



Personal growth is vital to change

As the New Year gives us another opportunity to “do better this year”, the key to any change is action. In taking actions we haven’t taken before, we see results we haven’t seen before – resulting in personal growth.

Personal growth is a process that relates to self-improvement and the acquisition of skills. Far from being an “airy-fairy” concept made popular in hundreds of self-help books, personal growth is about looking at your life as you go along and determining which areas you would like to improve upon – work, relationships, lifestyle.

Firstly, it’s important to know that we can change – and that change does not have to be massive. Small, daily changes can bring about huge results: Imagine you want to stop smoking and you currently smoke around two cigarettes an hour. Deciding to wait just one hour between smokes can drop your current rate by half, without being the enormous change that stopping altogether would be.

The time between smokes could be extended by ten minutes every couple of days, until eventually you will be smoking around five cigarettes a day. The big question – that only you can answer – is: What do you want to change?

If you’re not sure, ask yourself a few more questions:

- Do you like where you are and what you have become?
- Have you ever wished that your life was different?
- Can your relationship improve?
- Are you producing the results that you want at work?
- What makes you feel good?
- Why do you do what you do?
- What triggers you to produce your behaviour?
- How do you reach the top rung and achieve success?

The good news is that change doesn’t have to be difficult - and personal growth is the payoff that comes with it. However, what it does require is commitment and action. Once you have decided what you’d like to change, make a list of the actions you will need to take in order to effect the change.

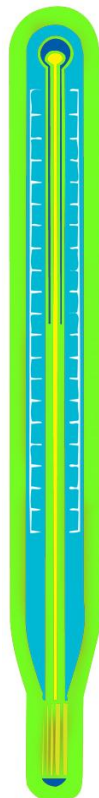
Don’t be afraid to ask for help, but remember – don’t go to a tractor dealer to buy a sports car! Choose a mentor or an advisor who has successfully implemented the

changes you want to make, and take the same actions they took to get where they are.

With a whole new year ahead, make a commitment to yourself to change something in your life you’re not happy with. Decide, commit and take action. You have nothing to lose but your unhappiness.

Make this year the year that you achieve that goal, reach that dream, feel fantastic about your life.

About those regular checkups...



Call it “taking your physical temperature”: Regardless of your age, it’s wise to get a checkup on a regular basis. Numerous medical studies prove that people who are seen regularly by a physician tend to be healthier overall than people who aren’t.

Even if you are young, vibrant, and in good health, regular visits mean:

- Having your vaccinations – like the flu shot – on time and avoiding serious illness
- Appropriate screening tests for your age - for example sexually active women, regardless of age, should be getting a regular Pap smear to test for cervical cancer and men aged 40 and up should be checked for prostate problems
- Risk factors like high cholesterol or high blood pressure can be identified early and reduce your chances of disease
- An established a relationship with your doctor, which makes it easier to discuss issues you may find embarrassing or hard to talk about

As you age you’ll need to visit more frequently, depending on the screening tests you need and the medical issues you have. If you need to see a specialist, get a recommendation from your doctor. Keep a record of your medical history, and always take a list of the medication you’re taking when you see a new doctor.

Just as taking your temperature can allow you to deal with a fever, regular checkups give you a fighting chance against illness.

As I grow older, I pay less attention to what men say. I just watch what they do.



- Andrew Carnegie

QUICK QUIZ

Test your diabetes knowledge

How much do you know about Type 2 diabetes? The disease has risk factors that can be changed, and those that can't. Fill in the missing words to see if you know enough to prevent or recognise diabetes in yourself or your family:

Risk factors that cannot be changed:

1. A family - - - - - of diabetes
2. Age - the risk - - - - - as we get older
3. Are from certain - - - - - backgrounds
4. Women who have given birth to a child over this size:
5. Women who have Polycystic Ovarian - - - - -

Risk factors that can be changed:

6. Lifestyle and - - - - - cigarettes
7. Carrying excess - - - - -
8. Raising your level of physical - - - - -
9. Monitoring - - - - blood pressure and cholesterol
10. Watching the type of - - - - - we eat

Check your answers below - and pass on the fact that some risk factors CAN be changed!

BE AMAZED BE AMAZED BE AMAZED BE

50 000 of the cells in your body will die and be replaced with new cells - all while you have been reading this sentence!



Sports for kids

Playing sport can help your child develop social skills, learn how to be part of a team, achieve goals, take responsibility and gain confidence - all assisting with his or her emotional growth.

It's also a great way of keeping them fit, of course. With childhood obesity levels rising annually, taking part in a sporting activity is a great way to make sure your child is getting the exercise he or she needs.

