

livingwell

BUILD RESILIENCY BY BUILDING OPTIMISM

Last issue, we talked about the "personal resiliency builders" that help us bounce back from adversity and lead to happiness. Optimism is one of the most important of them all. It not only makes us feel good, optimistic thinking may also help us fight illness, resist depression, and maintain high workplace performance in the face of stress. In short, optimism is good to have!

But if you're a pessimist by nature, can you really change? The experts say YES! Optimism can be a learned behaviour and there are concrete steps you can take to build it.

STEP 1 - Recognize pessimistic thoughts

Leading psychology expert and author, Dr. Martin Seligman, believes that optimistic people see bad events as having temporary and specific causes - whereas pessimistic people see them as having permanent and universal causes.

Example: Your boss reprimands you for turning in sloppy work.

OPTIMISTIC THINKING
(temporary & specific cause)

"I didn't check that work carefully enough. Next time I'll make sure I do."

PESSIMISTIC THINKING
(permanent & universal cause)

"I'm a failure at everything I do. I'll never get anywhere."

In this example, optimistic thinking lets you file the event away in a mental compartment and get on with life (hopefully learning from it)! Pessimistic thinking, on the other hand, magnifies the event and ensures gloom colours every aspect of life.

STEP 2 - Argue against pessimistic thoughts

Your thoughts are just that: thoughts that may or may not be true. If you think the event happened because you're a failure at everything, argue the facts: have you really failed at everything you've done? Does this event really doom you to failure for life? Chances are, neither are true!

STEP 3 - Find the event's true causes

Think of specific causes that you can do something about. For instance, perhaps you didn't check the work carefully, didn't leave yourself enough time, or didn't know the correct procedure, etc.

The key is to recognize that you're not helplessly caged by bad events; consequences don't have to be permanent and you can change future outcomes. Keep identifying and working through pessimistic thoughts in this way. Gradually, your thinking habits will start shifting to optimistic patterns and the world will start looking much brighter. Enjoy!

Find out what your personal strengths are:

www.authentichappiness.org



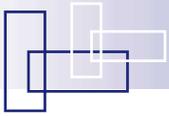
INSIDE...

- ▶ Finding optimism in the face of loss
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- ▶ Eating on the run
- ▶ Feel better...plan a budget

Call WorkLife Solutions for more information on the topics in this issue or for helpful time-saving telephonic advice, educational information and resources on a wide range of other issues, including childcare, parenting, homecare, eldercare, legal, career, and financial issues.

Call 1-800-268-5211

Next issue's resiliency builder...
Flexibility



FINDING OPTIMISM IN THE FACE OF LOSS

When we lose someone or something we care about deeply through death, separation or disability (e.g., Alzheimer's), the world can feel like a dark and empty place. Finding reason for hope can seem difficult, especially for older adults living alone. It's during these difficult times that it's most important that we can gain some strength by reminding ourselves that the darkness won't last forever and we will come through it. Focusing on the light at the end of the tunnel can sometimes bring it closer.

Take each day one at a time. Meanwhile, here are some tips to help those who are grieving create small moments of hope:

- In spring or summer, plant seeds; in the fall, plant bulbs. A garden can help healing.
- If you can commit long-term, adopt a pet from a shelter.
- Book a weekend with family; a spa with friends.
- Appreciate the moment - a gentle breeze, a sunset, a child's laughter.
- Remember the power of laughter. Rent comedies from the video store.
- Volunteer for a cause that matters to you.
- Find distractions to fill your time, and you'll eventually begin to fill your life again.

SUPPORT THROUGH LOSS

If you, or an older relative, are struggling with loss or critical illness, FGI can help you with consultation, support and comprehensive materials that may include:

- When a loved one is dying
- Palliative and Hospice Care
- Stages of grief
- Loss of a partner
- Death of a child
- Getting through holidays
- Death of a pet
- Talking to children about death and about war and disaster
- Helping a friend or colleague who is grieving
- Planning a funeral
- When a child is gravely ill
- Funerals in different cultures
- ...and many others

Helpful link: <http://www.nmha.org/reassurance/coping.cfm>

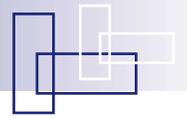
MAKE A NEW START IN RETIREMENT WITH PART-TIME WORK OR A SECOND CAREER



Retirement is the beginning of the rest of your life - make it a great transition by planning for future activities that will keep you fulfilled and maybe bring in extra cash. Call FGI for retirement lifestyle help that can include assessment tools for future careers or interests. Meanwhile, here are some tips:

- Review skills and personal qualities. Consider how they may be transferable to other occupations or volunteer work.
- Reflect on things you wish you could have achieved or done in life.
- Would you like to learn new skills or go back to school? Would you like to teach your skills?
- Could you consult, or start your own business?

CALL TODAY FOR A TELEPHONE APPOINTMENT WITH A WORKLIFE SPECIALIST AT **1-800-268-5211.**



HELP KIDS FEEL GOOD ABOUT STAYING HOME

Once children reach a certain age and maturity level, parents often begin to think about giving them more responsibilities - including allowing them to stay at home by themselves. Staying home alone can be a positive experience that builds confidence, self-reliance and self-esteem. Exactly what every child needs!

