Dear Center for Adventist Research:

Holidays bring us closer to families, but all too often they provide stress. The articles in this month’s e-newsletter give principles of stress management. You will enjoy the heart-pounding story of "Crime Scene at Wildwood" and the heart-warming stories in "Dysfunctional Relations: How to Survive and Thrive" as well as pertinent information in our other health features. If you don’t have time to read now, be sure to download the articles for future enjoyment.

Also, as you probably saw on the top banner of this e-mail, we are giving a huge discount on 2 special lifestyle programs! Spaces are limited, so we encourage you to register asap. You can register online by clicking on the banner above or by clicking here. You also can register by phone: 1-800-634-9355.

Healthfully Yours,
The Wildwood Staff

FEATURED ARTICLES
Dysfunctional Relationships: How To Survive and Thrive
What to do when a situation involves people who must relate to each other or when circumstances are perceived as intolerable.

Nutty About Nuts
Why is it important to eat nuts? How much should you eat per day?

Stress Buster: Crime Scene Investigation at Wildwood
In a one-word definition the sympathetic division yells, "FIRE!" The sympathetic nervous system operates in emergencies – which happens everyday. Are you stressed?

Want to Prevent a Stroke? Check This.
Every 45 seconds someone has a stroke in the United States, but you rarely hear about this risk factor. Want to prevent a stroke? Check this. In a systematic review and a meta-analysis of prospective...

RECIPES FROM THE WILDWOOD KITCHEN

HARVEST APPLE PIE

INGREDIENTS:
- 1/2 cup unsweetened fruit juice or soymilk
- 2 teaspoons whole wheat pastry flour or cornstarch
- dried fruit as needed to suit taste for sweetness (raisins, dates, or other)
- 8 apples, sliced
- unbaked double pie crust

HOW TO MAKE IT:

1) Blend the first two ingredients on high while adding the dried fruit until the consistency is that of a thick cream.

2) Place the sliced apples in a pie crust, pour the cream over the apples and mix well so that all the apples are coated.

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WILDWOOD NEEDS
3) Cover the apples with the top pie crust. Bake at 325º for about one hour, until lightly browned.

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Dysfunctional Relationships: How to Survive and Thrive

Written by Elizabeth J. Hall

The simplest meaning of "dysfunctional" is "doesn't work right." Dysfunction comes in differing degrees. Some dysfunctional things or people grate on one's nerves just a little bit—like a squeaky door. But when a situation involves people who must relate to each other or when circumstances are perceived as intolerable, you must do one of two things. You must modify this situation—at least partially—or remove yourself. For example, when a dysfunctional organ or system of your body results in disease, you'd better see a doctor sooner rather than later if you want to survive.

When families become dysfunctional, society becomes dysfunctional because the family is society's foundational unit. Alcohol, drug abuse, "workaholism," mental illness, parental neglect, indifference, abandonment, or the untimely death of a family member can contribute to personal dysfunction and dysfunctional group behavior. Even a physical disease like congestive heart failure can become so serious that significant cognitive impairment, cantankerous attitudes, and impaired interpersonal relationships result, all because the blood vessels supplying the brain are not receiving sufficient blood and oxygen for its needs. Like a genetic disease, dysfunction is frequently passed on in some form from generation to generation. Its ripples can affect society in social costs, affecting non-familial relations. They sap our energy and resources, as would a chronic disease. The extent to which a specific family dysfunction influences us depends upon the degree, timing, and context in which we received the abuse, injustice, or injury and our coping capacities.

In this article, we will gingerly, but openly, explore issues with which individuals from dysfunctional homes have to contend, and offer some suggestions that promote healing, health and happiness. I choose to write from the viewpoint of an adult child from a dysfunctional family and from a Judeo-Christian philosophy. However, the principles outlined apply powerfully to any dysfunctional relationship. For example, children from dysfunctional parents often become dysfunctional themselves. Perhaps they overcompensate and become perfectionists to earn approval. Or as adult children they can become manipulative, demanding interest fees from their divorced parents—a guilt trip, in other words.

Again, there could be a codependent friendship or workaholism—a super-demanding boss. For encouragement, let us consider some real people who experienced some degree of dysfunction in their homes as children and who, in spite of this, blessed the world with their presence.

