

BALANCE

WELLNESS MAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017 | VOLUME 2 | NUMBER 3

Getting to Better™:

Wellness

How Purpose
& Values Pave
the Road

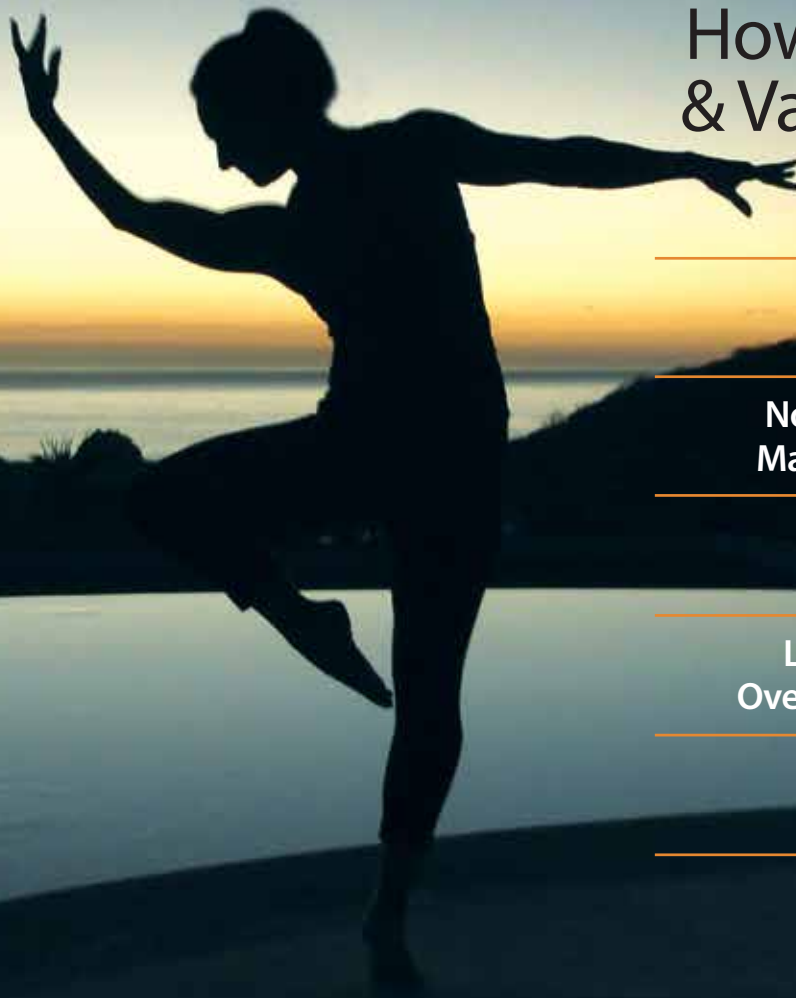
Putting Our
Affairs in Order

Non-verbal Behavior
Management (Part 2)

New Couples
and Money

Living On the Edge:
Overcoming Our Fears

Get Ready to
Ride (or Walk)



editor's MESSAGE



What does wellness look like to you?

When we go out and talk about “Balance” we often speak about how wellness is very personal. If you ask a hundred people what wellness means to them, you can get a hundred different answers; and if you ask the same hundred people what wellness means to them six months later you may get a completely different response. This is because wellness means something different to everybody.

You may look at the cover of this issue of the Balance magazine and question how that is an appropriate cover for a winter edition. This picture represents a moment of wellness for me. When I look at this photo there are many feelings and emotions that are brought up. To start it was a beautiful sunrise on top of a hill in Huatulco, Mexico, a vacation I remember very fondly. Throughout my time there I had the opportunity to dance, to exercise, practice yoga, indulge on incredible and large portions of food, and spend quality time with family. When I look at this photo it brings a smile to my face. So to me, this photo represents wellness.

So now, it is -30 outside, winter vacation is over, and the second half of the year is just beginning. Now is a very important time to focus on personal wellness. It is easy to forget about wellness as you are battling the cold, winter driving, and minimal hours of sunshine. Why not find a photo for yourself that represents wellness for you. A photo of a moment in your life that makes you smile when you see it. When you need a positive image to focus on, take it out, and take a moment for yourself to remember that your wellness is important. Honour yourself this year.

This year, what is wellness going to look like for you? And can Balance help to make that happen? If we haven't had an opportunity to connect you with the Balance team yet now is a great time. To date Balance has had over 300 opportunities to work with members and share wellness programming. We thank you for the opportunity and look forward to many more events with you in the near future.

Robyn Braha
Wellness Coordinator



The
Manitoba
Teachers'
Society



BALANCE
mind body spirit
THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

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EDITOR

Robyn Braha
rbraha@mbteach.org
Phone: (204) 837-2564 / TF: 1-800-262-8803

DESIGN

Krista Rutledge

CIRCULATION

Jennifer Nasse, jnasse@mbteach.org

ADVERTISING

Robyn Braha, rbraha@mbteach.org

BALANCE

191 Harcourt Street
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3H2
Phone: (204) 888-7961 / TF: 1-800-262-8803
Fax: (204) 831-0877

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email: mts-im@mbteach.org



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12

enjoy life more DAY 10

Go to your library or local craft store and get information on a hobby you've always been curious about. Scrapbooking, drawing, photography, gardening...still interest you? Sign up for a low cost community club or Leisure Guide class to try it out.

- Courtesy of Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Mental Health Promotion Team WRHA

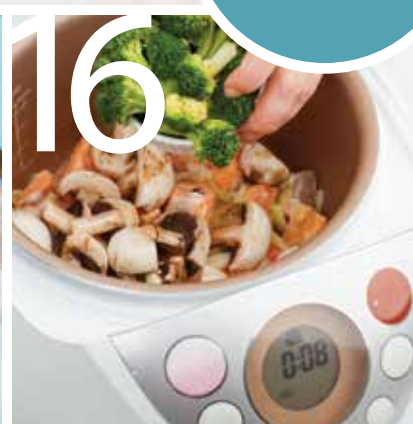


Vocal hygiene: **7**
Non-verbal behavior management

14



Recipes for healthy living **17**



- 4 Getting to Better™: Purpose & values pave road to wellness
- 6 Classroom reorganizing
- 7 Vocal hygiene: Non-verbal behavior management
- 8 Keith's corner: Overcoming our fears
- 10 The quest of the dragonfly
- 12 Get ready to ride (or walk)
- 14 A practical guide for caregivers: Putting our affairs in order
- 16 Nutrition column
- 17 Recipes for healthy living
- 18 Silence arises, our true self appears
- 19 Financial literacy: New couples and money



Getting to Better™: Purpose & values pave road to wellness



By Stephen de Groot, Myriad Consulting www.stephendegroot.com

This publication offers educators the opportunity to consider the important role purpose and values play for improving educator engagement and overall wellness. The article offers several individual and collective suggestions for leveraging purpose and values to improve value-alignment and enhance meaning as educators carry out their work.

