



Vital!

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'Tis the Season!

Stress Less,
Laugh More!

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Is It Your
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DECEMBER 2018



“What most people need to learn in life is how to love people and use things, instead of using people and loving things.” Black Friday/week/month is behind us, but still my inbox and my mailbox are being bombarded with ads. A friend of mine was in town for Thanksgiving and said she was already feeling the stress of getting the decorations up, attending school and work holiday parties, endless shopping—and trust me, she wasn’t laughing while saying it. That’s why we’re hoping that this holiday season, you remember to carve out time for caring for yourself, carve out time for enjoying the *experiences* of the holiday season, and carve out time for laughter.

Caring for yourself can be as simple as giving yourself time to join an exercise group (check out the study on HIIT, page 4—it might be your fountain of youth!) or curling up with a good book. It can be as simple as finding a new social group or activity to try out (did you know that many senior living communities invite non-residents to join in their activities? Find out more on page 10). It can be as simple as setting up a fun date night with your honey or good friends (we found some fun events to celebrate New Year’s Eve, and you don’t even have to stay up til midnight! They’re on page 15) or it can be as simple as giving of yourself to a cause close to your heart.

This holiday season my mantra is “Stress less, laugh more.” People aren’t going to remember that you spent hours and hours making your home perfection. They’re not going to remember that you spent hundreds and hundreds of dollars on “stuff.” Take it from Maya Angelou, who said, “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Wishing you and your loved ones all the love and laughter, hope and happiness that the holiday season brings!

Karyn and Heidi



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New Guidelines: Cholesterol Should Be on Everyone’s Radar, Beginning Early in Life

From American Heart Association News

Exposure to high blood cholesterol over a lifetime can increase the risk for heart attack or stroke, and new scientific guidelines say managing this waxy, fat-like substance in the blood should be a concern for all ages.

The guidelines, published in November, are meant to help health care providers prevent, diagnose and treat high cholesterol. A panel of 24 science and health experts from the American Heart Association and 11 other health organizations wrote the guidelines’ science-based recommendations for people with very specific conditions and risks.

“The evidence is overwhelming,” said Dr. Scott M. Grundy, chairman of the guideline writing committee and professor of internal medicine at the University of Texas Southwestern

Medical Center in Dallas. Nearly 1 of every 3 U.S. adults has high levels of LDL, the so-called “bad” cholesterol that contributes to fatty buildup and narrowing of the arteries, called atherosclerosis. Global and U.S. studies have suggested the optimal level is less than 100 mg/dL for otherwise healthy people, and research trials have shown people with an increased risk of heart disease are less likely to develop heart disease and stroke when given drugs to lower elevated levels of LDL.

Along with well-established risk factors such as smoking, high blood pressure and high blood sugar, the guidelines suggest also looking at “risk-enhancing factors” such as family history and other health conditions to provide a better perspective of a person’s overall risk during the next 10 years.

The guidelines recommend doctors use a calculator to give a detailed assessment of a person’s 10-year risk for heart disease and to help create a personalized plan. For most patients who can’t control the condition with diet and exercise, cholesterol-reducing drugs called statins can be used. For patients at very high risk, including those who already have coronary heart disease, stroke or very high cholesterol caused by genetic conditions, additional drugs called ezetimibe and PCSK9 inhibitors can be used.

“There is no black and white. It’s all gray,” said Lloyd-Jones, a practicing cardiologist. “That’s why the emphasis in this document is making sure the patient and doctor are having well-informed discussions about the benefits and the potential risks of drug therapy. If a patient has had a heart attack or a stroke, we know those people will benefit from a statin. When there is someone who hasn’t had an event, that’s when the decision is more difficult and a detailed and personalized discussion is very important.”

For people 40 to 75 years old without evident heart disease, the guidelines use four classifications of risk: low, borderline, intermediate and high. When a patient is in the intermediate zone, and sometimes on the borderline, the guidelines suggest doctors have an in-depth discussion about potential benefits of statin drugs, considering all risk factors. If uncertainty remains about whether to use a statin, doctors can consider delving further with a test called a coronary artery calcium, or CAC, screening. A CAC score is calculated based on taking a CT scan of the heart and determining how much calcium plaque is building up in the heart’s arteries.

For younger adults between 20 and 39, the guidelines emphasize a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy diet and weight and exercising regularly. Because of a lack of long-term research for this younger age group, statin recommendations are reserved for those at higher risk, but Grundy said that doesn’t mean those patients should be ignored because young adults with risk factors like high cholesterol often already show the first stages of atherosclerosis.

