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A VanLandingham Company

6650 East Brainerd Road
Suite 200
Chattanooga, TN 37421

Phone 423-510-0409
Fax 423-510-0868

E-mail
plan2retire@guardianwealth.com

Website
www.guardianwealth.com



"IF YOU TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN, YOU CAN HELP THEM TO KEEP THEIR LIVES TOGETHER. IF YOU TALK TO THEM SKILLFULLY, YOU CAN HELP THEM TO BUILD FUTURE DREAMS."

—JIM ROHN

HERE'S A THOUGHT...

Olympic and superstar athletes do not become champions without help. Elite athletes can't imagine competing at the highest levels of their sport without their coaches. They are not only receptive to coaching, but they are also accustomed to learning new skills to improve their performance.

Your Trusted Advisor sees you as something like a star athlete: a person with meaningful goals and very personal

Get in the game and listen to your coach.

reasons for achieving them. You do not need to know the physics of the game to play it. You provide the muscle (money), and your financial coach helps you direct it to achieve the ends you desire. You don't have to analyze the market, dissect your financial strategies, or interpret the nuances of insurance; you just have to get in the game and listen to your coach.

This is wisdom: to know what you must understand, and to understand what you can trust someone else to know.

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PHYSICAL HEALTH

Optimism and the Immune System

BY SUZANNE SEGERSTROM, Ph.D.,
SHELLEY TAYLOR, Ph.D.,
MARGARET KEMENY, Ph.D., AND
JOHN FAHEY, Ph.D.

While research has tied optimism to better coping with health challenges such as surgery and AIDS, a new study is the first relating optimism to immune change in a healthy population. According to research to be published in the June issue of the American Psychological Association's (APA) *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, healthy first year law students who endorsed optimistic beliefs prior to the beginning of the school year had higher levels and function of key immune cells in the middle of their first semester.

Optimistic beliefs for the law students included positive evaluations of their abilities, expectations that they would succeed, and confident emotions when thinking about law school. In contrast, appre-

hension and uncertainty that they would succeed in law school reflected pessimism.

Psychologists at the University of California, Los Angeles examined whether optimism in the context of a stressor – the first year of law school – affected mood and immune changes in a sample of 90 law students (50 of whom had immune measures evaluated). The sample was 51 percent male, and the mean age of the sample was 23.9 years. The sample was 54 percent White, 15 percent Asian American, 11 percent African American, and 9 percent Hispanic.

While there were no immune differences between optimists and pessimists prior to beginning law school, those students who began the semester optimistic had more helper T cells and higher natural killer cell cytotoxicity mid-semester than students who had been pessimistic. Helper T cells are the "conductors" of the immune system, directing and amplifying immune responses. Natural killer cell cytotoxicity reflects the ability of these immune cells to kill cancer cells in the laboratory. Natural killer cells are thought to be important in immunity against viral infection and some types

continued on back page

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RELATIONSHIP HEALTH

How to Create and Maintain Quality Relationships

BY SCOTT HUNTER

Whenever two or more people get together to accomplish anything, the primary element in the foundation upon which the accomplishment will be built is rich, empowering relationships. Unfortunately, the world we grew up in neither taught us the importance of quality relationships nor how to create and maintain them.

In virtually all relationships, whether business or personal, there is an initial euphoria stage, commonly referred to as the “honeymoon.” Unfortunately, the honeymoon eventually ends. While we think we enter relationships with a “blank slate,” this is simply not the case. All individuals have expectations about the nature of their relationships and intentions as to the outcome. Since we rarely discuss these expectations and intentions openly, fulfilling them becomes highly improbable.

The result is unfulfilled expectations and thwarted intentions, leaving us disappointed and often disillusioned. Once a disappointment has occurred and a person becomes upset, the same mistake is often repeated. Again, rather than discussing the unfulfilled expectation or thwarted intention, no one says anything. Communication is often the choice of last resort.

Instead, we open metaphorical “files” on others and store evidence against them whenever a negative judgment has taken place. Once opened, these files accumulate evidence, providing the genesis for the hidden agendas that most people conceal from each other. As the files continue to grow in the absence of communication, the relationships within the company cascade relentlessly downhill.

The following suggestions will help foster an environment where relationships take precedence.

Empty the files

People must learn that it is essential to refrain from building files and that they must stay in communication with their co-workers. Yet, because people don't appreciate the necessity of quality relationships and because they are untrained in responsible communication, this is rarely achieved. Co-workers need to understand why keeping mental files on each other harms relationships and sets up false expectations for the other person.