Connecting with purpose - two important questions

What brought you to the field of

education? What are the things that keep you here?

Now, depending on your level of engagement and/or the amount of stress and strain you might be experiencing at any given moment, these questions can sound like, "Why am I doing this?" or "Why am I still doing this?". It is not uncommon for every person at some point or other, if they are human of course, to ask themselves these questions.

Why are these questions so important? Because they assist in connecting us to

our "why", also known as our purpose. For many of us, purpose is where passion comes from; it is what often drives us. It is important to stay connected to our purpose as much as possible, because purpose fuels us with the energy, focus and conviction to do what most of us love to do.

Purpose is a great thing under all circumstances, but becomes increasingly significant in tough times. Knowing and staying connected to our purpose can make good days great and bad days better.

The importance of values

Purpose is often comprised of two very important elements; goals and the drivers of those goals - personal values. Values, as discussed in other articles, make up an important component of "Most Meaningful". Most Meaningful occurs at work, when educators' needs are being met, values are in alignment, goals are being approximated and/or accomplished and, strengths are recognized and leveraged as people carry out their work.

Values while representing one of the four components of Most Meaningful, may actually signify the most powerful source of human motivation, engagement and thereby operate as a major component of individual and collective wellness. Research demonstrates that, when people feel alignment between their personal values and the guiding values of their workplace, they experience a deeper sense of connection to the work, report higher degrees of satisfaction and tend to be more motivated and engaged in their work overall.

Value incongruence – an unintentional and unfortunate phenomenon

At one time or another, educators may experience feeling less than engaged as they carry out their important work. Unfortunately, recurrent and prolonged periods of disengagement can negatively impact an educator's overall emotional and social well-being.

One of the major reasons people can become disengaged from their work has to do with a disconnection and or dislocation from the things that give their work meaning. Values can be one of those important things. Value-incongruence is a phenomenon wherein people experience a disconnect and/or incongruence between important and often stated personal/professional values and how they actually experience the people, their work environment or the work overall.

Two Causes: A major cause of value-incongruence occurs often unintentionally when, for many reasons, educators become dislocated from a connection between their own values and important aspects of their work that are most aligned with those values. For example, I speak with lots of teachers that say things like, "You know, we used to have more fun in the classroom" or "I remember when I used to make more time

for personal check-ins before students would get to work" or: "I don't go to the staff room and connect with colleagues as much as I used to".

Another cause of value-incongruence occurs when people and groups unintentionally behave in ways that contradict the guiding values on the wall. It is this type of value-incongruence that can have a variety of impacts on the morale and overall wellness of educators. At first, value-incongruences can be somewhat disconcerting. The longer incongruences in behaviour persist, by individuals and/or groups of people, the experience can become disillusioning and over time, may even be experienced by some staff members as demoralizing.

Two Remedies: Re-aligning and resetting a deeper connection to our work starts with revisiting our own purpose and searching for important value-alignments that give us the greatest meaning. The purpose-questions offered above and values-directed questions offered below may provide a starting point for individual reflections and first steps:

- What values are most important to me?
- How do these compare with the school/division values?
- Are my values similar or different? To the School/Division? To other colleagues?
- Are there aspects of my work and/or work environment where I feel more or less aligned/connected with important values?
- Are there things I can do to bring more alignment to my personal and professional values in the classroom; with students; with colleagues; with parents/caregivers?

The second remedy is suggested for the collective. There are 3 important steps that educators and their colleagues can take to decrease and eliminate value-incongruences.

1. Identify important values – This step is fairly easy to do as key values are often a big part of most school/division's Vision, Mission, and/or Guiding Principles.

2. Develop a shared understanding of what those values mean – it is important that people have a shared understanding of what the values mean as they carry out the work. Different interpretations can lead to confusion, disagreements or conflicts that arise from actions and/or interactions that are incongruent with important values.



Purpose and values – tips for leaders

1. Make values and value-alignment a priority.
2. Encourage staff members to connect with individual and collective purpose.
3. Initiate and facilitate a courageous values - conversation offered in the 3 steps above.
4. Always, to the extent possible, role model values - based behaviors in practice.
5. Recognize and reinforce behavior that is congruent with important values.

3. Identify concrete and observable value-based behavior in operation – It is important that everyone understands what values look like in operation everywhere; in the hallway, in the classroom, the staff room, at meetings, etc. What do Safety, Empowerment, Accountability, Innovation, etc., and/or other important and guiding values look like in our practice?

When individuals and the collective work to identify and operate in-line, to the extent possible, with important values, unintentional value-incongruences and the unfortunate implications can be avoided, paving the way for greater meaning and wellness as educators carry out their very important work.

The role of leaders

Values are simply words, until our actions give them meaning. Leaders play a major role in promoting and sustaining value-congruence. As leaders and role models, it is critical that leaders consistently consider the meaning their actions and interactions give to the values on the wall.

Values are foundational and form a cornerstone to great culture. Given that leaders operate as culture champions; it is important that they be purposeful in promoting value-driven behavior. Great culture is compromised when leaders permit and/or tolerate behaviours that are incongruent with the guiding values. **B**

Clarity over clutter: Reorganizing your classroom



By Susan Macaulay, Clarity over Clutter

You may have been in your classroom for many years, share it with another colleague, or have had a small room to store your resources and travel from classroom to classroom using a cart to carry your needed supplies. Or maybe you have an area in your home for the 'stored' items from school.

There may be teaching supplies and resources you have accumulated over the years that you have created, gathered from workshops or publishers, acquired from retiring colleagues, or purchased yourself.

Whether it be classroom, home or work reorganizing, we all need to periodically take a look at our spaces and do some 'Spring Cleaning'. I'm talking about getting into the filing cabinets, bookshelves, bins, cubbies, closets and storage rooms.

Taking time to sort through, edit and reorganize these areas will save you time and energy.