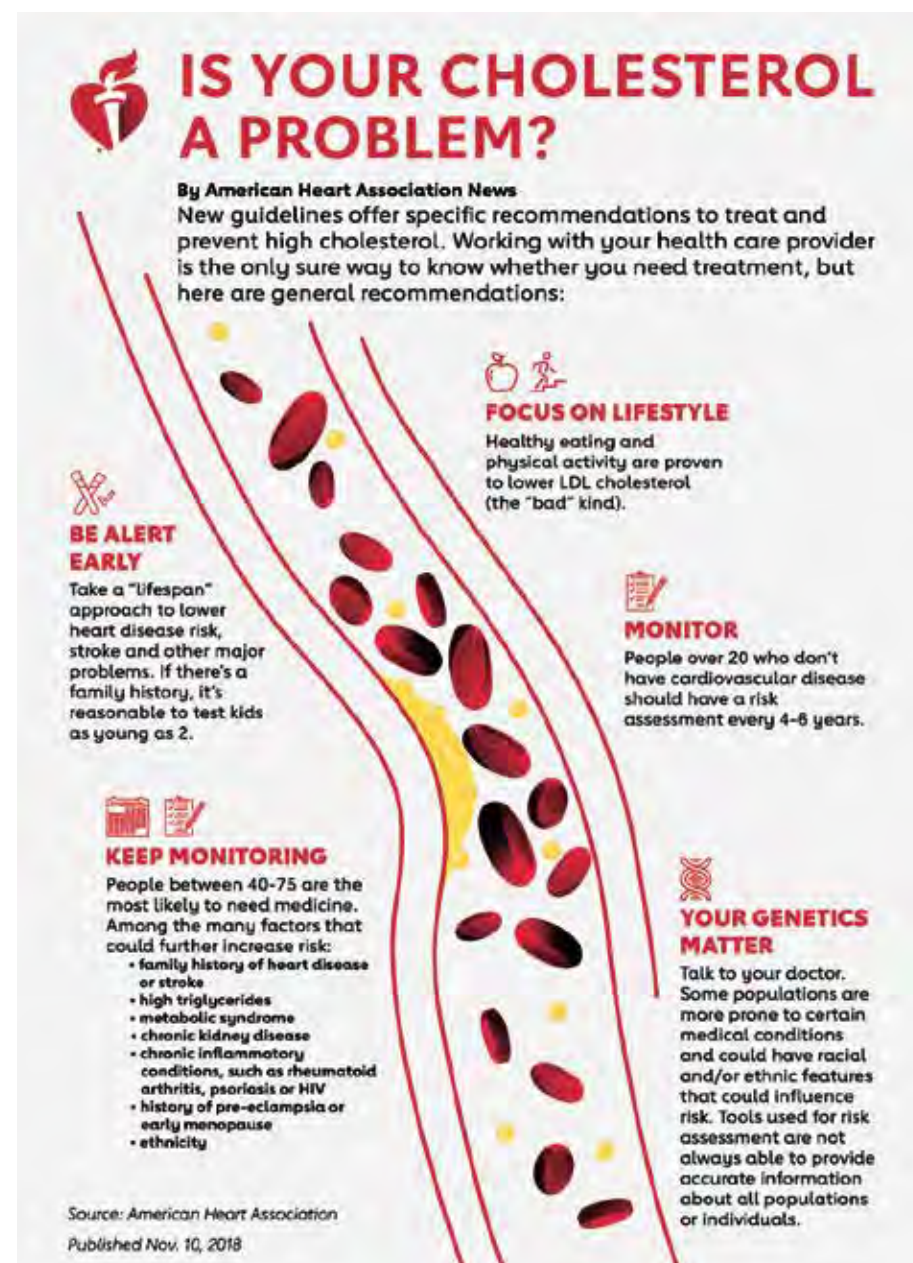
“We think doctors ought to pay more attention to young adults,” said Grundy, who is also chief of the metabolic unit at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Dallas. “If their cholesterol is high, they should try to lower it through diet and weight control. They might not need a statin, but they certainly need attention.”

Because of the potentially dangerous effects of a lifetime exposure to high cholesterol, particularly LDL, the guidelines suggest doctors consider selective screenings of children as young as 2 who have a family history of early heart disease or high cholesterol. In children without any known risk factors, doctors could recommend tests between the ages of 9 and 11 and then again between 17 and 21.

“That catches those with severe cholesterol disorders requiring early treatment with lifestyle changes or, rarely, for those 10 and older, medication,” said Dr. Sarah D. de Ferranti, chief of outpatient cardiology and director of preventive cardiology at Harvard Medical School’s Boston Children’s Hospital. “It’s important that, even at a young age, people are following a lifespan approach with a heart-healthy lifestyle and understanding and maintaining healthy cholesterol levels.”

It’s a reality that Carl Korfmachner of Wisconsin experienced just before turning 10, when he watched his 37-year-old father die of a heart attack. Before that, his dad, who also was a smoker, had learned he had hardening of the arteries caused by high cholesterol. Afterward, Korfmachner and his siblings had their cholesterol checked. He embarked on a lifetime of monitoring his diet, exercising and, later, taking medicine for high cholesterol.

Six years ago, when his own sons were 12 and 8, they were tested, too. Their cholesterol levels were so high that doctors put them on small doses of statin medicine. Today, they are managing well. “There’s no reason not to check it,” said Korfmachner, 55. “It’s one risk factor. Just because you have high cholesterol doesn’t mean you are going to die like my dad, but you should get plenty of exercise and not smoke. If you are overweight and staring at a screen, those things are just as important.”





GETTY IMAGES

Exercise to Rejuvenate Your Aging Cells

By Candy Sagon, AARP

We all know exercise can help us stay healthy, but what about helping us stay young? Is there one type of workout that's best at reducing the effects of aging? Researchers with the Mayo Clinic think they may have an answer. Their new study suggests that interval training, rather than weight lifting, may be best at slowing down—or even reversing—aging at a cellular level.

High-intensity interval training (HIIT) has become very popular in the last decade as a fast-paced routine that alternates between a short burst of intense aerobic exercise, such as sprinting or cycling at full speed, followed by a brief lower-intensity period. This pattern is repeated, usually for about 15 to 20 minutes, although some say even half that long is beneficial.

Briefly pushing your body to the max, then letting it recover, and then pushing it again helps improve cardiovascular and respiratory health, reduce fat and control glucose. But the new study, published in *Cell Metabolism*, finds interval training has additional benefits for older adults, namely reversing signs of aging within cells.