COURAGE-BUILDING STORIES

When Eleanor Roosevelt was born, her gorgeous socialite mother, Anna, marveled that she could...
When Eleanor was eight, her mother died, and her father’s alcoholism prevented his caring for her. While under the care of a strict but concerned grandmother, she was exposed to two mentally ill relatives. One was an alcoholic uncle who would shoot at the neighbors and their children. For Eleanor’s protection, her grandmother sent her to boarding school as soon as possible. Homely as Eleanor was, even in her twenties her loveliness of personality was evident as she reached out to help the poor. Although betrayed in her marriage, distressed by a controlling mother-in-law, and struggling with depression, she persistently espoused social rights. Yes, indeed, Americans owe a lot to this daughter of a dysfunctional home, as she advocated the rights of the poor, the unfortunate, and women.

How about Winston Churchill? Although his parents provided for his physical needs, they were not there for him emotionally. They would often be away when he went home on vacation from his boarding school. In spite of his heavy drinking, smoking, and bouts of depression, God used him to save Western Europe from Hitler.

As a child, Dorie Van Stone’s mother would put her into a drawer and then close it. Eventually she left Dorie at an orphanage, where a lesbian matron sexually abused her. At age 14, she entered a foster system that moved her from one home to another, where she was almost always abused. Fortunately, before she left the orphanage, this little terror of a teenager heard about and accepted the love of God. As a young lady, she finally located her father. However, her joy was short-lived, for, unfortunately, he too rejected her. But in spite of all this, for decades she has been a successful, warm, and sometimes jubilant motivational speaker and missionary.

HOW TO SURVIVE

Maybe you happen to be one of those “good” troubled youth. Or perhaps you were one that got into trouble a lot. Maybe you are middle-aged and still hear critical voices from the past shouting into your psyche, maligning your genuine accomplishments. Or perhaps in your work you almost daily come in contact with the hurting and the deprived. What solace do you have to offer? What spiritual dynamics need to be recognized before you can offer the gospel to these suffering ones? Maybe God is calling you to be a mentoring mom or dad. If any of these situations apply to you, I would like to suggest to you five life-giving principles to speed your healing or help others who come from dysfunctional homes.

PRINCIPLE ONE: BEWARE OF BIRD’S NESTS

There is an old adage that says, “You can’t prevent birds from flying over your head, but you can prevent them from making nests in your hair.” This holds true for negative automatic thinking that is fueled by relational dysfunctionality. Their actions set up distorted thought patterns and emotional auras that contribute to depression, uncontrollable anger and rage, and paralyzing anxiety. Here are some detrimental patterns of thinking we need to recognize and replace if we are going to progress.

- **Personalization:** In this distorted thought pattern we assume the blame for a problem outside of our responsibilities or capabilities. When parents divorce, for example, children often blame themselves. I know that when my mom became mentally ill, I thought, If I had washed the dishes and cleaned my room, she wouldn’t have suffered this mental illness. If I had been a better daughter, this wouldn’t have happened.

  Perhaps Danny Smith’s parents are separated. Mr. Smith promised to take his son camping but doesn’t show. Danny thinks, He didn’t show again. Guess I don’t count! So when someone disappoints him as an adult, Danny thinks, I don’t count and spirals down into deep depression. When he can’t take this contempt any longer, he lashes out in anger or perhaps resorts to addictions. These are examples of unwarranted personalizations.

  This and any other kind of distorted thinking pattern is dangerous in that it usurps the true value that God places on us. The healing answer is: “The Scriptures reveal that God wants you, He loves you, and He has chosen you. (3) This love, if accepted, is powerful enough to satisfy all love hunger. Of course, it takes time for increasing maturity to realize the possibilities of this healing love.

- **Labeling** is a kind of jumping to conclusions in which a parent applies a negative term to a complex situation. Sammy fails math. His parents assume that Sammy is “lazy.” Don’t get me wrong. As a teacher, I know laziness and procrastination contribute to poor grades. Perhaps, though, there are other contributing factors—distractions, discouragement, individual learning-styles, and others. All of these need to be explored. It is much more accurate to say, “Sammy has problems with math,” than to call him “stupid.” Or maybe, someone refers to his own father as “my old man, the drunk.” But the father is much more; he is a human being. He needs to be treated with respect. Loving respect usually, sometimes slowly and even awkwardly, awakens respect in others.

