness website for all NYS/SUNY employees called *WellNYS Everyday* has been launched. The *mission* of *WellNYS Everyday* is to educate, engage, and empower employees and their families, by encouraging participation in healthy behaviors. The *vision* for this initiative is to increase the number of employees who choose to eat healthier and become more physically active. *

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**WellNYS Everyday** consists of the following:

- **WellNYS Everyday Tip for the Day** - everyday a new tip will be displayed on the home page
- **NYS Workplace Walking Maps** - a listing of walking maps for NYS Workplaces
- **Eating for Your Health** - weekly recipes, monthly themes, food tips, and information
- **Physical Activities around NYS** - listing of walking, running, cycling, or hiking events, etc.
- **I Did It!** - success stories from participants; employees can nominate themselves or others to be recognized for making better wellness choices, or by participating in an event like a walkathon, bike ride, road race, or weight loss challenge
- **WellNYS in the Workplace** - ideas on how to engage in healthy behaviors while in NYS workplaces.
- **Olympic Experience 2014** is a program that encourages employees and their families to participate in one healthy behavior each day during the summer and winter Olympics. The next Olympic Experience will be held during the 16 days of the 2014 Winter Olympics. Employees and their families are encouraged to register to participate on the *WellNYS Everyday* website. Complete 10 days and receive a bronze certificate, 12 days and receive a silver certificate, or complete all 16 days and receive a gold certificate.
- **Monthly Behavior Challenges**. Employees and family members will be encouraged to register and track a different healthy behavior each month on the *WellNYS Everyday* website. The Monthly Behavior Challenge will start in March 2014, immediately following the Olympic Experience of 2014.

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To access this new resource to support your health and well-being, go to: [www.worklife.ny.gov/wellNYSeveryday](http://www.worklife.ny.gov/wellNYSeveryday) For more information about WellNYS Everyday, contact **NYS EAP Wellness Coordinator,** Linda Carignan at (518) 474-1841, Linda.carignan@eap.ny.gov