Researchers had two age groups of men and women, younger than 30 and older than 65, who were randomly assigned to one of three 12-week routines doing either high-intensity interval cycling, strength training with weights, or a modified combination of the two. The HIIT group had the most strenuous routine, cycling three days a week, with four four-minute intervals of high-intensity cy-

cling, followed by three-minute easy cycling intervals. Two days a week, they walked briskly on a treadmill for 45 minutes. The strength-training group did upper- and lower-body weight lifting exercises twice a week, while the combination training group did moderately-paced steady cycling (no intervals) and lifted weights five days a week, but for less time.

Researchers measured changes in the exercisers' leg strength and lean muscle mass, oxygen capacity and insulin sensitivity, an indication of diabetes risk. They also took biopsies of thigh muscles to examine cell activity. The good news: All the exercise routines improved overall fitness, including better respiration, lower fat and increased insulin sensitivity, which translates to a lower risk of diabetes. For older adults, however, the HIIT routine yielded the most benefits in reversing signs of aging within cells. The over-65 group had a dramatic 69 percent increase in cells' ability to take in oxygen and produce energy; the under-30 group experienced a 49 percent boost.

The HIIT group, the researchers noted, registered larger cellular changes, especially in mitochondria and ribosomes, which are important for maintaining healthy cell function and also tend to deteriorate with age, "as well as reversal of many age-related changes."

The takeaway, study author Sreekumaran Nair, M.D., diabetes researcher at the Mayo Clinic told CNN, is that "any exercise is better than being sedentary." But for older adults, interval training is "highly efficient" when it comes to reversing many age-related changes.


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2019 Social Security Changes

Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA):

The Social Security Administration announced that, based on the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI-W) from the third quarter of 2017 through the third quarter of 2018, Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for more than 67 million Americans will increase 2.8 percent in 2019. Some other adjustments that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$132,900 from \$128,400.

Other important 2019 Social Security information is as follows:

Tax Rate	2018	2019
Employee	7.65%	7.65%
Self-Employed	15.30%	15.30%

NOTE: The 7.65% tax rate is the combined rate for Social Security and Medicare. The Social Security portion (OASDI) is 6.20% on earnings up to the applicable taxable maximum amount (see below). The Medicare portion (HI) is 1.45% on all earnings. Also, as of January 2013, individuals with earned income of more than \$200,000 (\$250,000 for married couples filing jointly) pay an additional 0.9 percent in Medicare taxes. The tax rates shown above do not include the 0.9 percent.

	2018	2019
Maximum Taxable Earnings		
Social Security (OASDI only)	\$128,400	\$132,900
Medicare (HI only)	No Limit	
Quarter of Coverage		
	\$1,320	\$1,360
Retirement Earnings Test Exempt Amounts		
Under full retirement age	\$17,040/yr. (\$1,420/mo.)	\$17,640/yr. (\$1,470/mo.)
NOTE: One dollar in benefits will be withheld for every \$2 in earnings above the limit.		
The year an individual reaches full retirement age	\$45,360/yr. (\$3,780/mo.)	\$46,920/yr. (\$3,910/mo.)
NOTE: Applies only to earnings for months prior to attaining full retirement age. One dollar in benefits will be withheld for every \$3 in earnings above the limit.		
Beginning the month an individual attains full retirement age.	None	

	2018	2019
Social Security Disability Thresholds		
Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA)		
Non-Blind	\$1,180/mo.	\$1,220/mo.
Blind	\$1,970/mo.	\$2,040/mo.
Trial Work Period (TWP)	\$ 850/mo.	\$ 880/mo.
Maximum Social Security Benefit: Worker Retiring at Full Retirement Age		
	\$2,788/mo.	\$2,861/mo.
SSI Federal Payment Standard		
Individual	\$ 750/mo.	\$ 771/mo.
Couple	\$1,125/mo.	\$1,157/mo.
SSI Resource Limits		
Individual	\$2,000	\$2,000
Couple	\$3,000	\$3,000
SSI Student Exclusion		
Monthly limit	\$1,820	\$1,870
Annual limit	\$7,350	\$7,550
Estimated Average Monthly Social Security Benefits Payable in January 2019		
	Before 2.8% COLA	After 2.8% COLA
All Retired Workers	\$1,422	\$1,461
Aged Couple, Both Receiving Benefits	\$2,381	\$2,448
Widowed Mother and Two Children	\$2,797	\$2,876
Aged Widow(er) Alone	\$1,348	\$1,386
Disabled Worker, Spouse and One or More Children	\$2,072	\$2,130
All Disabled Workers	\$1,200	\$1,234

Social Security Q&A

Question:
Who can get *Extra Help* with Medicare prescription drug coverage?

Answer:
Anyone who has Medicare can get Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage. Joining a Medicare prescription drug plan is voluntary, and you pay an additional monthly premium for the coverage. People with higher incomes might pay a higher premium.

If you have limited income and resources, you may be eligible for *Extra Help* to pay for the costs—monthly premiums, annual deductibles, and prescription co-payments—related to a Medicare prescription drug plan. To qualify for *Extra Help*, you must be en-

rolled in a Medicare Part D plan and reside in one of the 50 states or the District of Columbia. For 2019, your annual income must be less than \$18,210 for an individual or \$24,690 for a married couple living together. Even if your annual income is higher, you still may be able to get some help. Learn more at www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp.

Your resources cannot exceed \$9,060 for an individual or \$14,340 for a married couple who live together to receive full *Extra Help*, or \$14,100 for an individual or \$28,150 for a married couple who live together to receive partial *Extra Help*. Resources include: bank accounts, stocks and bonds. Resources do not include your home, your car, or life insurance policies.