  **Selective filtering** is another distorted thinking pattern that must be recognized and replaced before any healing can be maintained. In this cognitive distortion, a person focuses on one aspect, usually negative, to the exclusion of the positive. To continue our scenario, Sammy’s parents focus on his poor math grades without praising him for his good
Dysfunctional Relationships: How to Survive and Thrive

http://www.wildwoodhealth.org/index.php/mental-health/193-dysfunc...
dwell on past hurts. For this reason, I cannot accept the advice of some counselors who suggest that I chronologically record the hurtful events of my life. If one does this, positive memories or present opportunities are lost—and one is lost in a graveyard of sadness, for “by beholding we become changed.” (5)

However, to a very real extent, the past helps to shape the present, and the present the future. As children we learned lessons, which are seldom obliterated. Consciously or subconsciously, negative events can motivate us toward a stunted, suspicious manner. We develop strategies of protection that subtly rob our integrity and sabotage many of our contributions to society. It is therefore imperative that we are open to learning from the past. I like the way David prayed if I can paraphrase the literal Hebrew, “Lord, search my heart, to see if there be any anger, pain, or anxiety in me—that could accumulate in wickedness in me.” (6) We might have survived the past, but we can’t live—really live—in the present until we forgive those who have hurt us. (7) In true forgiveness I must reject the devaluation that the offender or abuser has placed on me. In its place, I must accept God’s estimation of me. He sees my weakness and wickedness as well as my strengths and successes. Because He sees all and it is His very nature to love, I can accept His unconditional love. (8)

Still, forgiveness and respect don’t mandate that we absolve our parents from their accountability. By all accounts, Bill Ginglen, was an upstanding citizen—a former Marine, a loving husband, a devoted father and grandfather. “Then on August 19, 2004, Jared, a Peoria, Illinois, police officer, read a story in the paper about a series of bank robberies in another part of the state. ‘The description just oddly matched my father to a T,’ Jared says. ‘The description of the vehicle—the getaway car—was the same vehicle my father drove. And he spends time over in that area.’ As he continued reading, he noticed that the newspaper story referenced a website set up by local police authorities that contained surveillance photos of one of the robberies. ‘Just to clear up my own mind, I decided to go look to be sure that it wasn’t he,’ Jared says. ‘But it was.’ Jared immediately called his brothers.” (9) They made a heart-wrenching decision to turn their Dad in to the authorities. They didn’t want anybody to get hurt.

We must hold our family members accountable when they have committed a crime, even a crime against us. To not report childhood abuse, sexual abuse, or physical abuse because it is one’s family member—is irresponsible. Mothers who ignore their abusive husbands injuring or molesting their children jeopardize the lives of their children and sacrifice the self-respect and integrity of everyone involved. The dysfunction will only accrue terrible interest rates until we heartily face it.

Forgiveness also doesn’t necessarily mean reconciliation. If our parents frequently put us down, we need to recognize that this is their problem. We are not obligated to require their acceptance. If we always try to win their approval, it sets us up for defeat. However, an occasional overture in form of a letter, call, or phone visit might eventually lead to some healing. And forgiveness certainly does not mean a superficial acceptance of a superficial apology in order to be conciliatory and escape painful memories.

**PRINCIPLE 3: DO NOT PROJECT**

Some of the attitudes I have regarding my parents can unwittingly be projected upon God and others. The promise and power of parenting must be recognized. Respect the power of parenting. In a perfect world, God designed parents to be as God to their children, to portray His character faithfully and accurately until the child can develop an independent concept of what a personal, loving God He really is. Our parents are to reflect the goodness of God. However, as a result of sin, individual or collective, even good parents fail short. Mark this point well. Whatever we think about our parents determines, to a great extent, our personal concept of God. This distortion, whether obvious or unconscious on our part, can profoundly impact our loved ones because it erodes our happiness, and contaminates our other important relationships.

Let me mention my own background again, if I may. Our parents had separated by the time I was three. Dad, however, would faithfully visit us children every Saturday, but when the divorce was final, he dropped out of sight completely and did not send any monetary support to our family. I know from my own personal experience, even while intellectually understanding and accepting the concept of God’s love, that somewhere in my core being, I subconsciously felt that, because my earthly father was indifferent to me, my heavenly Father was too. He never seemed to answer certain prayers. In these secret pockets of my soul it was as if I had certain black holes into which the grace of God never accumulated in wickedness in me.” (6) We might have survived the past, but we can’t live—really live—in the present until we forgive those who have hurt us. (7) In true forgiveness I must reject the devaluation that the offender or abuser has placed on me. In its place, I must accept God’s estimation of me. He sees my weakness and wickedness as well as my strengths and successes. Because He sees all and it is His very nature to love, I can accept His unconditional love. (8)

PRINCIPLE 4: HONOR MY FATHER AND MOTHER?

