Are We Suffering From Nature-Deficit Disorder?

Listen. Have you begun to hear the sound of birds chirping and singing on some mornings? Are you sensing a slightly different feel in the air outside? Have you noticed the quality of the day’s light shifting as we move closer to spring time? Daylight lasts past 5 pm now. Or, do these changes stay out of your realm of awareness? Is life just too fast-paced and harried to pay attention to the small natural seasonal changes that take place each year? How connected are you to the natural world? Do you think you might suffer from nature-deficit disorder?

Richard Louv, author of Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder, explores the idea that due to the rise in our use of technology, along with the increased pace of life, children are growing up without exposure to the natural world like generations past. Louv coined the phrase “nature-deficit disorder” which is not a real psychiatric diagnosis. Creating this “diagnosis” is a way of highlighting the effects this trend is having on us individually and as a culture. Results from various studies are included in the book indicating how vital it is to human development that we be connected to the natural world. He outlines how the rise in obesity, attention disorders, and depression can be associated with our lack of connection to nature.

Nature-deficit disorder is not just relegated to children. We adults are feeling the impact of it as well. Louv delves into this in his most recent book, The Nature Principle: Reconnecting with Life in a Virtual Age.

In The Nature Principle, Louv states, “Young, old, or in between, we can reap extraordinary benefits by connecting—or reconnecting—to nature. For the jaded and weary among us, an outdoor world can expand our senses and reignite a sense of awe and wonder not felt since we were children; it can support better health, enhance creativity, new careers and business opportunities, and act as a bonding agent for families and communities. Nature can help us feel fully alive.” (pp. 5 & 6)

To help raise awareness within the UAlbany community of the benefits of staying in tune with nature, this year’s Earth and Wellness Day theme will be “Nurture Nature and Yourself.” Co-sponsored by EAP and the Office of Environmental Sustainability, the event will focus on ways that we can connect with nature for our health and well-being as well as for the sake of the planet. A special addition to our annual campus event will be a nature photo contest. We encourage students, faculty, and staff to go outside, explore the wonders of the natural world, and capture some of those moments to share with others! (See pages 7 & 8 for event and photo contest details.)

Both of Louv’s books are available through the EAP Lending Library. Whether you read the books or not, pay more attention to your natural surroundings—even if it’s just as you walk to and from your car. There’s a lot to take in and experience in the natural world. You might just feel better if you do!

How You Say It Matters

Effective Ways of Getting Your Message Across

We all have the basic human need to be heard and understood. Experiencing this makes us feel valued and respected. Staying on top of our communication skills and realizing that there’s always room for improvement are essential things to remember. Doing so can help make the workplace a more productive and enjoyable place to be.

Personal Best Publication’s “The Way You Say It” brochure has some helpful information designed to raise awareness about communication styles. It includes some handy tips to enhance your ability to listen and receive messages. Here are some things to consider as you take a look at how effective you are as a communicator. See if there are some new things you can add to your communication skills toolbox!


Six Ways to Shape Your Message:

1. **Treat others with respect.** Be persuasive, but keep an open mind. It’s the differences between people—cultures, talents, personalities, strengths—that make a creative workplace.

2. **Listen carefully.** You may miss important details or seem distracted if you’re thinking about what you’ll say next.

3. **Think before you speak.** Words said in haste or anger are often those you wish you could take back. Take a deep breath before you speak your mind. If you doubt whether what you are about to say is appropriate, it probably isn’t.

4. **Clarify.** You communicate to persuade, explain, inform, solve a problem, or gain information. Choose your words carefully.

5. **Be positive.** Complaining and criticizing hurt the morale of those around you. Seek to solve problems rather than just pointing them out. Give twice as much praise as criticism.

6. **Make your point.** Don’t bury your message with unnecessary words. Explain yourself, then let people ask questions for more information.

What’s Your Communication Style?

**Aggressive.** These individuals think they are always right, are poor listeners, try to bring others around to their point of view, interrupt, get angry or impatient, and speak quickly and loudly.

**Expressive.** Those with an expressive style get excited or emotional while speaking and are very persuasive. They tend to act on intuition and feelings and don’t listen well to explanations or facts.

**Passive.** Here the focus is on relationships and agreement. They may seek agreement or try to make all parties happy, and often prefer to let others take center stage and make decisions.