When employees are made aware of their internal file building practice, they can take the first step to discarding the information they've compiled and to opening up to those around them. This revelation

creates an opportunity to train them to speak and listen responsibly.

Speak without judgment

People must speak honestly and straight, but with compassion and respect. They must learn to not speak self-righteously or try to demean, attack or blame someone else for an upsetting emotion. Communication must become strictly a report on the speaker's thoughts and feelings about a particular person or event.

Listen proactively

There is a way to listen in which the listener's attention is on the speaker, on recognizing how it is for them. To do this, set aside judgment and interpretation and just “be there” for the other person. Just “get” the communication. Really work hard to understand and appreciate how it is for your co-workers, and encourage them to speak.

Apologize and forgive

Once communication is complete and all files have been emptied, people need to apologize to one another where appropriate and forgive each other. An apology is simply an acknowledgment of one's impact on another and a statement of responsibility in the resulting upset. It is also an invitation for the other to forgive.

True forgiveness wipes the slate clean, destroys the mental files, and starts the relationship anew. Its intent is to return the relationship to where and how it was before the event that caused the upset.

Empowering relationships will not solve all the problems in the present business environment. However, you cannot build an efficient and productive office environment without highly effective personal relationships. Nurturing relationships require real commitment to others and a willingness to do the work of effective communication. When people are willing to make this commitment and take these steps, communication and contribution become part of the company's culture, and creativity and innovation soar. The result is immediate access to breakthrough thinking and bold action that increases a company's productivity and profitability for long-term results.

©2004 Scott Hunter. All rights reserved. Scott Hunter is a professional speaker, workshop leader, consultant and business coach. His work involves creating meaningful, quality relationships in the workplace to increase productivity, creativity, teamwork and profitability. He is the author of the ground-breaking book, Making Work Work. He can be reached at scott@thpalliance.com or visit his web site at www.thpalliance.com.

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SPIRITUAL HEALTH

Living ‘The Good Life’

BY GAIL OSTRISHKO

Ah...living the good life...isn't that what we all dream of? You know, the feeling you get about midway through your best vacation, when you say...this is the life! If only I could do this full time. Well, maybe you can. Not likely you can be on vacation full time but chances are good you are already living the good life.

Life is good! Yet we often neglect to notice. Instead we see what is bad, what is not working, or how other people need to change to fit our picture. Our brain focuses on what needs fixing at the expense of embracing what works. We spend so much time regretting the past and anticipating the future, we miss out on the precious present.

How does one get the most out of life, anyway? Do you squeeze in as much as you can, living as fast as you can? You know, the proverbial ‘type A’ person...the maximizing perfectionist. Or do we realize that less is more, and take life one moment at a time, turning life's lemons into lemonade? There is not

a right or wrong approach. The good life is different for everyone, and applying someone else's definition to your life is a blueprint for disappointment and possible disaster.

We get so caught up in daily life, so focused on taking care of business that we lose focus on what is truly important. Somehow we get so busy that it is only when our body is not longer healthy, our children are grown, or our relationships are broken that we realize the damage done. We look in the mirror and don't even recognize the person looking back.

Achieving balance is a popular topic. I prefer to consider equilibrium. Balance suggests either or, taking from one side to balance out the other. Equilibrium is more like the tides and waves of the ocean. They evolve with the universe, flowing naturally without consistent need for human intervention. When we embrace the rhythm of nature, swim when the water is warm and walk when the tide is low, we allow our lives to unfold as they are destined to be.

So, now what? All sounds good but what does it mean for me, the person ready to take action but uncertain where to begin. I offer for your consideration:

Live

Live your life to the fullest every day. Take risks, set goals, dream dreams.

A dream is a goal with a deadline. Define and refine your dreams and take action toward them every day. Always remember to enjoy what is yours right now.

Love

Love yourself and others with all your heart, your mind and your soul.

Acceptance and belonging are cornerstones to our effectiveness in the world. Our relationships are the single most influential factor that shape and define our lives.

Surround yourself with loving friends, family and networks that support your values, goals, and interests.

Learn

Learn all that you can about everything that captures your attention.

Knowledge is power and wisdom is one thing that no one can ever take from you. Learning feeds the mind, body and spirit, preparing us to embrace and engage life fully.

Leave a legacy

Give back some of the abundance you have acquired. Share your gifts with the world in a way that reflects your values. Passion is the desire to Pass “I” on. When you embrace your passion and share it with others, you leave a living legacy.

Living ‘the good life’ is more about who you are than what you do.

It means honoring your true values by living from the heart.