How Much Will You Pay With *Extra Help*?

With the full *Extra Help* benefit in 2019, an eligible beneficiary should pay no more than \$3.40 for a generic drug (or a brand-name drug treated as a generic) and \$8.50 for any other brand-name drug. For those qualifying for partial *Extra Help*, an eligible beneficiary should pay no more than 15 percent of the cost of drugs on your plan's formulary, or the plan copay, whichever is less, until you reach the out-of-pocket maximum. Most people who qualify for *Extra Help* also pay nothing, or a reduced amount, for their monthly premium and annual deductible.

Medicare enrollees who have Medicaid, live in an institution like a nursing home, or receive home and community-based services should not be paying anything out of pocket for their prescription drugs.



Pipes Don't Fail Me Now!

By Jim McBride, Burns & McBride Home Comfort



When it's cold outside! Forecasters are predicting record-breaking low temperatures this winter. When freezing temps hit, it's important to remember that your normal habits for heating your house might be putting your property at risk for frozen pipes.

People don't often think about the fact that most of their heating pipes, and very often their plumbing pipes, are on outside walls, while thermostats are always on an inside wall. These separate locations can result in significant differences between

the temperature at the thermostat location and the temperatures in the cold exterior walls. One burst pipe, and you'll never make that mistake again.

Here are some preventive measures to help avoid a disaster during a deep freeze.

- Keep your thermostats set at the same temperature both day and night in all areas of the house. If you normally turn back the thermostats at night, discontinue that practice until temperatures moderate. It's even advisable to raise your home's temperature during extreme cold periods.
- Wood stoves can fool a thermostat into operating as if there's plenty of warmth in the house, causing pipes to freeze in the outside walls. It's best to shut off the stove and use your central heating system until temperatures moderate.
- Do not isolate rooms by closing doors. Pipes in the walls of those rooms will be much more likely to freeze.
- If you have water pipes that you think might be prone to freezing, let the hot and cold water

faucets drip overnight.

- Open doors to kitchen cabinets and bathroom vanities to allow better air circulation.
- Look for air leaks around electrical wiring, dryer vents and piping and seal them. Small openings, especially if windy conditions exist, can allow enough cold air in to freeze a pipe.
- Insulate pipes in crawl spaces or areas that could be prone to freezing.
- If your house is going to be unoccupied or vacant for any period of time, it is your responsibility to make sure you have an adequate supply of fuel and to arrange to monitor the temperature in your home. Either have a friend or neighbor check your house daily, or set up electronic temperature monitoring while the house is empty. If you're going to be away from your home, do not turn the thermostat down too low.
- Keep your garage doors closed in case there are pipes in that area or in the ceiling or walls that could freeze.

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HOW TO ARGUE CIVILLY

By Joseph Grenny

Q: My father often peppers his speech with declarations like “So-and-so is a Marxist” or “Eighty percent of Americans don’t pay taxes.” I can sometimes leave the conversation and look up details of what he calls “facts,” but in the moment I don’t have any tangible information, just a deep-rooted intuition that he’s repeating something he read. In most instances, I haven’t researched the topic at hand and he can quote a source, which leaves me extremely uncomfortable and looking for a way to escape his monologue. What can I say in response to these (sometimes outlandish) claims? Signed, *Swimming in Story*

Dear Swimming, Yours is a common complaint these days. We seem to think that people trafficking in poorly informed opinions is a new phenomenon. It isn’t. Fake news is as old as news. People spouting truths based on shaky logic has as storied a history as bloodletting and the AMC Gremlin.

The first thing I encourage you to do is humble yourself. Re-read your question and you’ll see clues that you suffer from the same problem your father does. He thinks he’s right and offers dubious data to support his view. You’re sure he’s wrong but have thin data to support your conviction. Welcome to humanity. You’re more likely to make progress if you accept that you resemble him more than you’d like to admit. And so do I.

The sobering truth is that we don’t arrive at many of our most cherished opinions starting with a blank page. Whether we are Christian or Muslim, Conservative or Liberal, boxers or briefs, our ideas are shaped more by the tribes we identify with than the facts we sift through. This idea first gained notice in the 1950s when psychologists Hastorf and Cantril asked college students from two rival colleges to watch film of a recent American football game between their schools. Students were asked to objectively study the film to identify all the penalties that should have been assessed against each team. The best predictor of their judgments was *not* the clarity of the offense—it was the school they attended! Subjects reported seeing half as many illegal plays by their own team as did students from their opponent’s college. We are often unconscious of the premises of our own convictions.

Humility is the most potent antidote to conflict. As unreasonable as your

father’s views may be, you likely hold many that have not been reasoned through either. Understanding this disconcerting concept helps me approach others with patience rather than judgment.

Given that we’re all often unconsciously irrational, what are we to do? It sounds like your frustration is as much about your own uncertainty as it is about your father’s exaggerated sense of certainty. If so, here are some thoughts you might consider for moving your relationship to greater peace and, perhaps, periodic dialogue:

■ **Decide what you really want.** If you don’t want to talk politics with your dad, tell him. Set a boundary. If the work involved with making these conversations healthier doesn’t seem worth it to you, fess up to him. Say something like, “Dad, you and I have many different political opinions—and I notice I don’t enjoy exploring those with you. It brings up a lot of emotions I’d rather not deal with in the short time we have to spend together. Can we focus on the things we both enjoy?” If he transgresses the boundary, it’s up to you to remind him, “Dad, you’re breaking our agreement about political topics. Would you please honor it?”