**Analytical.** These individuals like to have facts and data. They ask questions and get distracted if a conversation is too emotional or abstract. They are results-oriented.

**Assertive.** Confident, yet able to take others’ viewpoints into account, they are able to negotiate, compromise and consider alternatives. They get messages across clearly and listen well.

Want to gain more understanding about your communication style and learn additional tips on how to enhance your skills? Contact the EAP Office for a copy of “The Way You Say It” brochure and/or to request additional information on workplace communication. 442-5483 bseckerson@albany.edu
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

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

“Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says I'll try again tomorrow.”

~ Mary Ann Radmacher
Author & Artist
Managing Difficult Conversations

An Intro to Conflict Resolution

EAP Professional Development Workshop for supervisors, managers & Directors

As a supervisor, manager, or director, have you had the need to mediate conflict in the workplace? If so, did you wish you had some additional skills to address this type of situation? Join us for this 3-hour workshop which will provide basic skills on managing challenging conversations in the workplace. **Conducted by a dispute resolution professional**, participants will examine their own responses to conflict, develop techniques for effective communication, and learn basic techniques for managing conflict in a productive way.

**Workshop Facilitator:** Sarah Rudgers-Tysz, Esq., Executive Director of Mediation Matters

**TO REGISTER**
Brenda Seckerson, EAP Coordinator

**bseckerson@albany.edu**
**CALL 442-5483**
**OR REGISTER ONLINE**
**HTTP://WWW.ALBANY.EDU/EAP/EVENT_SIGN-UP.HTM**

**Registration Deadline:**
**Tuesday, March 19**

**Space is limited so register early!**
The Greater Capital Region Creating Assets, Savings, and Hope (CASH) program provides FREE tax preparation services from IRS-certified VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance)/AARP volunteers. All you need to qualify for free tax preparation is an annual household income below $51,000. That’s it!

- Refunds in as few as 10 days with direct deposit
- IRS-certified volunteer tax preparers
- Over 35 tax sites with convenient hours

For FREE tax preparation sites in Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Schoharie, and Saratoga counties, call (518) 694-8900. If you would like further information dial 2-1-1, the United Way Helpline, for all of the details. Or, check out the United Way website: http://www.cashgreatercapitalregion.org/

Additional Tax Preparation Resources:
- Visit www.myfreetaxes.com/NYCapRegion for FREE do-it-yourself state and federal income tax filing. People and families with an annual income under $57,000 are eligible to use www.MyFreeTaxes.com
- Or, go to the NYS Tax & Finance website to see if you qualify for a FREE tax return this year: http://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/efile/freefile_eligibility1.htm
- Questions about preparing your taxes? Connect with the IRS Taxpayer Advocate Service at www.irs.gov/advocate

Have you checked your credit reports?

The Fair Credit Reporting Act guarantees you access to your credit report free of charge from each of the three nationwide credit reporting companies (Experian, Equifax, and TransUnion) every 12 months. AnnualCreditReport.com is the ONLY authorized source for the free annual credit report that you are entitled to by law. A common practice is to check one company every four months to make sure your credit is in order. Take advantage of this opportunity to gain access to your report and look for mistakes or irregular listings. For more information, click on Federal Trade Commission.
All of us know by now that exercise is vital to being healthy both physically and mentally. But fitting exercise into a full day of work and family obligations is beyond a challenge -- it often feels like a downright impossibility. Who has the time? Who has the energy?

Local personal trainer Theresa Fiori knows the difficulties first hand. She is a mother of eight-year old twin boys, a wife, and a career woman. “People always say that it is easy for me since I exercise for a living, but that is just not correct. I have to fit my exercise into my day like everyone else. When I’m training people, I’m not working out, I’m working.”

So I asked Theresa for some fitness tips we can all use to keep us fit and active with our busy lives. Here is what she had to say:

**What is the number one way to start getting more fit?**

By making it a priority. 100%. You have to make exercise a priority in your life like everything else. Would you skip a board meeting? Would you not make your child’s lunch in the morning? You have to believe exercise is as important as any other non-negotiable part of your work and home life.