Later, I would recognize that genuine healing comes when we can discern and acknowledge how our parents negatively impacted our concept of God, and repent of projecting their deficiencies, anger, or indifference upon God. One of the first steps in this process is refusing to let what you don’t know about God shake your confidence in His love. We all use electricity, for example, but most of us don’t understand the deep scientific principles involved.

Sometimes we misplace our anger upon others. Years ago there was a colleague and supervisor that I just didn’t like or trust. When I realized that he had some of the same qualities of the distant grandfather that I lived with—all frame, frugal, avid gardener, laconic, and that subconsciously I had projected the discomfort I felt with my grandfather upon my co-worker, my relationship with him improved tremendously. Today, I regard him as a true friend and trusted advisor. I can’t help thinking that if grandfather had lived long enough, I might have had a meaningful relationship with him, also. To summarize principle three: In order for us to develop and maintain healthy relationships, we must be aware and acknowledge that we have made unhealthful transference of the negative qualities of our dysfunctional parents onto others and upon God.
Dysfunctional Relationships: How to Survive and Thrive

King Solomon observed of one who curses his father or mother that "his light will go out in time of darkness." (10) Whatever we reflect back to our parents will come back upon our heads—be it for good or for evil. "Indifferent" would be the one adjective that best summarizes my parents during our teen years. Although my mother was at first patient and gentle, by the time my twin sister and I entered our adolescence, my mother had developed paranoid schizophrenia. She thought we children were actually spies. Not only blinds and curtains covered the many windows of our house, but also blankets snuffed out any possible penetrating light. Mom was indifferent, incapable, scary, and embarrassing. As a teenager I was ashamed of my mom, and didn’t want to be seen with her. Clean, but unkempt in appearance, she would gyrate from the tactile hallucinations she felt. What teenager wants to go out and eat at a restaurant with her mother jerking and moving because she thought that someone was shocking her? She was so embarrassing to be with in public. However, I gained some insightful sympathy when, as a 30-something adult, I struggled with a severe social phobia which crippled my social life for a few years. I couldn’t even walk my dog! I would venture out for only work or groceries. It is a principle of life: what measure we give to others, will eventually in some way be reflected back upon us. Any contempt with which we have regarded our parents will surely come back to us.

Another point to consider is, even if we cannot respect our parents as being deserving, we can respect them as human beings. We can also honor our parents by stopping the cycle of contempt—even self-contempt caused by an unhealthy sense of shame.

Few, if any, individuals who come from a dysfunctional home themselves, have their lives together by age 30. So why should we condemn our parents so harshly for the mistakes they made? This isn’t to say we can’t hold them accountable for their actions, confront them, and express our anger to them—if it would be wise. However, in doing so, we want to exercise sympathy for their childhood development, the conditions they had to endure.

Elaborating more on my parent’s separation when I was three—the separation, as I mentioned before wasn’t too bad, because Dad visited every Saturday—faithfully. When the divorce was final, however, (we twins were eleven) he dropped out of sight—no visits, no letters, no calls, no financial support—only Christmas and birthday presents. Eventually, we made contact. Decades later, I discovered he really had had a hard decision to make—to support his mom and provide her nursing care or support his two children. He knew my mother worked (until her mental illness took over) and further, that my mother’s dad would provide for us. So we really didn’t lack any food, clothing, school supplies, or shelter.

When I was in my early forties, he also paid for my speech therapy for several years. When he died, my sister and I inherited a reasonable sum of money. Having subsequently experienced financial difficulties myself, I can better understand the dilemma that he faced as a young man. He had made a hard decision, and later paid his dues to me. I discovered that he had written to us, but apparently my mom had destroyed his letters to me. Though our relationship was rocky at times, I still do miss him. As I grow older, and learn more of the situation as it really was at the time, rather than how I perceived it, I no longer judge his behavior. As for mom, I would learn that schizophrenia was not only a mental disease, but also a brain disease that could cause damage to certain key structures in the brain. Therefore, her capacity to love and relate to her children was, to a large degree, determined by mental illness, not necessarily of her own choice.