If, on the other hand, you want to talk politics but in a more satisfying way, let me share some good news. In fact, this is some REALLY good news: It turns out it’s possible to influence even those of us with stubbornly-held opinions! The problem is you’ll have to do the opposite of what most usually do. As former secretary of state Dean Rusk once said, “The best way to persuade others is with your ears, by listening to them.” Research shows that if you ask others to not simply state their

opinion, but probe into the details of why they think their opinion works, they tend to become less certain about it. That’s why the following suggestions are so counter-intuitive, but effective.

■ **Agree on ground rules.** Next time your dad launches into a verbal Op-Ed, pause the action for a moment and ask for some ground rules. For example, “Dad, I’m actually very interested to understand what you think and why you think it. But only if we can do it in a way that works for me, too. For example, I’d like to hear you out. I’d like to ask a lot of questions about how your idea works, and why you believe it—not just repeating the belief itself. My goal isn’t to be offensive, it’s to understand. Would that be okay?” If he agrees, add the second ground rule. “Then, Dad, I’ll expect you to offer me the same opportunity. I want a chance to share my view—if I have one—and will invite you to probe and test it all you want. I don’t want you to argue against it. I just want you to ask questions so you understand my thoughts. If this works for you, I’m all in. If not, perhaps we can just go get a taco together.” If he agrees, hold him (and yourself) accountable to the ground rules! If you or he starts to criticize or attack rather than probe, call out the offender and enforce the ground rules.

■ **Get curious.** *Genuinely* curious. Try to approach the conversation like an interested scientist. Suspend judgments and frame your work as: “Discover why a reasonable, rational and decent human being would think this way.” Ninety-nine percent of the time, you will find an answer that confirms the premise. You won’t necessarily agree. You may not buy the logic. You may see flaws in the

other person’s choice of data. But when all is said and done, you’re likely to have a feeling of respect for how the life experiences, resources, associations, values, etc. of the other person brought him to think the way he thinks. And you’ll be the richer for it. Even if you end the conversation as political opponents, you are likely to feel like respected ones.

■ **Validate values.** Along the way, you are likely to discover that your differences are differences of strategy more than purpose. You’ll discover that where you are trying to achieve *safety*, the other person values *freedom*. Where you value personal responsibility, they value compassion. When they pound the table for opportunity, you’ll raise your voice for equality. But if you listen carefully, you’ll discover you *both* care about *both* values. You simply differ in how to achieve them, or in what order. When you notice this similarity, call it out. It will lubricate the conversation and foster intimacy even with an adversary.

■ **Share your truth not the truth.** Finally, remember humility. Remember that your views are likely pocked with inconsistencies, suspect data and tribal loyalty as well. Use statements like “I believe” or “I’ve concluded” rather than “The fact is” or “As everyone knows.”

Your question is a more urgent one today than ever. I hope these ideas help you find a peaceful path to candid disagreement! Warmly, Joseph

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Great Gifts for Mom and Dad

At a certain point, many people just don’t want any more “stuff.” Consider giving an “experience” or taking them to an event or fun time out instead.

- 1 **Gift certificate for a favorite restaurant.** Rekindle their romance! Or if you’re in the area, set a date for you to go out for a special meal together.
- 2 **Gift certificate for personal services** like hair styling, manicure, pedicure, or massage. Seriously—who doesn’t love a massage?
- 3 **Movie tickets.** You can even buy discount tickets online and at club stores like Costco and Sam’s Club.
- 4 **Concert ticket.** Whether they love reminiscing about the good old days of rock n’ roll, are fans of the symphony, or something in between, music is always best enjoyed live.
- 5 **Online classes.** Learn a new skill! Whether through your local university, an online university, Coursera, or another arts or technical school, lifelong learning keeps you young!
- 6 **A DNA test kit.** Help them discover their roots. You can take it a step further, delving deeper into your family’s history, by creating your family tree and preserving your family’s story forever.
- 7 **Lessons.** Help them take their favorite pastime up a notch. Whether tennis, golf, bridge, dancing, photography or some other hobby, whenever you’re getting better at something you’re bound to feel better about yourself.
- 8 **Weekend getaway.** Sometimes people just need a little push to get up and go. Look for package deals at their favorite resort for a night or a weekend.
- 9 **An Apple Watch Series 4** (well this might be for you too) lets them keep an eye on their health. The new Apple Watch Series 4 has lots of new features, but the fall detection is perhaps the best feature for adult children who want to keep an eye on their aging parents. This new Apple Watch also has a larger screen display, perfect for older eyes.
- 10 **A Quirky Monthly Subscription.** You can find prepaid “clubs” that offer monthly gifts of beer, tea, wine, cheese, chocolate, flowers, pie, DIY projects... even steak. They’re the gifts that keep on giving, and say, “You’re wonderful, we’re thinking of you, we love you!” over and over again, all year long.



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Cultivating Experiences for the Experienced

By Hayley Corbett, Discovery Senior Living

How time flies! Baby boomers, those born between 1945-1964, are now ages 55-72. That means that now and over the next 20 years, millions of people (and their children!) will be pondering their next moves. Study after study has shown that the keys to a vibrant, fulfilling life are healthy activity and the knowledge that your life is purposeful and meaningful. Those keys don't change just because years pass. Humans are social creatures and it's human nature to want to be useful to others and to be deeply engaged with family, friends, and the community, and to continue to grow and learn and to experience pleasure on a regular basis.

That's why it's not surprising that the best senior living communities today have a laser focus on quality of life and quality of experiences. They understand that health and happiness are nurtured through social connectedness and continual growth, and that there are many times when individuals living on their own can simply fall into a pattern of social isolation. They want people to know that communities today are about so much more than simply handling your housekeeping, security and healthcare. They're about broadening your horizons on every level.