A great starting point is to:

- Create a vision for your classroom
- What do you want your classroom to look like?
- What 'zones' or 'functions' do you want in the classroom?
- Write down your thoughts and ideas for each area.

Step back and try to look at your classroom with a fresh perspective. It will contribute to better classroom management. I'm not talking about completely changing up your space, but being open to look at new ways to improve the use of your space.

There are no cookie cutter solutions for reorganizing. Everyone has ways of doing things, some that work well, and some that might be causing frustration and take too much of your time.

One area to focus on is your main desk or work table. For this space to be more functional, review what you really need for your daily activities, and remove the items



that are not used daily or weekly. This will create more space, reduce distractions, save time and energy.

The items that you keep close at hand will vary from teacher to teacher.

Items used every few weeks or monthly can be placed on a shelf or cupboard close to the desk. Items that are used seasonally can be stored across the room, or in another storage area.

Create a 'teacher zone' in your classroom to keep the teacher resources, supplies and confidential materials separated from student resources.

Setting up defined student areas for resources and supplies is helpful in classroom organizing.

Some examples are:

- Set up the classroom library in a less traffic area of the room
- Set up labeled bins for 'work to hand in' close to the teacher area
- Outdoor supplies set up close to the door
- Arranging the resources or supplies in the area that they will be used will improve functionality

Review to see if things are set up in such

a way for easy access for students and yourself. Editing out items that are no longer being used, outdated, broken, or missing pieces; can allow for more space for pertinent items.

Having some empty space on shelves and in cupboards is good.

I call it 'breathable space'. It is much easier to find what you're looking for when things are not packed in a storage place.

One great way to help keep the classroom organized is to label bins, shelves and cupboards. See-through containers with labels work well for students to immediately understand where an item belongs.

The reorganizing process can take time to work through. By 'chunking' time into 15 minute or 30 minute blocks, you can focus on one shelf, drawer or box at a time. Each step in the process is a step in the direction of your vision. **B**

Susan Macaulay of Clarity Over Clutter is a Professional Organizer who works with individuals, and families to create and enjoy a functional home. Susan specializes, as well, working with those who are dealing with Chronic Disorganization and/or Hoarding.

Vocal hygiene: Non-verbal behavior management (Part 2)



By **Caitlin Buchel, RSLP, SLP (C), M.Cl.Sc. , Buchel Speech & Language Group**

It's science class and you are surrounded by excited 10-year-olds. They move to their station, loudly talking to their partners as they figure out the next mini experiment. The background noise in the room rises. You look at the clock and realize that it is time to switch stations again. Calling out to your students you tell them to switch, but they cannot hear you. You take a long breath, knowing that you will need to raise your voice...again.

But wait! Before you start to shout, consider using some non-verbal behavior management strategies. These involve techniques for quieting your classroom and getting student attention without straining your voice. If this sounds like something you can use, well you are not alone. Teachers consistently ask for non-verbal behavioural management strategies tailored to their own teaching style, student ages, and classroom "personalities".

As a start, why not enlist your students to be "voice helpers". You can pick someone different each day, and assign them the job of quieting down the classroom. Depending on their age and interests, you can even have them choose from an array of noisemakers, like a whistle, bell, kazoo, or cowbell to help them do their job. If you have a particularly noisy bunch, try separating them into teams of students each with their own voice helper. You can then make a contest out of which team can quiet down the quickest.

Another very flexible strategy is to decrease the distance between you and your students. You can do this by using a signal to get them to come to you. A noisemaker, turning the lights off and on, or playing music may all



work to get their attention and get them to gather around. Alternatively, you can move to them. For example, let's say you have given the class a signal to quiet down and they are not listening. Choose one or two particularly noisy students and walk purposefully right up to them. Look them in the eye and in a calm, low voice, ask them to stop talking. You would be amazed how many students will respond more quickly to this than to yelling from across the room.

There are an unending number of non-verbal behavior management strategies out there. In fact, you and your colleagues likely already have some fantastic tricks. In the staff room at lunch, ask some of your colleagues to share theirs, and don't forget to bring a pen so you can jot down your favorites and try them with your class!

Tips for managing your class without losing your voice

1. Enlist voice helpers. Use one student to separate your students into teams to help you quiet the classroom.
2. Decrease the distance between you and your students. Use a noisemaker or another non-verbal signal to get them to come to you before you give any other instructions.
3. Move to your students. Walk purposefully right up to them and speak in a quiet voice. You'll be surprised how effective this can be.
4. Share your tips and tricks with your fellow teachers. Creativity is the only limit! **B**

Caitlin Buchel is the owner and managing clinician of the Buchel Speech & Language Group, a private speech-language pathology (SLP) practice offering services in Winnipeg, and throughout Manitoba.

WHAT'S
YOUR
PLAN?



Keith's corner: Overcoming our fears



By Keith Macpherson www.keithmacpherson.ca

In my mindfulness workshops I often show a video that I discovered on Youtube suggesting that a flea can jump one hundred times its size. For humans, that would be the equivalent to jumping to the top of a skyscraper building. With this in mind if you put a flea in a jar it will simply jump out of the jar. However if you put a lid on the jar the flea will attempt to jump out of the jar and hit the bottom of the lid and fall back down to the bottom. After a few attempts to jump out of the jar and painfully hitting the lid, the flea will only jump so high as to not hit the lid of the jar anymore. In a recently conducted experiment, it was discovered that even if the lid gets removed from the jar the flea will no longer jump beyond where it has been programmed to. It will never again jump out of the jar.

This phenomenon is also apparent when working with baby elephants. It has been discovered that if a baby elephant is tied up to a post it will initially try to break free from its confinement. After several attempts, it no longer decides to leave the post and even if it becomes untied it will not leave the proximity of the post to which it was originally tied.


I would like to suggest that these similar patterns are also very much ingrained into us as human beings. How often do we stay trapped in the confines of our own mind and fear what might happen if we take the risk and follow our inner hearts' desires? Many of us have been conditioned to believe that if we step outside of what we have been told is "normal" and "acceptable" we will risk our reputation, our belongings and perhaps even our life. So as a result many of us stay

stuck in our safe little bubbles where we no longer have to take risks. The issue is that when we stay confined to what we have deemed "safe", many times this decision keeps us in a status quo that does not allow us to grow and expand.