**Sure, but how do you get that mindset? Any tricks?**

Make a realistic plan. Stick to it without wavering for a minimum of 5-7 days. Once you get into a pattern and feel the benefits, your mindset will be changed and your priorities adjusted. Beginning a routine can be the hardest part, so that first week is critical to success and a change in behavior.

**What do you mean by realistic?**

We all have our own unique lifestyles, limitations and needs/wants. When you plan your schedule and routine, map those out on paper. If you’re not a morning person, don’t schedule yourself for a 5am workout. You’ll eventually just drop out. If you have small kids that limit your ability to get out for a run or walk, and that is what you’d like to do, budget for a treadmill at home and/or a jogging stroller. And remember, 30 minutes a day, five days a week, of moderate intensity activity will improve your health and cardio-respiratory fitness level. You don’t need 60-90 minutes, and you don’t need it all at the same time, 10-15 minute blocks are okay.

**What kind of 10-15 minute exercises do you recommend?**

Provided you have some privacy, you can bring a yoga mat and a balance ball to work and do 1-2 reps each of sit-ups, push-ups, and squats right in your office. You can also keep some small hand weights at your desk and do bicep curls while talking on the phone, viewing a podcast, etc.

You also have to think of exercise in a broader way. For example, housework and gardening can expend a lot of calories, with the added benefit of checking two or three things off your ‘to-do’ list. Also, take advantage of opportunities to bond with your children and neighbors and get fit by creating a neighborhood ‘sports night.’ I did that in my neighborhood. It has been a great social, emotional and physical endeavor. We play kickball or volleyball, ride bikes, or go jogging/walking.

Another point is to take advantage of family outings. If you go to a park, don’t just plop down on a blanket and watch the kids play. Go play! Have relay races, create an obstacle course, do jumping jacks! You will be exercising and teaching your children the value of staying active by doing, not just saying!

Lastly, don’t forget about mind/body activities like yoga, Pilates, and Bar Fitness. If you are not a fan of jogging or weight training, these are great choices as they more subtly use resistance to build muscles and stabilize your mood.

**Great ideas. Any final thoughts?**

Suffice it to say, exercise should not be an option in your life. Once you get into a routine – a routine that fits your life and your goals – you will glean the benefits. In a lot of ways, your life depends on it. Not to be cliché, but ‘Just Do It!’
Save the Date!

Thursday, April 18
Campus Center

This year’s theme...

Nurture Nature & Yourself!

You won’t want to miss this year’s event which will focus on connecting with nature for our health & well-being. The April edition of the EAP E-News will have all of the event details. For now, here are highlights of what’s in store!

Free Clothing Exchange
The tradition continues!

This is UAlbany’s eco-friendly way of spring cleaning that gives your clothes a longer life! Bring in unwanted, gently used and laundered clothing during our collection, volunteers will sort the donations and then display the items during our "Earth and Wellness Day" on April 18. Students, faculty and staff may take what appeals to them, and any remaining clothes will be donated to the City Mission. All items are FREE; however, monetary donations for the benefit of the Mission will be greatly appreciated. What a great way to help prevent 2.5 billion pounds of post-consumer textile waste from going into a landfill. So, recycle last season’s garments as second-hand clothing and feel better knowing that trading used clothing has a positive impact on the environment!

⇒ An Array of Exhibitors
⇒ FREE Health Screenings
⇒ Clothing Exchange
⇒ Nature Photo Contest
⇒ Soil Sample Analysis
⇒ Give-Aways
⇒ Refreshments

Clothing Exchange Collection Sites:

Campus Center Lobby Drop-Off Location
April 1 — 12 from 11 am - 2 pm

Collection Boxes will be placed at the following locations for donations anytime during the same dates:
• Quad Offices
• Husted Hall, Downtown Campus
• East Campus
• UAB and MSC Buildings
Here's a great way to get outside and enjoy nature. Capture your experiences by taking some photos and enter them in this contest. We'll also be using some of the photos to enhance our Earth and Wellness Day event in the Campus Center Ballroom. Help us to bring the outdoors indoor with some great nature photos!

**OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES:**

1. This contest is free and open to all University at Albany students, staff and faculty.
2. Only photos taken within the eligible categories* outlined in the Submission Guidelines will be considered.
3. Up to three photos may be submitted per person (*total, not per category*).
4. Photographers will retain original copyrights to their photos.
5. Entrants grant the Earth and Wellness Day Committee permission to use photo(s) for display and in conjunction with media and marketing related to the event.
6. Only submissions that adhere to the contest rules and submission guidelines are eligible to compete.
7. All decisions by the judges are final.

**SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

**TWO Eligible Categories:** Nature photos taken on the UAlbany Campus and those photos taken anywhere else.

All submissions should be e-mailed to earthandwellness@albany.edu.

All entrants must include the following in the body of the e-mail **PER ENTRY** (if submitting more than one photo, please send in separate e-mails):

**ENTRY FROM A STUDENT:**

First and Last Name; Status (freshman/sophomore/junior/senior/graduate); E-mail address; Phone number; Category for entry (On Campus or Off Campus); Brief description of photo(s) submitted

(Example: Squirrel in tree by State Quad)

**ENTRY FROM FACULTY/STAFF:**

First and Last Name; Department; E-mail address; Phone number; Category for entry (On Campus or Off Campus); Brief description of photo(s) submitted

(Example: “Squirrel in tree by State Quad”)

**PHOTOS:** Photos taken with a digital camera must be submitted at a minimum resolution of 1600 x 1200 pixels and in jpeg, bmp, png or tif format. Minor digital enhancement for cropping, red-eye removal, filters, and corrective functions are permitted, but images that have been judged to be significantly altered will be disqualified. Photographers are not permitted to place borders or frames around their images or to place watermarks, signatures, dates, or copyright notices on their images. Images MUST maintain the integrity of the subject as it was photographed.

Please re-name images to include the photographer’s first and last name and a one word description of the photo separated by a period (Example: “JohnDoe.stream.jpg”)

**CONTEST DEADLINE:**

April 3, 2013 - midnight

**ELIGIBLE CATEGORIES:**

**NATURE-ON CAMPUS:** Capture nature on any of the University at Albany campuses!

**NATURE-OFF CAMPUS:** Capture nature anywhere that is NOT on a University at Albany campus!
Harmful Interactions:

Mixing Alcohol with Medicines

You’ve probably seen this warning on medicines you’ve taken. The danger is real. Mixing alcohol with certain medications can cause nausea and vomiting, headaches, drowsiness, fainting, or loss of coordination. It can also put you at risk for internal bleeding, heart problems, and difficulties in breathing. In addition to these dangers, alcohol can make a medication less effective or even useless, or it may make the medication harmful or toxic to your body. Some medicines that you might never have suspected can react with alcohol, including many medications which can be purchased “over-the-counter”—that is, without a prescription. Even some herbal remedies can have harmful effects when combined with alcohol. Medications are safe and effective when used appropriately. Your pharmacist or other health care provider can help you determine which medications interact harmfully with alcohol. If you would like a copy of the booklet “Harmful Interactions: Mixing Alcohol with Medicines,” published by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), which lists reactions to commonly used medicines, contact the EAP Office. bseckerson@albany.edu


March is National Nutrition Month

Learn some “simple swap” ideas to help you make healthy “tweaks” to your food choices. Brought to you by Personal Best Publications — the source of EAP’s annual wellness calendars.


A “great plate” includes a yummy vegetable dish!

Check out this simple Asparagus & Mushroom recipe from Personal Best.

Increasing Your Happiness Quotient

Would you like to know how you can increase the potential to feel happiness? Join us as Dr. Finlayson examines some of the factors that are likely to help us in this pursuit. A variety of resources will be included in the discussion such as: positive psychology, Eastern philosophies, mindfulness, and studies identifying what contributes to the happiness of people living in Blue Zones — where the happiest populations in the world live. We’ll also take time to develop an individualized plan for increasing our own happiness quotient. You won’t want to miss this EAP Lunchtime Wellness Program!

**Presenter:** Louise M. Finlayson, Ph.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist

**Program Hosts:** Linda Gallagher and Kathy Gurney
EAP Committee Members, UUP and CSEA Representatives

**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

**UPTOWN CAMPUS**
Friday, March 15
12:00 - 1:00 pm
Room 354,
Humanities Building
TED

TED Talks

TED is a nonprofit devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading. It started out (in 1984) as a conference bringing together people from three worlds: Technology, Entertainment, Design.

