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relationship news & more

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In This Newsletter

[Discover a New Way to Love
Couples Weekend](#)

[Habits are a Strange Phenomenon](#)

[Keep Your New Year's Resolutions](#)

[Free Workshops
at Crazy Wisdom Bookstore
114 S Main, Ann Arbor](#)

[What Makes a
Good Life?](#)

Sun, 1/12 - 2-4:30pm

Intro to the concept of well-being from the book *Flourish*. Understand attitudes, happiness, optimism, motivation, goals & character.

[Receiving Love,
Our Challenges
& Opportunities](#)

Sun, 2/9 - 2-4:30pm

Info from *Receiving Love, Transform Your Relationship by Letting Yourself be Loved*, by Dr. Hendrix. What gets in your way of graciously receiving 'love' - appreciations, encouragement, compliments, admiration, etc? Take a survey to assess your receiving love quotient.

[Impact of Technology &
Social Media on Our Lives &
Relationships](#)

Sun, 3/2 - 2-4:30pm

Digital technology, social media,

Best Wishes for a Peaceful New Year

I can't believe it's 2014. Time rushes by. Here I am at home with heavy snow all around while I am thinking and planning for things that I will offer this winter and early spring. In addition to my private practice where I work with couples, individuals, and groups, as well as the weekends for couples that I offer several times a year, I do the free workshops at Crazy Wisdom 6 - 8 times a year. I am offering one this Sunday, Jan 12th, taking information from Martin Seligman's new book, *Flourish, A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being*. Dr. Seligman is the author of *Authentic Happiness* and *Learned Optimism*, two very ground-breaking books that introduced the general public to the ideas and concepts of positive psychology. I hope some of you will join me this Sunday at Crazy Wisdom from 2 - 4:30 pm. While free, please call or e-mail to register.

My daughter and granddaughter are in Dexter for the school year as my granddaughter is finishing high school here and then they will return to New York City, their home. I have been enjoying spending time with them. I took care of their dog, which is the brother dog, to my Neesa over the holidays. Some of you know my Neesa as she is often with me in the office. She is not an official therapy dog; however, she loves greeting people as they come up the steps. For the most part, she is quiet and helps folks feel comfortable and welcomed in my office.

I am pleased to report that a project that I worked on for many months, the ImagoMichigan.org website, was completed in early December. I am proud to say that we have 55 Imago therapists in Southeastern Michigan. The website gives information about Imago relationship therapy and lists the names and locations of the therapists who belong to our association. Check the link above to view our website.

The only other news of note, actually it's only of notice about me, is that after years of not being interested in television dramas or soap operas, I have just succumbed and, even gotten hooked, on the *Downton Abbey* series. We have watched the first and second series on CD's that we got from the library, but tonight, I am eager to watch the first in the fourth series as it being broadcasted.

Facebook, etc. are all blessings in many ways, but they can create special challenges in personal relationships. Learn about the negative impact it can have on kids, teens, adults, couples & families.

While FREE, please call 734.424.2797 or email carole@therapy4couples.com to register.

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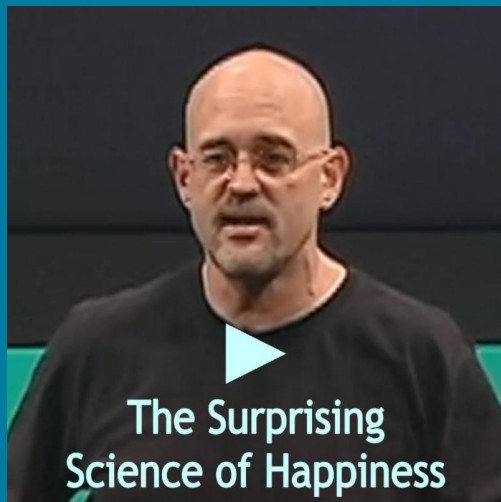
"The main reason that conscious control of habits is limited is that it requires the most easily exhaustible and metabolically expensive of mental resources: focused attention.

True learning doesn't come in a sudden breakthrough: it takes most people years of trial, error, practice, reinforcement of some behaviors, and active discouragement of others to become civilized adult human beings.