Consider some of the things that distract you from getting what you truly want out of life. You may even decide to make a laundry list of these things. Besides the laundry, you may notice that things such as not having enough money, not having enough time or perhaps a lack of self-confidence are some of the top items that appear on your list. One of the major contributors that prevents us from truly going after what we want is fear.

In my mindfulness workshops the acronym for fear is False Evidence Appearing Real. It has been said that 98% of what we worry about in our minds does not actually come true the way we have been worrying about it. Consider how much time and energy we often waste on worrying about what happened or what will happen only to find out that our perspective was in fact not the way things panned out in the end. Consider how many books have not been written, how many songs have not been sung, how many great lesson plans have been trashed before they were taught and even how many amazing thoughts have never been spoken because of worry, doubt and fear.

I am writing this article to encourage you to move forward over these next few months and to keep the famous quote by Eleanor Roosevelt on your mind. When asked about the topic of fear Roosevelt suggested, "Do one



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thing a day that scares you." What is it in your life that you have been avoiding, neglecting or procrastinating over because of the voice in your head that tells you to be afraid or because of the feeling of fear (False Evidence Appearing Real) that comes over you when you get too close to the so called edge? I challenge you this week to take action in your life once a day and mindfully challenge your "bubble" or status quo. Keep a list going of the things you did that pushed your edge and send them to me at the end of the week. I want to hear what you have decided to move through to grow and connect with your inner dream to continue to expand into the wonderful person that you truly are. **B**

Keith Macpherson is a motivational speaker, yoga instructor, life coach and recording artist. For more information and to sign up for Keith's daily inspiration emails visit <http://www.keithmacpherson.ca>

[TREASURE]



The quest of the dragonfly



By **Danielle Fullan Kolton, PhD, The Manitoba Teachers' Society**

"Think of it as a game," coached my dad persistently throughout my formative years. Whether it was a test, an interview, or anything I felt challenged by or nervous about, he would dare me to be optimistic by using my resources and thinking creatively. We would talk about the object of the game and strategize my moves to play it. My teenaged self thought the whole thing was dumb (insert dramatic eye roll here), but I've since learned that my dad was way ahead of his time in using a gameful mindset to approach obstacles in life.

Obstacles can be involuntary and voluntary. As the name implies, involuntary obstacles occur outside of our control; we

don't choose them. We are living our lives and suddenly, WHAM: bad stuff happens, like death, illness, injury, or trauma. On the other hand, voluntary obstacles are the self-imposed challenges or projects that seem like a really awesome idea when we dream them up. Even though we choose them, they still cause stress and require motivation, willpower, and grit to achieve, like training for a marathon, getting into shape, or taking a university course.

Both voluntary and involuntary obstacles have tremendous potential for personal growth and development, depending on how they are perceived. Seen as a threat, they induce a fight-or-flight response

that can be self-defeating and socially isolating. Arteries constrict and the stress hormone, cortisol, is released which increases anxiety. Rather, if the obstacle is framed as a challenge, arteries expand and a calm-and-connect response occurs which is used to gather resources and tap into strengths. It is natural to react to an obstacle as a threat, and it is also possible to switch to a challenge mindset by reframing the obstacle as a game.

The research on the psychology of games is very compelling. According to psychologist and author Jane McGonigal (2015), games require players to be flexible and resilient while also taking

risks and seeking help to achieve a goal. When people play a game, they demonstrate courage, creativity, optimism, and determination; yet, these gameful strengths do not necessarily transfer to the obstacles that are faced in real life. Thanks to my dad, I find myself playing games all the time, usually with voluntary obstacles like learning a new skill; but, I also use gameful skills when I am caught unaware by life's curveballs such as the recent and unexpected death of a friend.

In her book, *SuperBetter: A Revolutionary Approach to Getting Stronger, Happier, Braver, and More Resilient*, McGonigal describes how gaming lingo and skills can be effective for coping with real-life obstacles. She describes six game concepts to reframe how we tackle obstacles: **secret identity, power ups, quests, bad guys, allies, and epic wins**. Fear not if these terms summon self-help visions of Dr. Phil-meets-Super-Mario-Brothers; it's not as silly as you think. Here's how I have embraced these ideas to enhance my gameful strengths:

Having a **SECRET IDENTITY** helps to distance myself from the intensity of the challenge, and this detachment enables a deeper form of self reflection and creative problem solving. Like an avatar, a secret identity represents me in the game but also possesses qualities that I aspire to. My secret identity is a dragonfly. I chose it carefully because I am inspired by the agility, adaptation, and grace of this awe-inspiring little creature. Aspiring to the virtues of a dragonfly urges me to embody its strengths.

Power ups

POWER UPS provide physical energy, positive emotion, motivation, and social connections to keep me focussed on the challenge. They are all about topping up my gas tank; if it's running on empty, it's impossible to reach the destination. There are four types of power ups that lead to happier, healthier, and stronger responses to obstacles, and I aim for a combination of at least three a day:

Physical: quick strategies to help my body withstand stress and rejuvenate. Physical power ups are game changers: It is amazing how a glass of water, 10-minute brain recess, quick walk, fresh air, and fruits and vegetables provide a boost. Seems like common sense, but on days when caffeine and Pinot Grigio are the main forms of hydration, there is a reason why my performance is sluggish. I'm not sure why this seems so hard to do, but power

ups are definitely a determining factor in how I play the game.

Emotional: actions that help me to access positive emotions like listening to a favourite song, looking at baby animals on Pinterest, or staring out the window. Even a hug can boost the spirits and change my strategy in the game.

Mental: intentional ways to increase my focus without exhausting my willpower; this helps me to stay determined and motivated. For example, digital detoxing, scheduling something to look forward to, and exercising my brain with puzzles. Our brains are precious cargo – we have to be nice to them so that they don't peter out.

Social: deliberate actions to connect with people, like sending a thank-you text, writing a "you're awesome" email, or random acts of kindness that enhance my connection to other human beings. Though I sometimes think I just want to cocoon, I have come to know that social support is an important part of reaching my goals.

Allies

ALLIES provide connections to people who understand my obstacles. They are the people who cheer me on with advice and encouragement. In fact, research shows that connecting with allies increases life expectancy by reducing stress hormones and boosting immune response, cardiovascular efficiency, and physical resilience. My allies are different depending on the game; sometimes I choose people who rub my back (metaphorically) and other times I choose people who challenge me. When it feels vulnerable to share with an ally, I press forward knowing that I need this connection to reach my goal and outsmart the bad guys.