As an example, Scott Thomas, program director at The Summit in Hockessin, DE ensures there is always a variety of activities and

events going on at his community. Thomas says, "I take pride in thinking outside the box when orchestrating experiences for our residents. From exercise classes and seminars, educational presentations and live entertainment, there's never a dull moment! Throughout the year, we plan parties and charity events here or on the town, offer our residents multi-faceted activities and events to take part in, and multiply the opportunity to meet new people. I want people to find it difficult to decide what to do next—not because of a lack of options, but because of the appeal of ALL the options."

Baby Boomers want a living experience that's both challenging and exciting. If they leave their homes for a senior living community, they want to know that the comfortable living space and familiarity they're giving up will be replaced by something exciting that offers new possibilities. Most senior living communities provide prospective residents a copy of their calendar of upcoming events and invite them to join in. It's a great way to experience the vibrancy and excitement that the transition to a senior living community can provide. Try it—you might like it!

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The Gift That Keeps on Giving

By Karyn Cortez with Samantha Grossman

Wondering what gift to give the person who has everything? How about a pet? Aside from the obvious companionship, pet ownership comes with a ton of benefits. Animals can help reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and increase social interaction and physical activity (just make sure the pet's energy and needs are a match with the new owner; sometimes lower-maintenance animals like cats and birds may be preferable). Pets provide other intangibles, too. Animals live in the moment. They embody a great sense of here and now, and it tends to rub off on people.

Animals benefit from adoption, too, particularly when retirees adopt older pets. "These lucky animals go from the pound to paradise. Retired adopters tend to have lots of time to devote to a previously unwanted pet, forming a lasting bond," says Chicago veterinarian Dr. Tony Kremer, who operates Help Save Pets, a nonprofit rescue organization, with his wife Meg.



Where to Find Your New Pet

Each year, around 1.5 million shelter animals are euthanized. That number could be decreased dramatically if more people opted to adopt from shelters and rescues rather than buy from breeders or stores. Aside from expenses in general being less than through a breeder, some shelters even offer reduced adoption fees for older pets and adopters age 55 and up.

Convinced that nothing less than a purebred pup will do? It's a myth that you have to shop instead of adopt if you want a specific purebred animal. Though it will certainly take patience and commitment, you can absolutely adopt or rescue that perfect little sidekick. Here's how to find the dog of your dreams (or cat or bird or ...)

1 Find as many breed-specific rescue groups as possible. Get in touch with networks like Rescue Me! Animal Rescue Network (www.rescueme.org), which helps all breeds of dogs, cats and other animals find good homes anywhere in the world. RescueShelter.com, another free service of Rescue Me!, provides the world's largest and most up-to-date directory of animal rescue organizations for all breeds of dogs, cats and other animals, including a comprehensive directory of wildlife rehabilitators in over 150 countries.

For dog-specific help, the American Kennel Club is a great resource.

Sign up for their mailing lists, get to know their organizers, and volunteer if you can. If you're involved in the Yorkshire terrier rescue community, for example, you'll be among the first to hear when a Yorkie needs a home. Often dogs need to be rehomed when their current owner can no longer care for them, and these arrangements frequently happen through local communities and breed-specific groups.

2 Be ready at a moment's notice. When I found out a corgi had been surrendered to a local shelter, I knew this was an extremely rare opportunity. My husband and I had planned to get a dog eventually, so we decided to just go for it, even though a pet wasn't on our radar at the time. We knew a 1-year-old rescue corgi was pretty much a unicorn. If the opportunity to adopt your desired breed comes along, it might be your only shot for a long time, so be ready! Keep a few doggie essentials stashed in a closet, like a crate, a leash, some food, so that you'll feel prepared to open your home if the opportunity arises. You can even get email alerts when a dog of a specific breed is added to pet adoption sites. Be vigilant!

3 Familiarize yourself with other, similar breeds. If you want a specific type of dog or pet for their look, size, temperament, or hypoallergenic fur, do some research and find other breeds with similar traits to open up your search. For

example, that husky you want to take hiking? Maybe you can find an Alaskan malamute instead. Or if you've wanted a Cairn terrier ever since you saw *The Wizard of Oz*, maybe the very similar-looking Norwich terrier would do the trick.

4 Sign up for Petfinder alerts. While shelter employees often know each animal's personality well and can assist in making a good match, online pet shopping is another route you might take. Consider sites like www.petfinder.com, which allows potential owners to search for their perfect pet in a massive database of almost 250,000 adoptable animals from nearly 11,000 animal and rescue groups nationwide. Keep in mind, though, that it's still recommended to meet a potential pet

in person to more accurately gauge the fit.

5 Tell your local shelters exactly what you're looking for. Keep in touch with them, volunteer if you can, keep reminding them about what you're looking for, and you'll likely be the first person they call if they get that type of dog.

6 Adopt a senior dog. Older dogs have a much tougher time getting adopted, even if they're purebred, so you'll have a greater chance of getting the breed you want if you're willing to adopt a dog who needs a little extra love and care. And think of the benefits—senior pets are often much calmer and they're likely already house-trained.

WORDS OF WISDOM

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart. Wishing you happiness."

— Helen Keller

Coping with Holiday Caregiving Blues

Let's face it—the holidays are stressful, even if it's good stress. But expectations of a “perfect” holiday, fed by advertising and media coverage, can contribute to depression for those who don't feel their holiday is measuring up. Add caregiving for children or elderly family members to this seasonal hoopla, and the result can be overwhelming negative stress. How can caregivers cope with the demands of creating a nice holiday environment for their loved ones and stay true to themselves?