Living ‘the good life’ is not about what you acquire or achieve, but about the degree to which you connect with, acknowledge and share your unique gifts.

©Gail Ostrishko. All rights reserved. Gail Ostrishko, a creative free spirit, specializes in building relationships from the inside out. Ranging from customized keynotes and corporate seminars to intimate retreats and life coaching, these lively learning experiences are guaranteed to engage your mind, body and spirit in a very powerful and permanent way. Please visit Gail at www.GailO.com

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MENTAL HEALTH

Scared or Sacred: Our Response to Transition Times

BY TAMA J. KIEVES

These days, most people I know are in the bog-swamp-fog of transition. Transition is that Jello-like place on the way to a new identity — a place that defies definition in the meantime. Maybe we have chosen to leave something behind. Maybe we've been heaved off a crumbling ledge — with or without a severance package. Either way, newness and “lack of control” have a way of sweeping in and taking our breath away, changing the course of our days, and leaving us hesitating before the Grand Void of power and change.

Here's what I think happens in transition — we're left alone with our minds. We don't know how things are going to go, and so we start making things up. Defeating thoughts trudge their cement-heavy suitcases in and pull out documentation evidencing your imminent and unmerciful doom. They have been waiting for years to show you this evidence and watching Perry Mason shows to practice their denouncing opening arguments. But really transition is a blank screen. You see what you believe, nothing more and nothing less. Take away the props of the everyday known world, perhaps your comforting successes, stare into the void, and before too long you see the buried convictions you have about yourself. And most of the times, they're not gorgeous.

In-between time is acid on our egos. It's a strong chemical that eats away at our self-worth and self-esteem until we shift gears and make use of our in-between time, not just any use, but *soulful* use. This is a time to heal and strengthen, let go of the self-attacking beliefs from your past, try on the loose garments of a magnificent future self. This is a checkpoint. You can't go into the big country of a new self with a new mission with the mindset of the past identity. Your old identity must be celebrated and laid to rest. Someone new is emerging on the scene.

These powerful times can be frightening, but we can allow this natural process to birth and grow us. We are *scared* when we resist transition. Transitions are *scared* when we enter them, when we are stripped, cleansed, detoxed and purified by them. They are shamans that disorient and clarify us at the same time, awakening a new vibration, manifestation, or expression of our soul.

So watch your thoughts during this time. “I'm stuck. I'm stuck here forever.” “What if I run out of money or no one will ever hear of me again or no opportunities will come my way?” You wouldn't have that thought unless you also had the thought that maybe you weren't that valuable, maybe you weren't that powerful, maybe you weren't blessed and sitting in the silver chariot of your destiny — escorted by a wise and inspired steed.

It's easy to look upon a bleak future when your heart is closed down to yourself. But when you get clearer about who you are, the life you were meant

to live, the love in your heart you have to give, your unequalled value, it is impossible to imagine a narrow path to a dire future. Don't look out there. Don't look at the screen. Look at what you believe about yourself, not what you believe about the future, the economy, the way things are, or the stock market. Look at your soul, your precious radiant special package. Look at what you think you'd like to express or offer to

others in our love-thirsty world. Look at what you know about yourself, deep, deep down, underneath the false modesty, the precautionary “don't get your hopes up,” the conditioned cynicism of our times.

Go deep, deep down, past old conditioning, to an infinite place inside that believes in you, knows the brilliant and fluid life you came to live. This is the self that will lead the way. She is the one who will cruise on. And everything that no longer serves your destiny will remain behind. That's what the checkpoint is for. No falsity can get you through this door. The ancient laments and scornful self-perceptions can't come with you into the next sweet expression of your life. This is purification time. This is sacred time. Bless this time.

And bless you all — and everyone — who travel here.

©2002 Tama J. Kieves. All rights reserved. Tama J. Kieves is author of This Time I Dance! Trusting the Journey of Creating the Work You Love/ How One Harvard Lawyer Left It All to Have It All! (©2003 Tarcher/Putnam). Tama devotes her dynamic energy to life/work coaching and to facilitating workshops and retreats throughout the country. For more than a decade, Tama's events have brimmed with “real world” examples, audience interaction, sharp humor, and lively transformations. Her eclectic work has been featured on television, radio and in many publications.

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CAREER HEALTH

Get Ready to Rumble

BY WILLIAM COTTRINGER

Did we really think we could make a major transformation into the Information Age and shift paradigms from traditional, hierarchical, and controlling bureaucracies to experimental, flattened, empowering, free-floating organizations *without* some serious consequences? Changing values such as divergent thinking, empowerment, discretion, ingenuity, diversity and responsible freedom, all have consequences just like their more traditional counterparts do.