Bad guys

BAD GUYS are the saboteurs. They are the counterproductive habits, energy-zapping emotions, and negative thoughts, feelings, and experiences that block my progress in the game. For me, bad guys always appear when I don't pay attention to self-care: Sleep loss, poor food choices, and lack of exercise exaggerate the worries and insecurities I feel. So, resisting the bad guys is all about power up prevention. The more I can resist the bad guys, the better I can achieve each quest.

Quests

QUESTS are mini challenges that get me closer to my goal. For example, when



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my goal was to write this article, my daily quest included one small step towards achieving that goal: reading a chapter of the book, reflecting, or seeking out the advice and knowledge of others. One tiny step each day is totally doable, and chunking the project helps the goal to feel less overwhelming while creating a sense of hope, optimism, and "I can do this. I will do this."

Epic wins

Finally, EPIC WINS are celebrations that recognize the good things that come from challenge and change. My most recent epic win was to tattoo a dragonfly on my leg to honour, remember, and commemorate my dad who died five years ago. His death was a sudden and overwhelming involuntary obstacle. At the time, I didn't imagine that we would hold his hand on the way out and then brace ourselves for the avalanche of grief.

Cradled between the two antennae on my dragonfly tattoo is the word "treasure", my dad's nickname for me from birth to adulthood. The real treasure in this epic win is that I was stronger than I thought, even in the midst of painful lessons learned while watching a loved one leave. With my dad as an ally, the quest of my dragonfly is to grow and learn my way through obstacles in life, one game at a time. **B**

References:

McGonigal, J. (2015). *SuperBetter: A Revolutionary Approach to Getting Stronger, Happier, Braver, and More Resilient*. London: Penguin Books, Ltd.

Danielle Fullan Kolton is a staff officer in the Professional and French Language Services Department (PFLS). The PFLS department is committed to supporting teachers as adult learners. Follow us on Twitter @mtsllearning.



Get ready to ride (or walk)

By Dave Elmore and Jessie Klassen, Green Action Centre

The weather may be blustery, but sweet spring days are on the way. Now is a great time to think about how you go about your daily errands, whether it's getting to work, to the store or dropping the kids at school. Do you find yourself sitting in your car more than you'd like?

Changing routines in our lives is always challenging. Follow these steps to better your chances of building more walking and cycling into your week.

Step 1: Get your bike ready to ride

Many bikes get little, if any, maintenance and often are not really safe to ride due to problems that could be detected with a simple 'ABC Quick Check'. This check can identify potential issues that require attention. (For more detailed guidance and pictures see greenactioncentre.ca/healthy-travel/abcs-make-sure-your-bike-is-ready-to-ride.)

- **'A' is for air:** Check that your tires are inflated to the maximum amount of air indicated on the side of the tire. Spin the wheels to make sure they run straight and to check there is no glass or other sharp object protruding from the tread that could result in a flat tire.
- **'B' is for brakes and bars:** Pull the brake levers back tightly towards the handlebars and make sure there is at least a finger's width of space between the lever and handle grip. Also check the brake pads for signs of wear or thinning. Make sure they firmly grab the rim of the tire when you squeeze the brake lever. To check that the steering of your bike is not compromised by a loose headset or the bolt that holds the handlebars in place, grab the front wheel between your legs and try to twist the handle bars from side to side.
- **'C' is for chain and crank:** Inspect your chain to make sure that it is clean and lubricated. To check the crank, grab the pedal arm and try to wiggle it back and forth. There should

not be any play in the bearings of the bottom bracket. If there is, your bike needs professional attention.

- **Quick:** Check the quick releases (if you have them) on your wheels and seat to make sure they are tight. If they are bolted, make sure the bolts are tight.
- **Final Check:** Pick your bicycle up 10 cm (three to four inches) off the ground and drop it to make sure there is nothing loose. If anything rattles or falls off, take it to a shop for a closer look.

Step 2: Plan your route

Map out a walking or cycling route that fits your comfort and skill level or personal preference – a combination of residential streets and pathways or the most direct route on major streets. Ask a colleague or friend who commutes by bike regularly for advice. You might want to consider first riding or walking the route when you have lots of time. You don't need to race down a major street on your first adventure to work, school or whatever your destination might be. Try the scenic route!

Step 3: Gear up

All you really need for walking is a good pair of shoes and a backpack to carry things. Consider leaving a pair of dress shoes for a quick change at the office. For cycling, bike lights (front and rear), panniers/saddlebags or a basket to hold your stuff, and a quality helmet and bike lock are all essential items.

Step 4: Lock it, don't lose it

Increase your odds of thwarting bike thieves:

- Always lock your bike, even if you're only going to be away a few moments.
- Use a high quality U-lock – this is generally the strongest type of lock.
- Lock to an immovable object – beware of sign posts with a 'collar' at the bottom, as the pole can be removed.

- Lock the frame and the wheels – use the U-lock to secure the bike frame to the immovable object and add a cable lock as needed if you have quick release wheels.
- Take your bike seat with you if it has a quick release.

Step 5: Smell nice

Showers and lockers at your workplace are helpful for employees arriving on foot or by bike. But if your workplace doesn't currently have these, check out any nearby gyms that might provide a discounted rate for use of their showers. Consider leaving a change of clothes at the office and some wet wipes for a quick clean up. Or simply bike or walk at a relaxed pace that keeps you dry and fresh!

Step 6: Sign up for the Commuter Challenge and Bike to Work Day

The Commuter Challenge takes place the first week of June each year. Participating is a fun way to try out healthy, active commuting with the incentive of friendly competition and prizes. Sign up your workplace or yourself as an individual (find out more at greenactioncentre.ca/commuterchallenge). Keep it going with Bike to Work Day on Friday, June 23, in 2017.

Step 7: Adjust as needed and repeat

Keep in mind that it's not all or nothing. You don't have to bike or walk for every trip. Try leaving the car at home once a week to start or split up your trip – drive part-way to your destination and then walk or bike the rest of the way. Small changes can have a big impact on your health. **B**

Green Action Centre is a non-profit organization based in Winnipeg, serving Manitoba. For more information visit greenactioncentre.ca.



A practical guide for caregivers: Putting our affairs in order



By Wendy Sutton, *Where Next? A Path for Caregivers* wherenxt.blogspot.ca

The time is now

Dying is a part of living. About 80% of deaths in Canada are neither sudden nor unexpected, and most Canadians die in old age. Given that the majority of deaths are expected, there are ample opportunities to plan for the end of life, but this often doesn't happen.