Consider tennis, athletics, dance, ice skating, cycling, swimming and the country's favourite, soccer. Your local gym will usually have a heated pool for winter exercise, and schools and recreation centres can assist with coaching of various sports.

Beating bugs: Hygiene helps!

Hygiene refers to the practice of good habits that minimise the risk of infection and maintain overall good health.

Did you know that until 1900, childbirth was the leading killer of women? But once physicians started to wash their hands routinely, the number of women dying during childbirth plummeted dramatically!

Some defense against infection is out of our control. However, what we can control to a large degree is the picking up and passing on of germs that can be minimised by hand-washing.

Flu and other sickness is often passed on by picking up the same telephone that an infected person just used, or shaking hands with someone who



has the germs on their hands.

Hygiene in the office

Because many of us share offices, it's important to reduce our risk of contracting illness by practicing good hygiene:

- Wash your hands - often!
- Wipe down your telephone and keyboard periodically with a dab of disinfectant on a cloth
- Give door handles a quick wipe, especially during flu season
- Dispose of used tissues properly and don't leave them lying on desks

A clean office is a healthier office . . . don't let clutter attract dust and set off allergies!

While there's no need to become obsessed with germs, it is important to keep your office hygienic. Good office hygiene can help stop the spread of illness.

- 1 - history
- 2 - increases
- 3 - ethnic
- 4 - 9lbs/4.5kgs
- 5 - Syndrome
- 6 - smoking
- 7 - weight
- 8 - activity
- 9 - high
- 10 - food

QUICK QUIZ ANSWERS

FAST FOOD FACT



Peas help to steady blood sugar levels in the body. They are also the richest food source of vitamin B1 and may also help to reduce heart disease risk. The pea was also the first vegetable to be frozen, bringing year-round goodness.



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPAEDIA

CIRRHOSIS

Cirrhosis is a condition of permanent liver damage caused most commonly by alcohol and viral hepatitis. Many complications can ensue and treatment may ultimately involve liver transplant.

Alternative Names

- :: Alcoholic cirrhosis
- :: Liver failure
- :: Liver cirrhosis

What is it?

Cirrhosis is a condition where the liver is damaged and scarred due to alcohol, infections, and other conditions. It is usually a serious, progressive and permanent condition.

Cirrhosis is a fairly common and very serious condition, being among the top ten causes of death from disease in the developed world.

Causes

The liver, the largest organ in the body, is essential in keeping the body functioning properly. It removes or neutralises poisons from the blood, produces immune agents to control infection, and removes germs and bacteria from the blood. It makes proteins that regulate blood clotting and produces bile to help absorb fats and fat-soluble vitamins. You cannot live without a functioning liver.

Cirrhosis has many causes but most common are:

- **Alcoholic liver disease.** Alcoholic cirrhosis usually develops after over a decade of heavy drinking. The amount of alcohol that can injure the liver varies greatly from person to person. In women, as few as two to three drinks a day have been linked with cirrhosis and in men, as few as three to four drinks a day.
- **Chronic hepatitis C.** causes inflammation and low-grade damage to the liver that, over several decades, can lead to cirrhosis.
- **Chronic hepatitis B.** Probably the most common cause of cirrhosis in undeveloped countries. Hepatitis B, like hepatitis C, causes liver inflammation and injury that

over several decades can lead to cirrhosis.

Diagnosis

Many people with cirrhosis have no symptoms in the early stages. However, as scar tissue replaces healthy cells, liver function starts to fail and a person may experience the following symptoms:

- Fatigue, weakness
- Loss of appetite, nausea
- Weight loss
- Jaundice

As the disease progresses, complications may develop.

Examination and blood tests:

On examination, the liver may feel hard, the patient may be jaundiced (yellow), and there may be other features of liver failure. Blood tests can confirm abnormal liver function, Hepatitis infection, and other associated problems (e.g. signs of alcohol abuse, clotting/bleeding problems)

Imaging: The doctor may order a computerised tomography (CT) scan or ultrasound, or look at the liver via a laparoscope inserted through the abdomen that relays pictures to a computer screen.

A liver biopsy will confirm the diagnosis. For a biopsy, the doctor uses a needle to take a small sample of tissue from the liver, and then examines it for scarring or other signs of disease.

Treatment

Treat the cause: Liver damage from cirrhosis cannot be reversed, but treatment can stop or delay progression and reduce complications. Treatment depends on cause and any complications: Cirrhosis caused by alcohol abuse is treated by abstaining from alcohol. Treatment for hepatitis-related cirrhosis involves medications to treat the type of hepatitis. Treatment for cirrhosis resulting from other diseases will depend on the underlying cause.