I want to be crystal clear. There is no excuse, for abuse, alcohol addiction, or, worse yet, heartless abandonment. Still, there can be many underlying factors that contribute to various abusive behaviors, and these need to be recognized and sufficiently dealt with for the children’s resulting dysfunction to be overcome.

We also need to consider that even dysfunctional parents can make genuine contributions to society. Take, for example, Abraham Lincoln. His father was such a hard taskmaster, even physically slapping his son around at times. Lincoln developed a significant sense of serious self-depreciation. However, both his mother and later, his stepmother, encouraged him. By the time of his presidency, Lincoln had enough self-respect to invite his political rivals to be members of his Cabinet. To some extent, his own family life was also dysfunctional. At times his wife was mentally unbalanced and difficult. His biographers write that he was very distant toward his first two sons. When his second son died, he soon became overindulgent to a serious fault with his last two sons. (11) This moderately dysfunctional dad, subject to difficulties, still did much to help his nation stop its expansion of slavery and later proclaimed its abolition in the South. My point is that, even in dysfunctional families, imperfect people can make significant contributions. Abraham Lincoln is great, in part, because he cared and worked diligently in the face of obstacles—some of which came from a dysfunctional home.

How much information do we dare share? In many dysfunctional homes, children are strictly commanded to keep silent about family secrets, never divulging them under any circumstances. This degree of secrecy stifles complete mental and emotional maturity. We grow maximally when we are accepted with truth and grace. This does not happen when we totally conceal our pain and injury from others. (12) Although we are confused and hurting, some little kernel of courage within us leads us to try to learn from pain. Then our agonizing experience will not be totally in vain. This benefit requires wrestling with great themes of life. At times, for us to be healed, we need an advisor that is on our side, someone who can validate our suffering. It is usually best to proceed gradually—testing the waters, so to speak—with a trained counselor, pastor, or a friend who can be objective as well as keep confidences.

After we have gained insight and peace, we can share what we have learned to encourage others. Nonetheless, unless a crime has been committed, we do well to guard the reputations of our parents. We do not want to broadcast
all the nasty details of abuse to anyone and everyone unwisely, or exaggerate our parents' weaknesses and indiscretions.

**PRINCIPLE 5: LEARN TO ACCEPT YOURSELF**

Usually when significant trauma happens in a child's life, it leaves him vulnerable to stunted growth and development in important areas of life. These areas must be acknowledged, accepted, and corrected before one has total freedom from his parents' blunders. But no one can achieve his best growth unless he is within a sphere of acceptance. The love of God provides this acceptance, even when our parents have rejected or ignored us. He says, I will not cast out anyone who comes to me. To the extent we refuse to acknowledge and squelch the undeveloped parts of our character, our personalities will never totally be integrated in love and integrity.

On the average, children have certain psychological tasks to master approximately every two years. Any grade-school teacher can tell you those aged 11 to 13 are in a very important stage of social development. So if a father, for example, deserts the family when his daughter is within that age group, that daughter, as an adult, might be stunted in social aspects in her life as an adult. Understanding the stages of childhood development, then, can be a useful tool and a valid approach to helping adult children of dysfunctional homes achieve integration and well-adjusted lives. In other words, if as children we didn't learn a particular psychological task, such as trust, determination, industry, purpose, courage, or initiative, we will have to acknowledge our deficits and patiently work upon them as adults. (13)

Frequently, as children pass through different stages of development, they have fear, anxiety, anger, or sadness, and it is better for them to be taught how to express their emotions, positive or negative, rather than bottle them up inside. They need guidance to progress into constructive thoughts and actions. If their parents are wise and available, the children learn healthful ways of coping. When parents are unavailable, indifferent, or angered by their children's needs, and these needs are left unaddressed, the children's personality is not fully developed or integrated. Then the emotions of fear, anxiety, or depletion often result in addictions (to ease the pain) or even psychosomatic disease.