Senator Sharon Carstairs says that Canada is a "death denying society" and that while the average person knows "in the back of their mind that they are going to die... they won't talk about it

until it absolutely hits them in the face." HealthyDebate.ca

Denial is not a solution

The 40/70 Rule refers to the ideal ages for family members to have "The Talk". Talking sooner rather than later allows for a more objective conversation. CaregiverStress.com has excellent guides on family communication issues from the perspectives of both adult children and aging parents.

Putting one's legal, medical and financial affairs in order is proactive

advance care planning.

Legal

Legal Information Guide for Seniors: This guide is so clear and concise that it does not make sense to repeat its contents. It is available online and as a PDF but I recommend getting your own free copy from the Manitoba Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat.

Legal Advice for the Frugal: Hire a lawyer. A simple will costs about \$250 and a power of attorney (POA) about \$200. These documents are essential.

Without legal documents, costs can increase substantially. This is not the place to save money.

Save money by being prepared for legal appointments. Understand terms and issues you plan to discuss. Make decisions about executors, beneficiaries, special bequests and POAs in advance. Make lists. List everything you own - all valuables, property, bank accounts, insurance policies, pensions and jointly owned items. List all beneficiaries of accounts, policies etc. List the names, addresses of all people named in the will.

Medical

Health Care Directives: The small space provided on the Manitoba Health Care Directive form is not sufficient to set out "your instructions concerning medical treatment that you do or do not wish to receive and the circumstances in which you do or do not wish to receive that treatment."

Draw up your own directive and attach it to the official form.

The WRHA has an Advance Care Planning site to help with this process. If you are looking for a sample Health care Directive or characteristics that define quality of life, go to:

Where Next? A Path for Caregivers and search for "end of life".

Financial first steps

Identify as a Caregiver: It's important to identify with the term caregiver, even if it feels uncomfortable. It allows you to qualify for tax benefits. It may also help you gain support with health and social services and in your workplace.

Become the Power of Attorney (POA): You must have a power of attorney drawn up by a lawyer in order to manage another's financial affairs. You must have an enduring power of attorney to manage another's financial affairs when they can no longer manage their affairs alone.

Finances and Estate Planning: A financial advisor, a lawyer and a tax accountant...often professionals have different perspectives. To make an informed decision, take the time to hear their advice. For example, read the booklet *Powers of Attorney and Joint Bank Accounts from the Canadian Government Series: What Every Older Canadian Should Know About*.

For a detailed financial to-do list, go to the Money and Taxes page of the Where Next? site.

Taxes - credits and benefits

1. Primary Caregiver Tax Credit | Manitoba: Savings - \$1,400 to the primary caregiver. Manitoba offers a fully refundable credit of \$1,400 a year to people who act as primary caregivers for spouses, relatives, neighbours or friends who live at home in Manitoba. You may claim the tax credit for each of up to three care recipients.

Note: "At home" includes retirement homes, supportive and assisted living facilities. You do not qualify if the person you care for is in the hospital or a personal care home.

The Primary Caregiver Tax Credit website has application forms, clear information and FAQs. If you have any further questions simply email the tax department TAO@gov.mb.ca. Save a copy of the response.

Tip: Don't be intimidated by the Primary Caregiver's Log. Just list the tasks you do; driving to doctor appointments, assisting with groceries, meals, home maintenance, and laundry or paying bills. Other supports may be banking, completing health and legal forms or arranging for medications. As for the frequency, most of us do all of these tasks weekly.

2. Disability Tax Credit | Canada: Savings - up to \$1,165 plus additional medical exemptions for the care recipient. This is a federal government tax credit for people with disabilities.

CAUTION: Do NOT hire a consultant to help complete the form or claim this tax credit. Your parent must apply and be approved by a doctor (or other approved health professional). The doctor may charge a tax deductible fee of \$100 or less to complete the form. If anyone offers to help you for a much larger fee, say no thanks.

Eligibility - The application and information can be confusing. Simply, eligible applicants have one or more severe and prolonged impairments in physical or mental functions. There are two levels.

Eligible applicants:

1. Have one or more severe impairments.
2. Have a significant impairment as well as a combination of other less severe impairments.



The 40/70 Rule refers to the ideal ages for family members to have "The Talk". Talking sooner rather than later allows for a more objective conversation. *CaregiverStress.com* has excellent guides on family communication issues from the perspectives of both adult children and aging parents.

Physical functions include:

- vision
- feeding or dressing oneself
- speaking or hearing impairment
- eliminating (bowel/bladder functions)
- walking

Mental functions include:

- memory
- problem solving, goal-setting and judgement (taken together)
- adaptive functioning (self-care, health and safety, social skills and simple transactions)

3. Canada Revenue Eligible Medical Expenses: Take 5 minutes to read the complete list. Did you know that incontinence products are an eligible medical expense?

There are significant exemptions for those who are approved for the disability tax credit. Almost 50% of the monthly fees at a retirement home are attendant care expenses. These are an eligible medical expense. The cost of moving to a more accessible housing is covered up to \$2000.

4. CPP Death Benefit: The maximum amount of this benefit is \$2500. Be aware that it is taxable and keep back \$1000 to pay the tax in the following year.

Caregivers require information when they have the least available time to look for it.

Searching for information takes time. Our information needs change as the journey progresses. Some of us find a resource only to forget where to find it a few weeks later.

The home page of *Where Next? A Path for Caregivers* has the links to all the resources named in this series of articles. **B**

Wendy Sutton is the creator of Where Next? A Path for Caregivers. She is a retired teacher from River East Transcona School Division.

Enjoy your food: Nutritious meals made fast



By Carla D'Andreamatteo, RD, MSc www.thefoodlady.ca

Something tells me that you have a busy life and fitting in healthy eating sometimes gets added to a very long “to do” list (okay, one of you readers actually said this and asked me to write about it). Good nutrition also gets moved down that list when obligations such as work and kids float to the top, repeatedly. In the several years that I have practiced as a dietitian, there are common themes presented by clients that interfere with a hectic schedule and nutritious food intake. As you continue to read, I hope you find some solutions that work for you to help balance healthy eating with a time-challenged life.

Theme: “I’m exhausted at the end of the work day. I have no desire to cook.”