During this season, caregivers need to be especially vigilant in recognizing their own, perhaps unrealistic, expectations for a “perfect” holiday, as well as the possibly excessive expectations of others. Tradition frequently plays a starring role in holiday stress, since many family traditions date back years, if not generations. It can seem as though not following through on every traditional holiday food, activity and decoration would be slap in the face to the whole family. Some caregivers are responsible for elders and children at the same time, the so-called “sandwich generation.” Their children want the routine of each holiday done like the one before while parents say, “This is the way we've always done it.”

How can caregivers minimize the stress and actually try to *enjoy* the holidays?

1 Your health comes first. If limited sunlight during the winter affects you (Seasonal Affective Disorder), see your doctor. If you don't have a problem with the sunlight, but still suffer seasonal depression, talking with a counselor to learn to cope with this depression is often a good idea.

2 If you've always enjoyed the holidays, but now find them

overwhelming because of too many demands on your time, **simplify the season.**

3 Learn to detach from the negative feedback you may get from others because of changes you're making. Detaching simply means that you recognize the other person's feelings, but you will not allow yourself to react or be controlled by their feelings without considering your own needs as well. Set boundaries by telling others what you can and can't do. Acknowledging your loved ones' views and telling them you love them but simply can't do it all generally helps. If your mom says, “But we've always done it that way,” you say, “Yes, we have, but now our holiday has to change a little, since our lives have changed.” If your kids lay on the guilt because you can't bake every kind of cookie they want, let them know that you want to please them, but that your time is limited now, so they can help you by being flexible. If you offer to let them help you, they can feel part of the decision, rather than brushed off.

4 Play music. If you have elders in nursing homes, bring them a CD player and CDs so they can play old songs they enjoy. Around the house, play Christmas tunes your kids like, but include your own favorite holiday tunes too. However, if you get a sick feeling every time you enter a mall because the Christmas music reminds you of all you have to do, then play other types of music at home.

5 Soothing light can help you relax. Obviously, candles aren't allowed in nursing homes and likely aren't a good idea for elders or kids, but there are many softly lit holiday decorations you can safely use, or get some indirect lamps for atmosphere. Soft lights, combined with good music can set a calming mood. Try it

while you bake treats, decorate your home or your loved ones' homes, or do other holiday duties.

6 Give yourself some “me” time. Get up a little early, go to bed a little later, take a walk, sit near water, enjoy nature. Some folks concentrate on their breathing pattern while they repeat one soothing word to help calm their overactive brain. Try to incorporate exercise into each day, and watch what you eat. It's definitely extra hard during the holiday season, but you'll feel better if you treat your body right.

7 Ask your spouse, a friend or relative to take over some of your duties for a time. It's amazing how many of us think we have to do everything ourselves, even though others would help if we only asked them. When we don't ask for help, people often don't know we need help, or else they simply don't know what to do.

8 Take a trip down memory lane. Remember your parents when

they (and you!) were young. Remember your children when they were tiny. Life is cyclical, and joy can be found everywhere.

9 According to Carol Bradley Bursack, editor at eldercarelink.com, “**Allow yourself to feel the pain of your aging parents' losses.** As my elders aged and grew frail, I was deeply saddened by their physical and psychological pain. The holidays threw a spotlight on all the things they could no longer enjoy. This pain is real. Allow yourself to feel it. Write it down. Talk about it with other caregivers, a religious leader, or a good friend. Get it out. It's natural, human and okay to feel the loss. If you feel bitter or angry, say so. You have a right to all of your feelings.”

10 Let go of perfection. It's likely that all those holidays you remember as being so wonderful really weren't that perfect; it's just that time skews our memories. Let good enough be good enough, give yourself the gift of acceptance, and enjoy!

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2	3	5	4	1	8	9	7	6
9	2	1	7	8	5	6	3	4
6	7	3	9	2	4	8	5	1
5	8	4	1	6	3	7	2	9

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Crossword

By Dave Fisher

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14						15					16			
17						18					19			
20							21				22			
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39									40					
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53					54				55		56	57	58	59
60					61			62						
63					64					65				
66					67					68				

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Answers on page 12

ACROSS

- 1. Gentlewoman
- 6. Mongolian desert
- 10. Swear
- 14. Fleet
- 15. Copied
- 16. Savvy about
- 17. Totally
- 19. Bearing
- 20. Excrements
- 21. Zero
- 22. Groan
- 23. Inscribed pillar
- 25. Beau
- 26. Netting
- 30. A fire-breathing dragon
- 32. Pacify
- 35. Scholarly
- 39. Seek
- 40. Anagram of "Plains"
- 41. Religious outcast
- 43. Anagram of "Clients"
- 44. Chief ingredient in ketchup
- 46. Not guys
- 47. Earlier in time
- 50. Doorkeeper
- 53. Animal foot
- 54. Consumed food
- 55. Save
- 60. Car
- 61. Written material
- 63. Celebrity
- 64. Throw
- 65. Type of mushroom
- 66. Anagram of "Sees"
- 67. 1 1 1 1
- 68. Spread out

DOWN

- 1. A ceremonial staff
- 2. Astir
- 3. 10 cent coin
- 4. Austrian peaks
- 5. Thaws
- 6. Gangster's gun
- 7. For all to see
- 8. Accept as true
- 9. Bucolic
- 10. Dominating
- 11. Labor group
- 12. Place
- 13. Lad
- 18. Consume
- 24. Female sheep
- 25. Stone fruit
- 26. Sitcom set in Korea
- 27. Type of sword
- 28. Box
- 29. Up to now
- 31. At one time (archaic)
- 33. Thespian
- 34. Leveling wedge
- 36. Ancient Peruvian
- 37. A dog wags one
- 38. L L L L
- 42. Carefulness
- 43. Comes after Mi and Fah
- 45. Sleeping sickness carrier
- 47. Stage
- 48. Defeats handily
- 49. Smidgens
- 51. Mistake
- 52. Units of paper
- 54. Countertenor
- 56. Cease
- 57. Ringlet
- 58. Component of urine
- 59. Evasive
- 62. S

EASY THAI PEANUT SAUCE SPAGHETTI SQUASH

This healthy spaghetti squash recipe is gluten-free, vegan, and uses no refined sugar. The peanut sauce makes a great dip, too!