The key lies in preparation. When you involve children in the process and give them some ownership of plans, confidence and optimism grow and fears diminish. Here are some tips:



- Involve your child in safety planning. Ensure that your child knows about smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and where to find a first aid kit. Have your child take the lead in organizing and rehearsing a fire escape plan.
- Prepare a support network. Arrange for nearby friends or neighbours to be on-call in case problems arise and you can't be reached. Clearly post contact information, plus emergency numbers for your child to see.
- Discuss and agree on street-proofing rules and house rules. Sign a parent-child contract and post in a visible place.
- Discuss 'what-if' scenarios and appropriate actions. For example, what if a friend calls and wants you to play? What if you lose your bus pass at school? What if you smell smoke?

HOME ALONE PROGRAM FROM FGI!

Call for telephone consultation, including advice on how to determine when a child is ready to stay home alone. Educational materials in this program include:

- Home Alone Parent Guide
- Young Person's Planner
- Parent-Child contract
- Home Alone Cook Book
- Street-proofing video from Stay Alert...Stay Safe.

Helpful link: www.sass.ca

Build kids' optimism!

- Help kids recognize that successes are due to their talents, efforts or judgement - not luck. Talk about different ways these qualities can be used through life.
- Failures? Help identify specific causes and discuss ways to overcome them next time. Point out that failure is temporary, but the lessons it teaches can be permanent.
- Encourage kids to move on from problems and focus on the blue sky, instead of the clouds.
- Avoid making mountains out of molehills. Help kids keep things in perspective.
- Discuss how holding grudges creates negative energy, but forgiving and forgetting makes kids winners!
- Share your joy in the world and your hope in the future. Make time to have fun together!

SEPARATING? GOT LEGAL QUESTIONS?

Call FGI for no-cost advice!

FGI offers extensive support and materials to help people with all aspects of separation, including free telephone consultation through our legal service. Depending on your specific needs, you may also receive helpful materials on planning for separation, surviving separation, finances, and related parenting and/or career issues.

For legal advice on separation or other topics, call the FGI legal service

1-800-268-5211
for service in English

1-800-363-3872
or service in French

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EATING ON THE RUN!

Finding time to eat right and make healthy choices can be a real challenge when you're running from one meeting to the next or on the road all day. But with a little planning, you can make 'energy wise' food choices most of the time. Try some winners!

Work situation	Energy wise choices
Meetings	Small muffins, bagels, scones, tea biscuits, fresh fruit, juice, milk
Vending machines or catering trucks	Juices, sandwiches, soup, cereal boxes, milk, yogurt, whole grain breads, fruit, pretzels, nuts
Hectic schedule/long hours	Raw veggies, fresh fruit, hearty salads or soups, lean sliced meats, milk, yogurt, grilled sandwiches, muffins, trail mix.
Emergency 're-fueling'	Raw fruit & veggies, yogurt or milk or cheese, protein or cereal bar, bagels, rice cakes, whole grain muffins, trail mix, tomato or vegetable juice, single service size tuna pouch or can.
On the road	Small plain burgers with lettuce & tomato, bagels, energy bars, crackers & cheese, veggie wraps, sandwiches (turkey, ham or tuna)

Contact your FGI WorkLife Solutions dietician by calling 1-800-268-5211

FEEL BETTER - PLAN A BUDGET!

Money problems don't have to be permanent. A good budget provides a concrete and workable plan for the future, and puts you back in control. You end up feeling more secure and more comfortable - a good reason for optimism!

Call our WorkLife Solutions service today to speak to one of our budgeting specialists. Depending on your needs, you may also get a wide range of materials and tips like these:

- Use a notebook for 4 weeks and record all you spend: pop, chocolate bars - the lot! You'll quickly see where the money's going.
- Divide expenses into 'needs' and 'wants', and include savings as 'needs'. Cut into 'wants' first.

Helpful link:

www.cba.ca/en/viewPub.asp?fl=6&sl=23&docid=27&pg=1

- Slice \$10 off your grocery bill each week and save \$500 a year!
- When you tire of clothing, sell it to 'gently used' clothing outlets and get extra cash.
- Review your credit report from Equifax at 1-800-465-7166 or Trans Union at 1-800-663-9980, to ensure it's accurate.
- If interest rates are lower when your mortgage is up for renewal, keep monthly payments the same. The extra money will cut the principal and pay your mortgage off faster.

For more information or assistance with any WorkLife Solutions, call your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). It's a free, confidential service for you and your family.

1-800-268-5211
(English)

1-800-363-3872
(en français)



You can also visit our website at www.fgiworldmembers.com for more information and resources.

We welcome any suggestions you may have about topics you'd like to see covered in Living Well. Please contact *Barbara Jaworski*, Director, WorkLife Solutions by e-mailing bjaworski@fgiworld.com, writing to the address below, or calling her at FGI at:

1-800-263-4533

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HEALTHY EATING FOR PLAYFUL TODDLERS

Parents often worry about toddlers' eating habits during the critical years of growth. What we think they should eat often clashes with what toddlers are actually willing to eat! Here are some tips to bridge the food gap:

- Be a great role model and eat a wide variety of foods from all 4 food groups.
- Children enjoy eating with others and often copy their food preferences. Some toddlers may eat a previously disliked food when they see one a friend eating it.
- Kids feel overwhelmed with adult size portions. Serve ½ to ¼ of what you would serve yourself, and let toddlers request more.
 - Provide a comfortable setting for eating - one without distractions like TV, which can interfere with appetite cues.