The lesson we should learn from the present transformation and paradigm shifting that we are going through is the wisdom of *balance*. We can't exchange one whole set of paradigms and values on the left for another different set on the right in a wholesale fashion, without some dire consequences. It is the thoughtful blending of the two extremes that creates real progress.

Here are a few of the internal shifts that are presenting new problems in organizations which require a balanced leadership response to quell the rumbling. Without such a careful response the rumbling may be destructive.

Convergent Thinking vs. Divergent Thinking

According to intelligence theorists such as Robert Sternberg, the successful thinking that is needed today is a blending of logic, creativity and common sense. The challenge for leaders is to teach others how to achieve this blend of successful thinking by demonstrating these three different mental skills themselves for everyone to see. The difficulty is in letting go of learning expectations—it takes great patience to avoid over-focusing on the consequences of inevitable mistakes that people will make in trying to improve the quality of their thinking. It will take a lot of practice to get it right.

Beliefs vs. Principles

If knowledge workers are going to be fully productive and successful in the Information Age, they will have to trade in their obsolete, rusty truth compasses for shiny new ones. Unverified assumptions and emotionally-based beliefs must be replaced with practical principles that are proven and evidenced-based. The

difficulty here is that people quickly adopt wrong beliefs and then those beliefs become almost impervious to change, regardless of compelling evidence to the contrary. Effective leaders need to demonstrate the level of self-confidence and mental flexibility that it takes to openly question their own faulty beliefs and replace them with tried and true principles.

External Motivation vs. Intrinsic Motivation

Employees will always need to be encouraged to perform better with the promise of external rewards such as personal acknowledgment, public recognition, and financial incentives. But, some of the important cognitive skills we are expecting employees to learn and practice today can only come about by intrinsic motivation—wanting to do something just because it feels satisfying to do in and by itself. The knowledge workers of today need jobs that afford significant meaning, real responsibility, custom uniqueness, a sense of making a contribution, flexible autonomy and multiple choices. These things provide both external and internal motivation.

Outer Directed vs. Inner-directed

For people to reach their full potential and be as productive as they can be, they must move from an outward focus of control to an inner-directed one—paying less attention to what others expect and say, and more from what they know by their own experience and thinking. To encourage this transition, leaders must create situations that can build such autonomy without having too many undesirable side effects. The difficulty is that such a transition requires skills such as critical thinking, creativity, intrinsic motivation and good listening, which may have to be taught first.

In a sense, we are all headed towards uncharted waters where we have to learn and improve by sharing our pieces of the map and working together as a team. Leaders have the challenge of orchestrating all this with their balanced leadership abilities to minimize the rumbling.

©2003 William Cottringer. All rights reserved. William Cottringer is a business consultant, sport psychologist and college teacher from Glen Carbon, IL. He is author of *You Can Have Your Cheese & Eat It Too*. He can be reached at ckurtdoc@charter.net.

Optimism and the Immune System

continued from cover

of cancers. The changes in the immune system are attributable to two psychological characteristics of optimists: they experience events as less stressful, and they show less negative mood, such as anxiety and depression.

“As evidence increases to show that psychological factors may play a role in the course of chronic diseases such as HIV infection, healthy people wonder if psychological factors also affect their health,” says Dr. Suzanne C. Segerstrom, lead author of the study. “We have seen that optimism positively affects the psychological response to stressful events, and this research reflects a first step toward expanding that observation to include physical health under stress.”

The research adds to the growing number of studies that have helped scientists understand the contribution of psychosocial factors to physical health. Researchers previously found that optimism about health outcomes among HIV patients has been associated with slower immune decline and later symptom onset. However, the authors caution that more research is needed to establish whether these

types of immune changes mean health benefits for people without chronic disease. “While this size of change in the immune system may not always translate into health differences, it does establish the possibility that people’s outlook and mood when stressed

might affect responses to common immune challenges such as exposure to cold viruses or immunization,” says Dr. Segerstrom. This study shows that beliefs, such as optimism, and associated mood changes are important elements of the immune consequences of stressful events.

“Optimism is Associated With Mood, Coping, and Immune Change in Response to Stress” by Suzanne C. Segerstrom, Ph.D., Shelley E. Taylor, Ph.D., Margaret E. Kemeny, Ph.D., and John L. Fahey, Ph.D.; *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 74, No. 6. Suzanne Segerstrom, Ph.D. can be reached at 606-257-4549.

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