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When your values are clear, your decisions are easy. — Roy Disney

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We have met the enemy... and he is us! — Pogo



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“The best way to have a good idea is to have a lot of ideas.”

- Linus Pauling

VALUES - BASED QUALITY OF LIFE™ **Newsletter**

Because Making Smart Choices About Your Money Impacts The Quality of Your Life

Over the years, we have found that there are elements of your life that are more important than money. These elements - Physical Health, Relationship Health, Inner Health and Career Health - cannot be delegated.

We hope that you find these articles to be of value in improving the quality of your life.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Music to Heal the Mind, Heart, and Body

By Traci Stein, PhD, MPH

Humans have been making music ever since they realized that tapping two sticks together could create an engaging beat. Music can foster feelings of joy, unleash our creativity, and is often a key feature of our most enjoyable social gatherings. Ever versatile, music can set the tone for romance or relaxation, and can impel us to move our bodies, whether for exercise or self-expression.

In the mid-twentieth century, music therapy emerged as a discipline, and the development of modern technologies has since shed new light on how music can change the structure and function of the brain, improve mood, and help us recover after a stroke.

Music and the Brain

One thing we have learned is that music is processed by a number of different areas of the brain, including ones involved in spoken language. Learning to play music changes the structure of our brains in a way that is somewhat analogous to how physical exercise tones our muscles and makes us stronger and more dexterous. A number of studies with healthy and clinical samples have shown temporary cognitive benefits associated with listening to pleasant music, including improved information processing speed, reasoning, attention and memory, and creativity.

In some studies, verbal material that was presented in a musical context was learned and recalled better than

spoken verbal material. Music therapy has also helped people who have had strokes to improve their gait, mood, speech, social interactions, and to reduce visual neglect.

Music Therapy and Visual Processing

Visual neglect is the inability to recognize objects in part of the visual field due to lesions in the visual cortex. Specifically, a lesion in one hemisphere produces neglect in the opposite visual field (so a stroke in the left visual cortex would result in one being unable recognize objects in the right visual field, and vice versa). In one study of stroke patients experiencing visual neglect, listening to pleasant music resulted in both better mood and a statistically significant improvement in their ability to describe the color and shape of geometric objects presented via computer. No such effects were observed when patients sat in silence or when they were presented with music that they did not like.

Further examination with functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) confirmed that listening to pleasant music activated a number of different brain areas, including those involved in visual processing.

Memory, Attention, and Mood

The same team conducted another study, this time with 60 patients who had recently suffered a stroke. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups: a music group, an audio book group, or a control group receiving neither intervention. All groups otherwise received standard

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RELATIONSHIP HEALTH

Are You a Good Friend to Your Grown-up Kid? 5 tips for relating to your now-adult child

By Elizabeth Fishel, Dr. Jeffrey Jensen Arnett

When your children reach their 20s, the balance of connection between you and them seesaws. The challenge becomes how to find common ground without overstepping the comfortable boundaries between you. The issues become how much time to spend together and how to spend it, how much information to share and about what, which battles to fight and when to turn the other cheek, what advice to give and when silence is golden.

In interviews for our forthcoming book, *When Will My Grown-Up Kid Grow Up?*, 75 percent of parents said that their current relationship with their adult children was better now than the relationship they had when their kids were 15. The best part, most agreed, is “the friendship that emerges along with the adult.”

But even a good relationship with grown kids may have its pitfalls. Parents still may be tempted to give unsolicited advice, do whatever’s needed to protect kids from harm — and remind them to get car insurance. And grown kids may be frustrating friends who don’t return parents’ calls, cancel dates at the last minute or text their buddies while dining with the family. Just when you think you’re dealing with an equal, you may be brought up short.

Forgiveness is the name of the game, but don’t be afraid to set some ground rules— such as no cellphones at the dinner table, or asking that they return a text from you that begins, URGNT.

Emerging adults need a different kind of closeness than when they were young. They need emotional support that helps boost, not stifle, their confidence in their own coping skills, and they need parents to bear witness to their increasing capacity to take on responsibilities, even if there are setbacks or mishaps along the way.