Avoid alcohol: In all cases, following a healthy diet and avoiding alcohol are essential as alcohol will lead to more liver damage. Treatment will also include various remedies for any complications.

Liver transplant: When complications can't be controlled or the liver is so damaged that it stops functioning, a liver transplant is necessary. A diseased liver is removed and replaced with a healthy one from an organ donor. About 80-90 per cent of people survive transplantation due to new drugs, which suppress the immune system and keep it from damaging the new liver.

Outcome

The course of the disease, and the occurrence of complications, varies greatly, but sadly, many sufferers continue to drink alcohol, making the prognosis quite poor.

Pomegranates linked to many health benefits

Drinking a daily eight ounce (0.24 litre) glass of pomegranate juice can significantly slow the progress of prostate cancer, says a study published in Clinical Cancer Research.

Scientists say the effect may be so profound that the juice may help older men outlive the disease. Pomegranates contain a cocktail of chemicals that minimise cell damage, and potentially kill off cancer cells. Pomegranate juice is known to have anti-inflammatory effects and high levels of anti-oxidants, which are believed to protect the body from damage by particles called free radicals. It also contains isoflavones, which are believed to play a role in cancer cell death.

Chris Hiley, of the Prostate Cancer Charity believes more work was needed to firm up the findings, saying: "It may well turn out that pomegranate juice has a wider application than just delaying disease progression in men with prostate cancer who have already been treated. It might also help as a reassuring low-key intervention for men whose cancer is being monitored rather than treated."

Whatever the final findings, men, women and children could do worse than having a glass of pomegranate juice every day!



BUSINESS AT ITS BEST

Increasing your Emotional Quotient

The driving force of intelligence in business has, until now, been IQ: Your Intelligence Quotient or "capacity to learn". The interesting thing is that while some people have a very high IQ, it doesn't mean that they will necessarily use it – it merely means that they have the ability to learn, should they apply themselves.

This century will see EQ – Emotional Quotient - development taking centre stage for those determined to lead balanced, successful lives. This "new" intelligence is the heart-level engine that drives human capital and produces the exceptional, creative work required for companies to lead the field amid the turbulence of global market changes.

A comprehensive theory of EQ was proposed in 1990 by two psychologists, Peter Salovey at Yale, and John Mayer at the University of New Hampshire. They defined EQ as being able to monitor and regulate your own and others' feelings, and to use them to guide thought and action.

The important thing about your EQ is that you can change it, as it includes the following five basic emotional and social competencies:

- **Self-awareness:** Knowing what we are feeling in the moment, and using those preferences to guide your decision making; having a realistic assessment of our own abilities and a well-grounded sense of self-confidence
- **Self-regulation:** Handling your emotions so that they facilitate rather than interfere with the task at hand; recovering well from emotional distress
- **Motivation:** Using our deepest preferences to move and guide us toward our goals, to help us take initiative and strive to improve, and to persevere in the face of setbacks and frustrations
- **Empathy:** Sensing what people are feeling, being able to see their perspective, and cultivating rapport and attunement with a broad diversity of people
- **Social skills:** Handling emotions in relationships well and accurately reading social situations and networks; interacting smoothly; using these skills to persuade and lead, negotiate and settle disputes, for cooperation and teamwork.

Emotions have the potential to get in the way of our most important business and personal relationships.

Research tracking over 160 high performing individuals across a variety of industries and job levels revealed that emotional intelligence was twice as important in contributing to excellence than intellect and expertise alone.

To improve your EQ, take one of the many tests available online, or visit your local book store and ask for a reference on one of the better books on the topic.



Start living now. Stop saving the good china for that special occasion. Stop withholding your love until that special person materialises. Every day you are alive is a special occasion. Every minute, every breath, is a gift from God.

- Mary Manin Morrissey

BE AMAZED BE AMAZED

The average human body contains enough:

- Sulphur to kill all fleas on an average dog
- Carbon to make 900 pencils
- Potassium to fire a toy cannon
- Fat to make seven bars of soap
- Phosphorus to make 2 200 matchheads
- Water to fill a ten-gallon tank

January 31 2008
World Leprosy Day

What is leprosy?

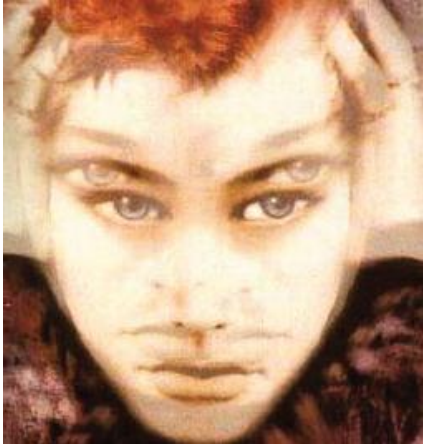
Leprosy, or Hansen's disease, is a chronic infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae*. It is primarily a granulomatous (abnormality of certain cells of the immune system) disease of the peripheral nerves and mucosa of the upper respiratory tract.