Prep Time: 8 minutes
Cook Time: 25 minutes
Servings: 2 servings as main (4 as a side)
392 Calories



INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium spaghetti squash
- olive oil
- salt
- 1 garlic clove minced
- ¼ cup chopped parsley or cilantro leaves
- 2 tablespoons crushed peanuts

Peanut Sauce:

- 1 can (14 ounces) coconut milk
- ⅔ cup natural peanut butter
- ¼ cup coconut sugar*
- ¼ cup water
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce (or Tamari to make gluten-free, or fish sauce for non-vegans)
- 2 tablespoons white or apple cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
- 2 teaspoons red curry paste

INSTRUCTIONS

Spaghetti Squash:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Halve the squash and scoop out the seeds.
2. Drizzle inside with olive oil and sprinkle with salt. Place spaghetti squash cut side down on a baking sheet and roast for 25 minutes.
3. When spaghetti squash is done roasting, take it out from oven and let cool for 10 minutes. Then, using a fork, scrape out the spaghetti squash strands. If your squash is very moist, you might have to place the strands in a colander and pat with a paper towel.

Peanut Sauce:

1. Place all sauce ingredients in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Then turn down to low and simmer for 5 minutes to thicken the sauce, while stirring almost constantly.
2. Remove from heat once thickened.
3. Heat a skillet over medium heat. Add minced garlic, chopped parsley and ¼ cup of the peanut sauce from the pan and combine. Add spaghetti squash and crushed peanuts, stir to combine and cook until heated through (about 2 minutes).
4. Plate and garnish with a little more crushed peanuts and chopped parsley. Optionally, serve with veggies of choice. Bean sprouts, sliced bell pepper and carrots are pictured here. Drizzle with more peanut sauce as desired.

Source: www.leelalicious.com



Sudoku

Fill in the blank squares so that each row, each column and each 3-by-3 block contain all of the digits 1 thru 9.

3	9						8	
4		2	8		7		6	
					2			
8					6	3	4	
			2		9			
	3	5	4					6
			7					
	7		9		4	8		1
	8						2	9

Answers on page 12

(courtesy of KrazyDad.com)

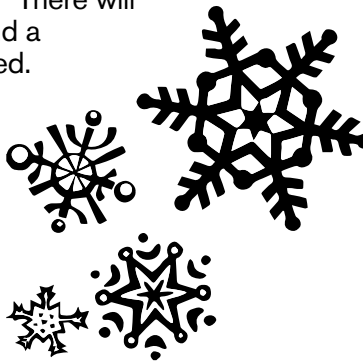
The Funny Bone

Snow Day

Ole and Lena are sitting down to their usual morning cup of coffee, listening to the weather report on the radio. "There will be 3 to 5 inches of snow today, and a snow emergency has been declared," says the weather reporter. "You must park your cars on the odd numbered side of the streets." Ole says, "Jeez, okay," and gets up from his coffee.

The next day they're sitting down with their coffee when the newscaster says, "There will be 2 to 4 inches of snow today, and a snow emergency has been declared. You must park your cars on the even numbered side of the streets." Again, Ole says, "Jeez, okay," and gets up from his coffee.

Two days later, again they're having their coffee when the weather forecaster says, "There will be 6 to 8 inches of snow today, and a snow emergency has been declared. You must park your cars on the..." The power goes out and Ole doesn't get the rest of the instructions. He turns to Lena, "Jeez, what am I going to do now?" Lena replies, "Aw, Ole, just leave the car in the damned garage today."



GET UP AND GO



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Celebrating New Year's Eve in Style

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New Year's Eve with the David Bromberg Quintet, Arden Gild Hall, 2126 The Hwy., Arden, DE 19810, 302-475-3126, ardenconcerts.com, admission \$79. New Year's Eve this year at Arden Gild Hall means

the return of David Bromberg and the Quintet, including a champagne toast at midnight! Doors open at 9:30 p.m.

There's fun for everyone from 3:00 p.m. 'til after midnight in Downtown Dover. After the kids have enjoyed the family fun event, **New Year's Eve in Dover**, from 3:00-6:00 p.m. downtown at various locations, the adults can adults can stick around for the **Capital City Countdown** at Lookerman Way Plaza. It's Dover's over-21 party brought to you by the folks who bring you OktDoverFest, History, Heritage, and Hops, and First Fridays in Dover. We know how to throw a party, we're betting you know how to enjoy one! <https://allevents.in/dover/capital-city-countdown/1000051685525799#>

The Delaware beaches are rockin' on New Year's Eve. How do you even start to choose? Music, midnight toasts, a keg drop, a crystal ball drop, a beach ball drop and an anchor drop are just some of the festivities. Find out more at www.visitdelaware.com/blog/post/2018-new-years-eve-events

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