Solution 1: Slow cooker wins the race

If you have a slow cooker (also called a crock-pot), time to dust it off and put it to use! If you do not own one, ask Santa to bring one for you this year. This cooking method is a very easy and convenient way to cook a meal when strapped for time. The ingredients can typically be put into the removable crock pot the night before, left in the fridge overnight, and placed in the slow cooker the following morning. Plug in and turn on the appliance and the food will cook while you go about your day. This will allow the meal to cook for ~4hrs (high temperature settings) up to ~8hrs (low temperature settings). A hot meal with wonderful odors filling the house will greet you at the end of the day. Assign a household member to putting together a salad, maybe cut up a slice of whole grain bread, and pouring a cool glass of milk to round off the meal. Mmmm.

To obtain healthy slow cooker recipes, you can certainly Internet search many recipe sites as desired. However, I would also recommend that you consider these items to help you with creating healthy

slow cooker recipes. Both are available at www.amazon.ca:

- Healthy Slow Cooker Cookbook by the American Heart Association
- The Everything Healthy Slow Cooker Cookbook by Rachel Rappaport with B. E. Horton

Solution 2: High five it!

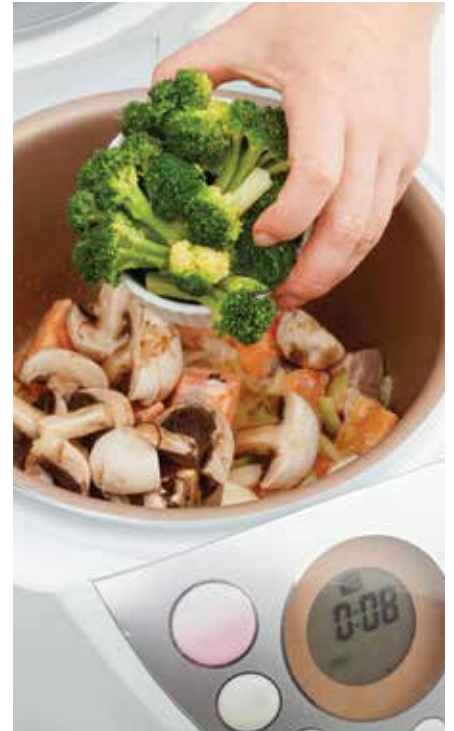
If you are a food show junkie that has a pantry full of fancy ingredients that allows you to make elaborate, hours-long cooking adventures a part of your life; good for you! (Oh, how I have longed to be one of those people. However, the mere thought of that exhausts me.) For the rest of us, returning home after a busy day and being able to cook a nutritious 5-ingredient or less recipe is far more appetizing. These healthy recipes have all the ingredients you want after a long day: quick, easy, fast. An Internet search for 5-ingredient nutritious meals will yield numerous options to select. Here is one resource to get you started:

- 5 Ingredients 10 Minutes available at <http://5ingredients10minutes.com>

Theme: “I have to drive my kid/s around to events right after school into the evening and we do not have time to stop at home to eat.”

Solution: Bring on the muffin tin meal

Consuming a processed, convenience food meal from drive-through, followed by an exercise class or sport competition is counter-productive and would seemingly send mixed messages about health and priorities to children. It’s time to start looking at your muffin tins in a new way. Muffin tins are a great way to make individual portion food that can be easily transported for the drive and dine family. Pack items such as meatloaf muffins, lasagna cups, or mini egg omelets in a small cooler, add some cut vegetables,



fresh fruit or yogurt cups for a dessert, and cool water. Place the cooler in the vehicle before picking up the kids and the whole family can stop to have a fun dinner in the vehicle before heading to the evening of events. No groaning if you think this is lame. Seriously, give it a try!

Healthy muffin tin recipes are available all over the Internet. I would suggest that you use the word “nutritious” or “healthy” when searching for recipes. The results will be endless.

I hope you will find that one or more of the options presented above will help you in your efforts to eat healthier with a busy lifestyle. You’re worth the effort. **B**

Carla D'Andreamatteo owns and operates a nutrition consulting company, The Food Lady, since 1999. Based in Winnipeg, the team of dietitians offers a variety of nutrition services provincially and nationally.



Orange-scented London fog

Prep time: 5 min

Cook time: 5-10 min

Makes: 1 serving

A London fog is quickly becoming a favourite at specialty shops thanks to its aromatic Earl Grey tea accented with vanilla. Try this version with a twist of orange zest and turn your own kitchen into a trendy café.

- 1 cup (250 ml) 1% milk
- 1 strip (about 2 x ½-inch/5 x 1 cm) orange zest
- 1 Earl Grey tea bag
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) boiling water
- 1/4 tsp (1 ml) vanilla extract
- Orange zest for garnish

Directions:

1. In a microwave-safe measuring cup or in a saucepan, heat milk on Medium-High (70%) power in the microwave or over medium heat for about 3 minutes or until steaming.
2. In a tall mug, combine orange zest, tea bag and boiling water; pour in half of the hot milk. Let steep for 5 minutes.
3. If desired, froth remaining hot milk with a battery-powered frother or whisk attachment on an immersion blender.
4. Remove orange zest and tea bag from mug (without squeezing tea bag). Stir in vanilla and pour in remaining hot milk. Garnish with a twist of orange zest or finely grated orange zest and serve immediately.

Per serving (1 cup): Calories 108, Protein 8 g, Total Fat 2 g, Saturated Fat 2 g, Cholesterol 12 mg, Carbohydrates 13 g, Fibre 0 g, Sugars 13 g, Added sugars 0 g, Sodium 107 mg, Potassium 375 mg



Café latte steamer

Prep time: 5 min

Cook time: 5 min

Makes: 3 servings

This fun little frothy drink will warm you up on cold, winter days or perk you up on hot, muggy summer days.

- 250 mL (1 cup) strong brewed coffee
- 15 mL (1 tbsp) granulated sugar
- 500 mL (2 cups) 1% milk
- Ground cinnamon for garnish

Directions:

1. In a saucepan or large glass measuring cup, combine coffee and sugar.
2. Gradually whisk in milk until blended.
3. Heat in saucepan over medium heat or in microwave on Medium (50%) power until steaming, 3 to 5 minutes.

To froth: Using a battery-powered latté whip or a whisk attachment on an immersion blender, whip hot milk mixture until frothy. Or, transfer to an upright blender or milk frother and blend or pump until frothy. Pour into warmed latté bowls or large mugs and sprinkle or drizzle with cinnamon.