For example, uncontrollable fear, devastating anger, and harmful habits and addictions are rooted in the limbic system (as the middle portion of the brain that is concerned with lower emotions is called). One may be either aware or unaware of these manifestations. If emotional pain, anger, confusion, and depression are kept inside, they often trigger disease, especially when they become attitudes. For example, anxiety and major depression increase pro-inflammatory agents that fuel chronic diseases. An epidemiological study has shown that severe bouts of anger are reported significantly more often than expected during the hour preceding myocardial infarction. (14) Other studies show that anxiety, impatience, and depression can increase the risk of even otherwise healthy men developing hypertension. (15)

As some investigators believe, expression of such emotions to a wise counselor can help to transfer pain from the emotional and imaginative right side of the brain to the logical left side and also somewhat to the frontal brain. When a person is able to verbalize the situation and clarify it, he can start solving some problems. It is like the long-worded math problems most of us never enjoyed in high school. To solve the problem, you need to sort out the information pertinent to defining the problem, eliminate what you don't know, and have resources available to look up what you forgot. An effective counselor might be compared with a good math teacher. He doesn't solve the problems, but helps provide the tools with which you can solve it. Reflective thinking, applying Biblical principles to one's situation, and pouring out our hearts to God, will help our frontal brain to process our problems successfully. It is the frontal brain, in cooperation with God, which enables us to focus, discern, and forgive.

However, just to express unbridled emotion for the sake of doing so, can be dangerous because expression deepens impression. What we say reacts back on our brain and in our minds more powerfully many times, than if left unsaid. It strengthens the circuit of anger and depression. It is when we express emotions in a safe environment to a godly counselor who distinguishes between giving wise sympathy and enabling crippling self-pity, that one can receive help. Expression by itself doesn't necessarily heal; it is the connection, the support, the respect, and the perspectives that help to change and heal us.

Having said this, though, even legitimate needs can deteriorate into selfish, unrealistic demands. Legitimate needs can easily be degraded into uncontrollable selfishness as is seen when an adult child blames his parents' divorce for his unhappiness as an adult and plunges into a self-destructive addiction. As important as childhood environment is, the will, strengthened by wise choices, contributes even more to adult happiness.

**MEET NEEDS IN A HEALTHY WAY**

There are many ways God can help us mature and meet needs healthfully. One is to find a father or mother in Israel (a mentor) to befriend us. They will teach you how to struggle fearfully, but bravely, with life's difficulties and unexpected problems. Many limitations can be overcome by teamwork, even those from childhood deprivations due to growing up in a dysfunctional family.

In His church, God has provided us with families, with friends who stick closer than blood brothers. These individuals can help to mitigate the effects of our troubled past. By becoming involved with children or adolescents, we can become more acquainted with ourselves and develop in the areas in which we need to grow. Teaching part time at a grade school has sharpened my perception of my own defects that needed to be remedied. Certain events there sometimes remind me of how I felt as a child or teenager, and perhaps those emotions tap into a current dilemma. Many times I rejoiced over my and my students' taking leaps into maturity. Almost every time I correct or discipline, a still small voice till the fallow ground of my heart.
A word of caution here: God’s church is also a hospital for sinners. Choose your mentors wisely, and look for one person to take the place of your mom, dad, or family. Be careful not to fall into a co-dependent relationship, where you get your self-worth from one person, one job, and one position. Balance here is absolutely essential. You need a variety of relationships and activities to achieve optimal mental health.

Don’t expect even the best friend or mentor to take the place of the parents you should have had. They can’t. If they are wise, they won’t try. God has reserved that privilege for Himself.

TWO ABSOLUTES

Undeniably, our parents have capriciously left some of us. Perhaps a cruel mental illness took them from our embrace. Sometimes they themselves, as children, were not truly loved. Having not received love, they didn’t know how to give it. For whatever reasons, we want some absolutes. If you, as I was, are in that position, you will have to search for them as in a treasure hunt. Perhaps you will pursue a wrong trail and will have to retrace your steps. You might have to go to unknown places and endure hardships as a courageous, but tired adventurer. But the treasure is waiting for you.

As a child of a literally mentally ill mom and seemingly “deadbeat dad,” I discovered two dependable absolutes that radically changed my life for good in so many ways. In Romans 4:17, Paul describes God as “calling those things that are not as though they were.” This verse gives you the first absolute. Even if you had a cruel, or maybe an indifferent or abusive dad, God has the ability to give you, as an adult, the same benefits as if you really did have a loving, wise, and wonderful parent! This principle can be applied to any dysfunctional relationship.

Remember Dorie? She was visiting California with her daughter and a friend, when her daughter wanted to go and visit the orphanage that Dorie was in as a child. Unaware of the sexual abuse that occurred there, her daughter had heard Dorie’s interesting stories and wanted to see the place. Dorie wasn’t thrilled, to say the least, but with urging from her daughter and her friend, she consented. The orphanage had been transformed into an art museum. Occasionally, one of the orphans returned to reminisce. That person was given a special guided tour.