To get big change, think small."
Steven Stosny, Ph.D

[Visit Steven Stosney's website](#)

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Dan Gilbert, author of "Stumbling on Happiness," challenges the idea that we'll be miserable if we don't

Discover a New Way to Love

A Weekend Workshop for Couples

Mar 7-9 or May 16-18

Fri 7-10:30pm ~ Sat 8:30am-8pm ~ Sun 8:30am-6pm

- Confused about where the love went?
- Afraid to get help & afraid not to get help?
- Thinking it's all your partner's fault?

This weekend will provide new tools and understanding that can help you co-create a closer, stronger coupleship.

Give your relationship a gift this spring! Whether you've been together 6 months, 5, 10, or 30 years, this weekend will offer you new tools and understanding that can help you co-create a closer, stronger relationship. This workshop is based on the best selling book, Getting the Love You Want, by Dr. Harville Hendrix, founder of Imago relationship therapy.

Registration and more information at:
www.therapy4couples.com



Habits are a Strange Phenomenon

There are good habits like brushing your teeth, saying please and thank you, being considerate, being grateful, keeping your personal belongings and house picked up, paying your bills, etc. There are unproductive habits like dawdling, procrastinating, feeling sorry for yourself, "checking out" with TV, computer, smart phones, surfing the web, excessive use of social media like Facebook, etc. There are destructive habits like - overspending living beyond your means, smoking, overeating, using alcohol or any other substance to avoid your own personal issues (shame, fear, anxiety, depression, unhappiness). Even good habits like exercising can become destructive if overdone and not balanced with other parts of your life.

Janet Rae-Dupree in an article in the *New York Times* mentioned that "habits are a funny thing and that we reach for them mindlessly, setting our brains on auto-pilot and relaxing into the unconscious comfort of familiar routine." She goes on to say that brain researchers have discovered that when we consciously develop new habits, we create parallel synaptic pathways, and even entirely new brain cells, that can jump our trains of thought onto new tracks

get what we want. Our "psychological immune system" lets us feel truly happy even when things don't go as planned.

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To feel connected is the underlying motive of every one of our actions. It is the experience of feeling "at home." It is a lasting transcendent experience; a warmth, a settledness in our body, present whether or not we are with someone. We seek connection with everything we touch in our lives - people, places, things.

~ Susan Kramer

resulting in more creativity and innovation. I'm for this and can imagine that it sounds pretty good to you as well.

Yet sometimes we dismiss ourselves as unchangeable creatures of habit, but instead we can direct our own change by consciously developing new habits. The latest research is confirming that the more new things we try, the more we step outside our comfort zone, the more inherently creative we become, both in the workplace and in our personal lives.

Rae-Dupre cautions against thinking that you can kill off old habits once those ruts are worn into the hippocampus. You can't kill them off, but you can consciously create parallel pathways that can bypass those old ruts. Ask any person who has struggled with an addiction how determined one has to be to recognize the yearning yet choose another path.

Dawna Markova, author of *The Open Mind* suggests that there are three zones of existence: comfort, stretch, and stress. She indicates that comfort is the realm of existing habit. Stress occurs when a challenge is so far beyond current experience as to be overwhelming. It's the stretch zone in the middle - activities that feel a bit awkward and unfamiliar - where true change occurs. Getting into the stretch zone is good for us in many ways. It helps keep our brains healthy thereby challenging us to create new pathways that serve to prevent atrophy.

Researchers who asked folks in a study to do something different every day for a period of time - listen to a new radio station, for instance - found that the folks in the study lost and kept off weight, although that was not the intent of the study. No one is sure why this was the case, but scientists speculate that getting out of routines makes us more aware in general. So consider the following for creating some intentional, new habits especially as we approach the time of year where people are encouraged to make New Year's resolutions.

KAIZEN, a Japanese technique calls for tiny, continuous, improvements. Researchers suggest that whenever we initiate change, even a positive one, we activate fear in our emotional brain. If the fear is big enough, the fight or flight response will go off and we will run or avoid moving forward with whatever new habit we were trying to create. The small steps recommended by the KAIZEN approach don't set off fight or flight alarm, but rather keep us in the thinking brain, where we have access to our creativity and emotional intelligence. With conscious awareness, knowledge, and commitment, alternative pathways can be developed in our brains.

How to Keep Your New Year's Resolutions

10 Great Tips for Keeping Your Resolutions This Year

The start of a New Year is the perfect time to turn a new page, which is probably why so many people create New Year's Resolutions. A new year often feels like a fresh start, a great opportunity to eliminate bad habits and establish new routines that will help you grow psychologically, emotionally, socially, physically or intellectually. Of course, resolutions are much easier to make than to keep and by the end of January many of us have abandoned our resolve and settled back into our old patterns.