Per serving (1 cup): Calories 88, Protein 5 g, Total fat 2 g, Saturated fat 1 g, Cholesterol 8 mg, Carbohydrates 13 g, Fibre 1 g, Sugars 13 g, Sodium 83 mg, Potassium 340 mg



Anna Olson's chilled chai latte

Prep time: 10 min

Cook time: 15 min

Makes: 4 servings

A cool nutrition drink cold or hot.

- 4 cups (1 L) 1% milk
- 3 chai tea bags
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) liquid honey or sugar
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) pure vanilla extract
- Ice cubes
- Ground cinnamon, for garnish

Directions:

1. In a medium heavy-bottom saucepan, combine milk, tea bags and cinnamon stick. Heat over medium heat for 12 minutes or until steaming, stirring occasionally. Remove saucepan from heat. Discard tea bags and cinnamon; stir in honey (or sugar) and vanilla. Cool to room temperature then chill completely, at least 4 hours.
2. To serve, pour 1 cup (250 ml) of the milk mixture into 4 tall (16 oz/500 ml) serving glasses. Froth using a milk frother and top glass with ice. Garnish with a pinch of cinnamon and serve with a straw.

Per serving (1 cup): Calories 121, Protein 8 g, Total Fat 2 g, Saturated Fat 2 g, Cholesterol 12 mg, Carbohydrates 17 g, Fibre 0 g, Sugars 17 g, Sodium 107 mg, Potassium 372 mg

Yoga practice: Silence arises, our true self appears



By Tally Young

Meditation is quickly becoming one of the most sought out health treatments in both allopathic and homeopathic medicine. It increases our oxygen levels, decreases stress which will ward off fatigue leaving our bodies refreshed and ready to take on all that comes our way.

The physical undertaking of meditation seems like a simple one, but scratch the surface and it is one of the most complex undertakings you will encounter. It means you have to listen to your inner thoughts unscramble for awhile before the melodic breath takes over. Most of us, when we listen to our thoughts, find out how mean and self-depreciating they can be.

This may be overwhelming to hear and make the start up of meditation really uncomfortable. What do you do with your thoughts? Well... you don't dance with them. You acknowledge their movement but don't take part. Let them run from one end then out the other, this is the pattern of letting go. Take it day by day.

Beginning is the key

Take 5 – 10 min a day until you are comfortable. Then increase it from there. Be patient with the process. When I had my son, my meditation practice took a very interrupted turn. He was most displeased that I was not focusing my total attention on him, so he took matters into his own hands. My practice went from about an hour down to maybe 5 - 10 min. This time was and still is so precious to quiet my mind and remind me how amazing the feeling of just being present is.

To start you really only need a quiet spot with a firm cushion that will support your sit bones. You do want to

get your hips higher than your knees, for comfort. Play with a few different cushions. You want firm support as the length of your practice grows, so will your sitting time and you want your support to keep you lifted, not release your sit bones over time. No need for expensive cushions, sometimes your couch cushion will do.

Try not to be in a room that is filled with distractions, like the kitchen.

Your thoughts may move to doing the dishes instead of meditation. Have a timer set for your allotted time. Find a spot, face your favorite direction, set up your cushion and start to breathe, in and out, focus on the following:

- *Take awareness of the breath as it moves in*
- *Take awareness of the breath as it moves out*

Breathe in the moments! **B**

“Life is available only in the present moment.”

- *Thich Nhat Hanh,*
Buddhist Philosopher



Financial literacy: New couples and money



By **Brian Denysuik, Creditaid** www.creditaid.ca

You've just moved in with your current love or maybe you've just got engaged. This is a happy, exciting time in your life. The two of you may have discussed where to go on a honeymoon, whether or not to have children, how many or where your dream house will be. But have you had a conversation with each other with regard to your finances? Everything listed above costs money and both of you need to be honest with each other regarding your finances in order to have those things.

As you begin a new, permanent relationship, it is time to set your financial goals as a couple and to be honest about your money values.

Here are things you need to discuss.

1. How are you going to manage your day to day expenses?

Some couples close their individual accounts and open a joint bank account. All their money gets deposited and withdrawn by either person from this bank account. It sounds like the most convenient way to handle expenses but for some it can cause problems. Who is depositing the money and who is withdrawing the money? And for what reason? This strategy works the best for couples who both manage their money well. So before you decide how you are going to handle your banking, it would be wise to write up a monthly budget then decide who will be responsible for paying for what. Some couples maintain separate banking for their entire relationship. Each is responsible for paying some of the joint bills. For example, one pays for the groceries and the other pays the rent. Some couples use a hybrid of both methods in which each maintains a separate bank account and pay their own individual expenses but both deposit a set amount to a joint bank account and joint expenses are paid from it. But how much



should each contribute to the joint bank account? Some couples each deposit the same amount of money, for example, \$2000 per month. Other couples each contribute a percentage of their income. Once you have come to an agreement, talk about what will happen if one spouse's income is reduced because of, a job loss, reduced hours or maternity leave.

2. What is your net worth?

This is a list of your current assets and liabilities. An asset is an item that you could sell and receive money for. For most of us this means real estate, cash in our bank accounts, RRSP's and vehicles. Liabilities are your debts. Ideally your assets should be higher than your liabilities. If so, you have a positive net worth. As you get older your net worth should increase. How do each of your net worth statements compare? Are you both in agreement concerning your net worth goals? This is important because your net worth can determine when you will be able to buy that dream home, afford to have children or when you can retire.

3. What are your short and long term goals?

This is important to establish early in a relationship because you may discover you have radically different financial goals. If one of you is happy to rent forever and basically spend every dime on travelling or entertainment, but the other spouse wants to save up for a house and early retirement – the relationship will be challenged. You need to be honest with yourself and each other as to what is important to you and where you see yourself financially in 5, 10 or 20 years. If your goals differ, determine if you are both willing to compromise. Staying in a committed relationship is hard work and can be stressful. When your goals and dreams are aligned you can look forward to long term happiness and peace in the household. **B**

Brian Denysuik is a local credit counsellor and registered insolvency counsellor at Creditaid who has been in the financial services industry for over 30 years.



BALANCE

mind body spirit
THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

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Manitoba
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For more information contact:

Ralph Ramore
DBP/EAP Administrator
P: 204-934-0386
TF: 1-800-262-8803

Robyn Braha
Wellness Coordinator
P: 204-837-2564
TF: 1-800-262-8803