As the guide announced, “Now, we will go to the basement,” Dorie refused and abruptly replied that there was no need to do so. The guide gently placed her hand on Dorie’s shoulder and encouraged her. “I understand, but please come. I know what happened in that room downstairs. But come and see what it is now.”

As Dorie entered the room where so much abuse had taken place, it was totally different. Her guide explained that a terrible fire had swept through the basement, and they had had to totally remodel it. This fire seemed, in her mind, as if the justice of God had devoured the abusive years meted out to so many young orphans and had validated their pain.

Perhaps you, too, have haunting memories of a variety of abuse or neglect. When I think of Dorie’s experience, I marvel in the truth of another verse, made especially for you. First Corinthians 1:28 says, “God has chosen the things which are not to bring to naught things that are.” The second absolute, then, is that God will create future events—people you do not presently know, places you haven’t been, capabilities you do not presently possess. He will create successive scenarios that will eventually nullify the detrimental effects of any abuse, neglect, or rejection you might have received in your family or from society. Like the fire that destroyed the room of Dorie’s abuse, God will destroy the effects of the abuse in your life, validate your pain, and in its place create a beautiful monument.

He has done this in my life to a large extent. I know God will continue to satisfy the demands of my craving soul. He will do that for you also. Skeptical? Raging? Hopeless? Whatever you feel, wherever you are, He understands and will definitely help you. This vertical connection with God is as vital as any horizontal connections with other human beings. With God we can, as the psalmist encourages us, “pour out our hearts at all times.” (Psalm 62:8) And it is only God who can satisfy all the needs of a longing soul. In Him and with Him we can find peace, hope, love, healing from the past, and courage in the present.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEDICAL</th>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>SEMINARS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle Center</td>
<td>Proclaim</td>
<td>Wildwood Seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital &amp; Clinic</td>
<td>Institute of Medical Ministry</td>
<td>Annual Seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Consultations</td>
<td>College of Health Evangelism</td>
<td>Church Wellness Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildwood Health Retreat</td>
<td>L.I.G.H.T.</td>
<td>Upcoming Health Emphasis Weekends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Marjorie Memorial Service</td>
<td></td>
<td>2011 Medical Seminar Registration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Nuts are one of the best plant sources of protein. They are rich in fiber, phytounitrients and antioxidants such as Vitamin E and selenium. Nuts are also high in plant sterols and “good” fats - but mostly, heart-friendly monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.

Researchers have found that people who eat nuts regularly have a lower risk of heart disease. In 1996, the Iowa Women’s Healthy Study found that women who ate nuts more than 4 times a week were 40% less likely to die of heart disease. Furthermore, potential heart health benefits of nuts were also found among men. Cross-sectional studies show that frequent nut consumption has been associated with lower markers of inflammation. That is important because inflammation fuels chronic diseases. Diets that daily include walnuts and even a single meal containing walnuts can improve the ability of the blood vessels to dilate appropriately.

Because nuts are high in calories, limit your intake to 1 to 2 oz of unsalted nuts per day. Although many people are hesitant to eat nuts because they are high in fat, eating nuts can provide a sense of fullness or satisfaction that actually causes you to eat less of other high-calorie, high fat foods. Studies show that eating a modest amount of nuts during the week helps in weight management.

References


Stress Buster: Crime Scene Investigation at Wildwood

Written by Elizabeth J. Hall

In a one-word definition the sympathetic division yells, “FIRE!” The sympathetic nervous system operates in emergencies – which happens everyday. Stress of any kind activates it. The well-known “fight-or-flight” response when confronted with sudden fear or a stressor is caused by increased activity of the sympathetic nervous system. Effects of stimulation to this system include:

- A rapid heart beat.
- Increased blood pressure due to decreased vasodilation.
- Slowed digestion due to slower peristalsis.
- Enhanced mental activity.

DANGERS

Excessive sympathetic nervous stimulation promotes arteriosclerosis in several different ways. For example, it makes the blood vessels stiff and reduces the capacity of the blood vessels to dilate in other ways. Overeating increases sympathetic outflow to the kidneys, heart, skeletal muscles, and blood vessels. All of these factors increase the risk for hypertension and arteriosclerosis. But that is not all; sympathetic nervous stimulation reduces the threshold for the development of electrical disturbances in the heart rate and rhythm. An overactive sympathetic nervous system also promotes inflammation throughout the body that contributes and sustains chronic diseases.