1. Choose a Specific, Realistic Goal Every year, millions of adults resolve to "lose weight" or "get in shape" during the next year. Instead of selecting such an ambiguous goal, focus on something more concrete that you can realistically set your sights on. For example, you might commit to losing 10 pounds or running a mini-marathon. Choosing a concrete, achievable goal also gives you the opportunity to plan exactly how you are going to achieve your goal over the course of the year.

2. Pick Just One Resolution While you may have a long list of potential New Year's Resolutions, Richard Wiseman, a professor of psychology at Hertfordshire University, suggests that you should pick just one and focus your energies on it rather than spreading yourself too thin among a number of different objectives.

3. Don't Wait Until New Year's Eve Planning is an essential part of achieving any goal. Experts suggest that you should spend some time planning out how you will tackle a major behavior change. You can start by writing down your goal, making a list of things you might do to achieve that goal and noting any obstacles that might stand in your way.

4. Start with Small Steps Taking on too much is a common reason why so many New Year's Resolutions fail. Dramatically slashing calories, over-doing it at the gym or radically altering your normal behavior are sure-fire ways to derail your plans. Instead, focus on taking tiny steps that will ultimately help you reach your larger goal. If you've resolved to run a marathon, start out by going for a jog two or three times a week. If you are trying to eat healthier, start by replacing some of your favorite junk foods with more nutritious foods. While it may seem like a slow start, these small changes make it easier to stick to your new habits and increase the likelihood of long-term success.

5. Avoid Repeating Past Failures Another strategy for keeping your New Year's Resolution is to not make the exact same resolution year after year. "If people think they can do it they probably can, but if they've already tried and failed, their self-belief will be low," explained Wiseman in a 2006 interview with The Guardian. If you do choose to reach for the same goals you've tried for in the past, spend some time evaluating your past results. Which strategies were the most effective? Which were the least effective? What has prevented you from keeping your resolution in past years? By changing your approach, you will be more likely to see real results this year.

6. Remember That Change Is a Process Those unhealthy habits that

you are trying to change probably took years to develop, so how can you expect to change them in just a matter of days, weeks or months? It may take longer than you would like to achieve your goals, but remember that this is not a race to the finish. Once you have made the commitment to changing a behavior, it is something that you will continue to work on for the rest of your life.

7. Don't Let Small Stumbles Bring You Down Encountering a setback is one of the most common reasons why people give up on their New Year's Resolutions. If you suddenly relapse into a bad habit, don't view it as a failure. The path toward your goal is not a straight one, and there are always going to be challenges. Instead, view relapses as learning opportunities. If you are keeping a resolution journal, write down important information about when the relapse occurred and what might have triggered it. By understanding the challenges you face, you will be better prepared to deal with them in the future.

8. Get Support from Your Friends and Family Yes, you've probably heard this advice a million times, but that is because the buddy system actually works. Having a solid support system can help you stay motivated. Explain what your goals are to your close friends or family and ask them to help you achieve your objectives. Better yet, enlist the help of others by joining a group that shares your goal.

9. Renew Your Motivation During the first days of a New Year's Resolution, you will probably feel confident and highly motivated to reach your goal. Because you haven't really faced any discomfort or temptation associated with changing your behavior, making this change might seem all too easy. After dealing with the reality of dragging yourself to the gym at 6 A.M. or gritting your teeth through headaches brought on by nicotine withdrawal, your motivation to keep your New Year's Resolution will probably start to dwindle. When you face such moments, remind yourself of exactly why you are doing this. What do you have to gain by achieving your goal? Find sources of inspiration that will keep you going when times get tough.

10. Keep Working on Your Goals By February, many people have lost that initial spark of motivation that they felt immediately after making their New Year's Resolution. Keep that inspiration alive by continuing to work on your goals, even after facing setbacks. If your current approach is not working, reevaluate your strategies and develop a new plan.

Consider keeping a resolution journal, where you can write about your successes and struggles. Write down the reasons why you are working toward your goal so that you can refer to them during times when you feel uninspired and unmotivated. By sticking with it and working on your goal all year long, you can be one of the few able to say that you really did keep your New Year's Resolution.

by Kendra Cherry, Psychology Today