Here are five strategies to nurture the friendship during your kids’ 20s and beyond:

1. Observe respectful boundaries

For emerging adults, keeping a privacy buffer is a crucial part of defining a separate identity, building confidence in making decisions, and learning to stand on their own. Parents who have cherished a close relationship when their children were younger may feel hurt if they sense their grown kids pulling away. Suddenly kids are balking at coming home during their vacations or are no longer available for lengthy phone chats. While it’s natural to miss

the former intimacy, it helps to understand their increased need for distance is appropriate for this stage of their lives and not to take it as a personal affront.

2. Listen more than you talk

Restraint is the elusive virtue now required of you, to keep from giving too much unwelcome advice or asking too many nosy questions. After years of hands-on parenting, you may bristle at how often you must bite your tongue as your children make both smart and foolish decisions. You may struggle with the want-to-fix-its, but if you jump in too quickly to unravel grown kids’ dilemmas, their important problem-solving muscles won’t have a chance to develop.

“It’s not just about proving yourself; it’s about improving yourself.”

– John Ryan

That said, there are still times during your kids’ 20s when you do have to voice your concerns and get involved even if your kids don’t want you to (and even if you aren’t happy stepping in yourself). If you’re wondering about whether to say something, ask yourself if the behavior that’s bothering you is serious, dangerous or simply unpleasant. For instance: If your son appears unshaven and scruffy for the family reunion, well, that may not be pretty, but it’s not life-threatening. But if your daughter shows signs that she’s smoking pot on a daily basis, that habit can be harmful. You need to address it directly with her and be ready with resources of outside professional help.

3. Do what you love together and intimacy will follow

When kids were young, family time happened inevitably. But now to hang out with your cooking-on-all-burners 20-somethings, you need to get creative.

Many parents will go to great lengths to carve out time and activities that work for their grown children. Hard-to-get baseball tickets or dinner reservations, biking, skiing, even training for a

marathon, like one gutsy, 64-year-old mother of two agile sons. Her report: “My knees hurt, but I learned so much about them.”

Jigsaw puzzles work for the less athletic, according to another mother of three sons ages 18 to 25. Heart-to-hearts follow their shared searches for matching pieces. “I take what’s offered, I’m never down their throats about anything, and I very rarely raise a subject they mentioned once in another conversation.” Plus, she respects her guys’ conversational styles. “They keep it short and sweet. A long discussion is 60 to 90 seconds.”

4. Set ground rules for how to disagree

Many of the benefits parents reap at this stage result from the kids’ more sharply honed communication skills. Compared with their younger selves, emerging adults are more likely to talk things over with their parents and peaceably process disagreements. Plus, they’re better able to see the other person’s point of view. Their frontal cortex is ripening like fine wine, and that means improved judgment, less impulsivity and a greater likelihood they’ll think before they speak.

If conflict does start to escalate, dial it down by listening to them without interrupting and then commenting in a neutral tone. When that’s not possible, taking a time-out for both sides to calm down is as useful at this stage as it was during their toddler years. Sleeping on it or letting heated emotions cool is also as good a strategy to use with grown children as it is for any couple or close friends.

5. Make room for the significant others in their lives

Maybe you wish that your son’s girlfriend had fewer tattoos or that your daughter’s boyfriend had a better job. But unless you notice behavior that’s seriously disturbing, do your best to embrace the people your grown kids love. And when they do settle on a partner, accept that it follows naturally for them to put that person first. When it comes to big decisions, plans or handling hardships, even the most dutiful grown children will shift their primary attachment to their mate. If they don’t, watch out: Marital trouble may follow.

As parents, you’re in the business of putting yourselves out of a job when your kids grow up, so nurture your own dreams while continuing to cultivate a close friendship with them.

INNER HEALTH

Yes, You Can: 10 Ways to Build Inner Strength

By Dr. Karin L. Smithson

*"Boom-boom! Pow! Can you feel that?
Boom-boom! Pow!"*

-The Black Eyed Peas - (Boom Boom Pow)

There are days when these lyrics remind me more of the overwhelming stress that can hit us from all sides like bombs exploding once-stable air. Like when you find out you have lost your job with no option in sight "Boom!" your spouse leaves because that he/she is in love with someone else. "Boom!" and you are told that it is time to put your 15-year-old Golden Retriever to sleep. "Pow!"