TED Talks is an online “clearinghouse that offers free knowledge and inspiration from the world's most inspired thinkers.” Join us for this brown bag lunch event wherein we'll view three short talks that provide some helpful tips to enhance our personal and professional growth. Here's your chance to discover some new ideas to spark your imagination and to start getting faculty and staff talking here at UAlbany!

TED Talk Line-Up:

- Happy Secret to Better Work w/ Shawn Achor (12:21)
- Body Language Shapes Who You Are w/ Amy Cuddy (21:03)
- Try Something New for 30 Days w/ Matt Cutts (3:27)

Thursday, March 14
12:00 - 1:00 pm
Standish Board Room
Science Library

Registration Deadline: Tuesday, March 12

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
For Your Professional Development...Thinking about getting your Master’s degree? UAlbany’s School of Education will be holding two Graduate Information Sessions in March.

School of Education
Graduate Information Session

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR NATIONALLY RANKED & ACCREDITED GRADUATE PROGRAMS!

RSVP: SMALLISON@ALBANY.EDU OR 518-442-4988

For UUP Members
THURSDAY, MARCH 28
12 Noon – 1:00 p.m.

UAlbany Uptown Campus
Science Library, Standish Room (3rd Floor)

♦ Lunch will be provided
♦ Take advantage of your UUP tuition waiver
♦ One free application fee will be awarded
♦ Bring an official transcript from the highest degree awarded and be considered for an instant admission decision for non-degree study

Open to All
THURSDAY, MARCH 28
6:30 p.m.

UAlbany Uptown Campus
University Hall, Room 110

♦ One free application fee will be awarded
♦ Bring an official transcript from the highest degree awarded and be considered for an instant admission decision for non-degree study
♦ Refreshments
♦ Free parking

GRADUATE PROGRAMS:

Birth-Grade 12 Education
Counseling Psychology
Curriculum & Instruction
Education Policy
Educational Psychology & Research
Global Education

Higher Education
Mental Health
Online Education
Reading/Literacy
School Psychology
Special Education

WWW.ALBANY.EDU/EDUCATION

Education is not filling a pail but the lighting of a fire.
~William Butler Yeats
Irish Poet (1865-1939)
Calling all walkers, joggers, and runners to participate in the annual Workforce Team Challenge!

Or, calling all people who WANT to become walkers, joggers, or runners! Recruitment is underway for the UAlbany Workforce Challenge Team. The Challenge – sponsored by CDPHP – will be held on Thursday, May 16. [http://www.cdphpwtc.com/](http://www.cdphpwtc.com/)

This event is for ALL levels of participants.

For more information and to register, contact Cathy Probst, UAlbany Team Coordinator, at 442-2562. cprobst@albany.edu

What's Cooking?

**Faculty and Staff Culinary 101:**

**Healthy Eating Habits**

March 26
12-12:30pm
Campus Center, Assembly Room, 2nd Floor

Learn to prepare healthy, balanced snacks and lunches under 600 calories.

RSVP by March 25th to joyce.favicchio@compass-usa.com

**WHAT'S COOKING ON CAMPUS - MARCH**

For dining specials and events at the Campus Center and Patroon Room click HERE!

Monthly Patroon Room Menu

[www.albany.edu/uas](http://www.albany.edu/uas)

This information provided by Michelle Bowen, EAP Committee Member, UAS Representative.
“Something precious is lost if we rush headlong into the details of life without pausing for a moment to pay homage to the mystery of life and the gift of another day.”

~Kent Nerburn
American Author

Available in the EAP Library...

Check out these titles available in the EAP Lending Library:

- 10 Simple Solutions to Worry
- Live Well on Less Than You Think
- Positive Discipline for Teenagers
- Reclaim Your Family from Addiction: How Couples & Families Recover Love & Meaning
- The Caregiver’s Path to Compassionate Decision Making
- The New Diary: How to Use a Journal for Self-Guidance and Expanded Creativity
- The Truth About Managing People
- This Is Not the Life I Ordered: 50 Ways to Keep Your Head Above Water When Life Keeps Dragging You
- Perfect Phrases for Conflict Resolution

To discover what materials are available from the EAP Lending Library, go to the EAP website. Contact the EAP Office to make arrangements to stop by to browse, or you may request materials be sent to you via campus mail.

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.