THE BALANCING ACT

The parasympathetic nervous system involved in the activities of daily living under normal, everyday conditions – the non-emergencies if you like. It has the effect of doing the opposite of the sympathetic system. The pupils constrict, as do the bronchioles, the heart rate slows but the secretion of digestive juices and processes increase, and bowel and bladder can empty. For health we need a balance between these two systems.

MENTAL STRESS IS NOT THE WHOLE STORY

An overactive sympathetic system with possible underactive parasympathetic nervous stimulation is commonly seen during sleep deprivation and overeating and in the following conditions: obesity, fibromyalgia, metabolic syndrome, and elevated lipids (elevated cholesterol, LDL, and triglycerides). Fibromyalgia is an increasingly recognized chronic pain illness, characterized by widespread musculoskeletal aches. The metabolic syndrome is a condition characterized by four of the following: obesity (including pot-belly fat), high blood pressure, high blood lipids, reduced ability to handle glucose, inflammatory problems, and increased risk of forming blood clots. Individuals who have these problems especially need to learn how to reduce stress. Even survivors of heart attacks who have reduced parasympathetic tone are twice as more likely to die than those who have normal parasympathetic tone.
A MAJOR STRESS BUSTER

I would like to introduce the first great principle of stress-busting relief this way. I live in a rural county in Georgia, USA. Dade County is remarkable at hosting a wide variety of individuals. Can you believe that this county which seceded from the United States during the Civil War did not rejoin it until 1947! We have our share of intellectual individuals and red necks. About 20 years ago I was assisting a teacher here named Mrs. Brown in a small country school. That particular year we had fifteen students with sixty-six personalities.

Now Mrs. Brown was something else. In her younger days, a definite 'Southern Belle'—good looks, poise, winsome with a lovely soprano voice - she seldom became ruffled under stress. Well, for several weeks we had detected the strong odor of a dead animal wafting around the classroom. We looked for it but, after thorough searching, couldn't find it and so concluded it must be somewhere outside under the dense foliage in the nearby woods that lay directly behind the school.

And so the odor persisted when on a particular spring day, I returned to the school. Unfortunately, I had left my keys to the school at my house and, finding the school door locked, I knocked. Shortly Mrs. Brown came to the door looking as white as a sheet of paper, while the excited cries from the children met my ears: "Miss Hall, Miss Hall, there is a dead man in the basement! We saw him!!" I turned to Mrs. Brown, who refused to venture downstairs into the kitchen where the body lay.

Visibly shaken, she informed me that she had called the campus maintenance men to investigate. Now I knew her marbles were really being shaken. The campus maintenance men and not the sheriff! I could see her reasoning in keeping the children in the school as their parents were at work. But the campus maintenance men? We could be waiting for hours because they were usually slow and hadn't been told the nature of the problem, just "You will see the emergency when you get here." It had been two hours already. Finally, after much whispered discussion, two of the more daring teenagers in the class stealthily tiptoed down the basement steps, gingerly opened the previously slammed shut door to the kitchen, peered in, and then thundered back upstairs. "Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Brown! There is no dead man. That's a dummy!"

Then I remembered that I had placed a manikin down there several weeks prior to my trip home as I wanted to teach a simple hydrotherapy treatment in my basic health class. Needless to say, it was at least a month before Mrs. Brown fully forgave me.

My point is that imaginary stress can produce many of the same effects as real stress. So, one of the cardinal principles of stress management is to distinguish between real and imaginary stress. We don't have to live in the dread arising from imaginary stress.
Want to Prevent a Stroke? Check This.

Written by Wildwood Health

Want to Prevent a Stroke? Check This.

In a systematic review and a meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies consisting 317,540 participants, researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health studied the association between depression and risk of total and subtypes of stroke participants. Pooled analysis showed that depression was associated with:

- 45 percent increased risk for total stroke
- 55 percent increased risk for fatal stroke
- 25 percent increased risk for strokes resulting from when the blood supply to a portion of brain has been interrupted or obstructed.

It should be noted that depressed individuals often have difficulty in incorporating good lifestyle practices. Also depression increases the risk for undesirable clotting by increasing platelet stickiness.

Unfortunately, it also substantially reduces blood flow to the front brain.