Skin lesions are the primary external symptom and, left untreated, leprosy can be progressive, causing permanent damage to the skin, nerves, limbs, and eyes.

Contrary to popular belief, leprosy does not cause body parts to simply fall off. It's a disease that has affected mankind since around 300 BC, and was well-recognised in the civilizations of ancient China, Egypt and India.

According to recent figures from the the World Health Organisation (WHO), new cases detected worldwide have decreased by approximately 107,000 cases (or 21 per cent) from 2003 to 2004. This decreasing trend has been consistent for the past three years. In addition, the global registered prevalence of HD was 286,063 cases; 407,791 new cases were detected during 2004.

World Leprosy Day is designed to increase public awareness about leprosy and to encourage donations. Consider making a donation online at one of the many sites, or through a religious organisation.



Headaches: Find and avoid your triggers

In some instances, headaches may be the result of food you're eating or activities you're performing.

To determine if you have "headache triggers", the first step is to figure out if there is a connection between your headaches and particular foods, activities, or situations. Few triggers are obvious, so a headache diary is a good tool to use when trying to figure this out.

If you find that certain foods or beverages bring on your headache, make it a priority to avoid these triggers. People with cluster headaches usually need to give up alcohol during periods when their headaches are active.

Another trigger for many people is MSG. If you get a headache after eating certain foods – Chinese food is a common one – check the MSG content of the food.

Wearing sunglasses can be effective if exposure to sunlight triggers your headaches. Make sure you buy a good pair, with UV protection.

If changes in eating and sleeping habits set off headaches, make an effort to maintain a regular schedule.

By avoiding triggers, you could succeed in reducing frequency, or perhaps eliminating headaches altogether. If they persist, though, you should consult a doctor.

The art of smart sleeping

The smallest changes can have lasting effects on your sleep habits. Many people who suffer interrupted sleep keep doing the same things and expecting different results. Want to get some smart shut-eye? Read on . . .

Declutter your sleep surroundings: Like Pavlov's dogs, humans learn to respond to environmental cues. Reinforce that your bedroom is designed for sleeping by removing the television, telephone and any office equipment.

Redecorate: An ideal sleeping environment is quiet, dark and reasonably cool, with a comfortable bed and a minimal amount of clutter. If your bedroom dazzles and you're having sleep problems, it may be time to go the neutral route with your wall colours and bedding.

Stay regular: A regular sleep schedule keeps the circadian sleep/wake cycle synchronised. People with the most regular sleep habits report the fewest problems with insomnia and the least feelings of depression. Experts advise getting up at about the same time every day, even after a late-night party or fitful sleep. Catching forty-winks during the day can also make it harder to get to sleep at night. If your goal is to sleep longer at night, sleeping during the day is a bad idea. Because your daily sleep requirement remains constant, an afternoon sleep will take away from evening sleep.

Decide now that if you wake in the night, you're going to enjoy it. Put out a teacup and a good book, and if you wake boil the kettle for some relaxing health tea. Read something light – don't tax your brain – and enjoy the time when the rest of the world is asleep. If, however, you're waking every night and it's affecting your work or health, see your doctor – there may be a treatable cause for the insomnia.

Half full or half empty?

Research shows that optimists tend to do better than pessimists when coping with stressful situations. They are more likely to put a positive spin on stressors, look for ways to make the best of a bad situation, and use problem-solving strategies to tackle difficulties.

Some studies show optimists often fare better physically, too. A long-term study of over 830 people in 2000 found that those classified as pessimists had a 19 per cent higher risk of mortality over the course of 30 years than those who were optimists.

A 10-year study of 1 300 men published in *Psychosomatic Medicine* in 2001 suggested that a sense of optimism may protect older men against developing heart disease.

If you're not a natural optimist, this information could merely

fuel your pessimism. Don't let it. Take a deep breath and relax. Evidence suggests avoiding pessimism is more important than boosting optimism. It's true that there are people with naturally sunny natures, but it's equally true that the way you handle yourself emotionally owes a great deal to nurture. With practice, your current outlook and behaviors can change for the better.

Remember, laughter really is the best medicine: Rent funny DVDs, visit comedy clubs, read amusing books, spend time with friends who make you laugh and uplift you – and embrace the absurd in daily life.



Once we believe in ourselves, we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight, or any experience that reveals the human spirit.

- e. e. cummings



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