Life will deliver blows, knocking you off balance with a sense of weakening confusion and a total loss of how to get your shaking, bruised feet back under you again. And when the "Boom!" feels the strongest, it can leave you feeling paralyzed from your head to your soul. You can't even remember what it feels like to "be normal."

You ask yourself, "Will I ever feel strong again?"

You are not alone. Let me share something with you. Over the past year, I have used web analytics to see what people are typing into search engines to find my inspiration-based blog. I kept asking myself, "What are people really looking for?" What I discovered touched me deeply. The most commonly searched words that bring people to my site are:

"Inner strength."

Every hour of every day, people are seeking ways to pull themselves out of crisis and feel "normal" again — feel strong again. I've been there, too, and it is the main reason why I was led to become a therapist. So I am writing this in hopes of helping you find your strength again, too.

First, here is what I believe completely: you can.

It is inspiring to know that you really can do something to make yourself stronger. Since part of survival is accepting that you cannot change outside circumstances or people, it is imperative to accept and feel empowered by the realization that you can transform yourself. It's a super power. Yes, you can, and here are some pointers to help you get there.

10 Ways to Build Inner Strength

1. Look back on your survival instincts of the past. Remind yourself of times when you survived, got through challenges, and even surprised yourself. See strength in your own abilities and fighting power. Don't underestimate your own resilience. You have roared before and will roar again.

2. Trust your inner pilot light — your core. Find power in your inner self and know that you were created with a spirit as your force field, even if it feels weakened. Your glow is not extinguishable, and it was created to rekindle itself.

3. Focus on the story of your entire life beyond the crisis. Practice seeing yourself rise above the pain, looking back and peering forward at

"It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop."

- Confucius

the values, experiences and goals of your whole life. Remind yourself that you are bigger than this, and that you will get back to you again. You have a lot of living yet to do.

4. Lean on your "trusted few" — friends, family, or counselors who know you and who will root for you without judgment. Ask for understanding, encouragement and TLC. Ask them to remind you of your strengths and listen to them. That is why these blessed relationships are in your life, and one day, you might do the same for them.

5. Find motivation from your outer strength. The key to feeling strong is holistically creating a solid foundation. While your energy levels might be low, make sure that you are doing something — anything — to tend to your physical self. Lift weights (even if they are soup cans), walk in nature, feed your body healthy food and get your sleep.

6. Make real attempts to be surrounded by positive people and atmospheres that make you feel good, energized and motivated. Limit any time around negative people or energy. Exit if you are starting to feel bad about yourself. Stay longer if you are feeling inspired.

7. Keep a "feel-good folder" of emails, letters and compliments that remind you how fierce you are. Anytime you receive a compliment that makes you feel strong, save it in a real or electronic file. You will likely forget the praise when you are at your lowest, and this will give you evidence of the positive effects you have on people's lives. Let these words validate your worth, breathing hope over you again.

8. Carve out time to do that thing that you are really good at. Part of pulling yourself out of a sad place is reminding your body how to release endorphins back into your system. A quick way to do this is to do what you have loved in the past — your system will reward you. Do you love playing piano? Painting? Writing? Singing? Crafting? Working on cars? Skiing? Whatever made you feel good about you in the past is what your body needs right now. Often.

9. Do something meaningful in the meantime, as time will keep passing anyway. These were some of the wisest words ever spoken to me and why I started volunteering and taking classes after the bottom dropped out of my world. They were actually the two things that ended up making me feel the strongest in the long run. Volunteer. Create something. Finish your degree. Paint that room. Be constructive and your heart will strengthen while you're not looking.

10. Develop and nurture a spiritual connection to a higher power, a purpose greater than this. Ask for spiritual guidance, comfort and grounding in your journey. Stay open to receiving divine gifts in the most wonderful, surprising ways, and believe that you deserve them when they show up. Meditate. Pray. Be mindful. Trust that you are going to move past this thing and that the universe wants that for you as well.

Yes, it does. And yes, you can.

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CAREER HEALTH

10 Tips to Revitalize Your Job Hunt

By Staff Writer at www.roberthalf.com

Does your job hunt keep dragging on and on? If it seems like you've tried everything, here are some tips for keeping your morale up and maintaining your focus:

1. Refresh your resume

Make sure you're up-to-date on the latest resume styles and trends. Ask someone who hasn't reviewed your resume before to offer feedback. In particular, consider family and friends with experience in your field. A fresh pair of eyes can often generate new ideas for presenting your skills and experience more effectively.

2. Revise your LinkedIn profile

If you're not taking full advantage of how LinkedIn can showcase your talents and experience, you could be slowing down your job hunt. In a Robert Half survey, 62 percent of executives interviewed said online business networking sites such as LinkedIn will prove useful in the search for job candidates over the next few years. If your social networking skills need a boost, create a LinkedIn account and start making contacts, join groups of like-minded professionals and search job listings.

3. Clean up your act

While you're putting more positive, professional information on LinkedIn and other networks, make sure negative information online isn't coming back to haunt you in your job hunt. Take steps like changing your Facebook privacy settings or untagging photos of yourself you wouldn't want a potential employer to see.

4. Get training

Would obtaining new skills or certifications broaden your employment prospects? Consider registering with a staffing firm to gain access to the courses you need. The best staffing firms offer free training and preparation toward obtaining a certification, including aligned courses, books and test preps for the candidates they represent.

5. Re-evaluate your tactics

Are you spending your time in the most productive ways? Look for activities in your job hunt that haven't been paying off. Maybe passing out business cards has been a bust for you, or you realize that you're spreading yourself too thin by applying for every opportunity available. How can you reallocate this time to make better use of it? Perhaps you could post your resume online or become more active on social media.

6. Find new ways to network

Networking with new people could give new momentum to your job hunt. Visit your local Chamber of Commerce website to learn about area business groups. On sites like Meetup, you can find both professional and social get-togethers, and many staffing firms also host networking events. Remember that job leads come from social connections, too, not just business relationships.

7. Get moral support

Sometimes simply talking about your setbacks dispels negative emotions and reinvigorates your mind. While family and friends may seem the obvious shoulders to cry on, you could also try support groups for job hunters. A little empathy can go a long way toward helping you keep up your momentum.

8. Boost your health

If you've been so focused on your job hunt that you're neglecting exercise and healthful eating, you might be sabotaging yourself. When your body isn't at its peak, you'll pay the price mentally, emotionally and physically. Potential employers may notice too. Nurture your physical and mental health to keep your morale up and your energy levels high.

9. Take a step back

Sometimes, you just need a break from the grind of a job hunt. Take a few days to recharge your batteries — go hiking, work in the yard or hit the bike trails. Chances are you'll come back rejuvenated and refocused.

10. Register with a specialized staffing firm

A staffing agency can help you in your job hunt by offering you new ideas, added motivation and information. A firm that specializes in your field can offer more employment opportunities than generalist firms can. In addition to benefiting from a firm's extensive list of job openings, you can also consult a variety of research materials and sign up for e-learning courses that help you improve your job search and maintain a strong set of in-demand skills.

Finding just the right job can be hard work. Getting the right support and using the smartest strategies can help you make it through the long haul.

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Music to Heal the Mind, Heart, and Body

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medical treatments. Those in the two audio groups were allowed to select either the music or audio books of their choice and were asked to listen for an hour daily for two months, and then more on their own after the intervention period ended.

Listening to music was associated with greater recovery of verbal memory and focused attention in the music group versus the other two. Furthermore, the music group participants had significantly less depression and confusion than those in the control group. This benefit was seen within the first three months of listening.

Those in the music group reported that listening helped them relax, increased their motor activity, and improved their moods. In both the music and audio book groups, participants said the experiences provided positive stimulation. Preliminary imaging results suggest that listening to music following a stroke may result in observable changes to the structure and function of the brain that enhance recovery.

The researchers speculate that the short-term cognitive benefits of music therapy post-stroke may be related to effects on the brain's reward system and effects on the neurotransmitter dopamine, but the long-term effect is more likely due to improvements in mood somehow impacting improvements in verbal memory and attention. Music may also mitigate the negative effects of stress on the brain and body, and impact other neurotransmitters that play a role in recovery.

The act of listening to music has been associated with a number of benefits, including on mood, cognition, and physical functioning in healthy people and in clinical samples, such as those who have suffered a stroke. Although we are still learning about how and why music helps, it is worth making time for music to move your body, engage your mind, and soothe your soul.

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