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In the Know

Connecting Patient / Family Library Patrons To Information, Ideas and Resources

January 2004

from

The Duke Patient/Family Resource Center

The Duke Patient/Family Resource Center is:

- A lending library offering books, audio and video tapes, magazines and free brochures dealing with cancer and certain blood disorders and with issues of coping, survivorship, caregiving, and grieving
- Open 8:30 to 5:00 every day the Morris Clinics are open
- Located in the White Zone, first floor, of the Morris Cancer Clinic, Room 15123.
- Our phone number is 919-684-6955. Our email address is FamilyLibrary@mc.duke.edu

Resource Center Coordinator: [Harriet Whitehead, PhD](#)

Cancer Patient Education Program Director: [Kerry Harwood, RN, MSN](#)



New Year's Resolutions

Are you determined that this year you'll keep those New Year's resolutions? Or, have you given up even making resolutions after feeling like a failure each year by Valentine's Day? This issue of *In The Know* focuses on strategies to actually change the way your brain works, so you can get rid of bad habits or begin new and positive habits. Read on for strategies and resources to help you succeed.

Why do New Year's resolutions so rarely stick? This question, it turns out, is intriguing to renowned scientists, including Ann Graybiel, Ph.D., professor of neuroanatomy in the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr. Graybiel received the 2001 Medal of Science, acknowledging her pioneering work in understanding how the brain controls and modulates motor activity, procedural learning, and cognition. While her work is important to the understanding and treatment of many diseases, it also directly addresses the issue of how humans can make or break habits.



Ann Graybiel receives the Medal of Science from President Bush.

Habits, it appears, are learned as 'chunks' of related behaviors, in response to a trigger. When we are first learning to drive, we consciously think of every action we need to take. After years of driving, we'll automatically respond to a red light with a series of movements that we don't even think about. Learning a complex set of behaviors as a 'chunk' frees up our brains to be thinking about other things, while we perform familiar activities almost automatically. Habits, or 'chunked' behaviors, can be difficult to change. Three strategies are critical to getting rid of a habit – recognize the triggers that initiate the set of behaviors, look for ways to break up the 'chunked' behavior, and look for ways to replace the undesirable behaviors within the 'chunk' with something positive. On the other hand, new habits can be created by repeating a series of actions consistently in response to a defined trigger.

What kind of New Year's resolutions are you contemplating?
Some of the most common New Year's resolutions are:

- Quit smoking
- Lose weight
- Eat better
- Exercise more
- Reduce stress



Each of these is particularly relevant to people who've had cancer. While these lifestyle changes are good habits for everyone, cancer is often a wake-up call to not take one's health for granted. A cancer diagnosis can also be a wake-up call in other areas of one's life. What other New Year's resolutions might cancer patients be considering? Do any of these resonate with you?

- Take time for the things that are important to me and learn to say no to the things I really don't want to do
- Maintain connections with people I care about
- Work to resolve conflict with someone important to me
- Seek space and time to focus on my spiritual concerns; seek companionship on my spiritual journey

What strategies will help you succeed in 2004?

Word your resolution in a way that reflects it as a positive change you want to make. Remember, this is something you want to do. Making this change, whether it's breaking an old habit or creating a new habit, will be good for your life. Let's say your resolution is to eat a more healthy diet. Try not to think of it as 'I will never eat another French fry, potato chip, candy bar, bowl of Ben and Jerry's, or hot dog again.' Focus on the positive changes: 'This year, I'm going to explore new foods that will help my body heal and protect itself from cancer-causing exposures.'

Make a plan that makes sense for you. This is where Dr. Graybiel's work really comes into play. In making your plan, you need to think very specifically about what triggers the behaviors you are trying to change. Then, what can you do to replace those behaviors with healthier behaviors, in response to that trigger? Weed bad triggers and plant good triggers! If watching television is your trigger to pull out the potato chips and ice cream, how can you change the trigger and / or the response? You might consider cutting back on television, using that time to meet another of your resolutions (go for a walk, write a letter to a friend). Plan for your TV time with healthy snacks. Replace the chips and ice cream with

alternatives that offer crunch and sweetness, like raw veggies and grapes. Make sure they're as easy as the junk food. If you have to cut up the cauliflower during the first commercial, it's probably not going to happen! Considering cutting up the veggies as part of putting away your groceries (do it every week and pretty soon it will become a habit!).



Don't try to do it all at one time. A drastic change may feel overwhelming. If you try to make many changes at the same time, you are more likely to give up. If you make a series of small changes, you have many opportunities to succeed. Success feels good! These successes will keep you going. If your resolution is a healthier diet, start where you are and make a series of small changes. Resolve to increase your daily fruit and vegetable intake by one serving each month until you are eating 9 – 11 servings a day. Resolve to try one vegetarian recipe each week. After a few months, or maybe just weeks, you may find yourself incorporating those vegetarian dishes into your menu planning without even thinking about it!

Write it down and tell others. Write your resolutions down and post them where you'll see them often. Consider putting them in locations related to potential triggers for that behavior. Post your nutrition-related resolutions on the refrigerator. Planning to quit smoking? Put your resolution on index cards and put one everywhere you used to have an ashtray. Needing to say 'no' to some requests so you have the time and energy for your priorities? Post a 'just say no' sign by your phone! Don't keep your New Year's Resolutions a secret! Tell your friends and family about the changes you plan to make. Let them know how they can help.



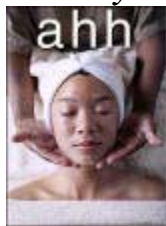
Find partners to join you. A partner can be very helpful as you work to turn a new behavior into a habit. You can encourage each other and help each other find creative strategies to succeed. Seeing or hearing that person may become the trigger for the new habit. If so, try to create an additional trigger, so if your partner bails on the New Year's Resolution, you don't lose your good habit. For example, don't rely on only that after-work phone call to trigger your walk around the block. Put out your exercise clothes or shoes before you leave in the morning so you'll have that trigger when you get home.



Keep track of your progress. Keeping a record of your progress is one way to give yourself positive feedback. Setting a goal and meeting it is wonderful for your self-esteem. Day-by-day, record

your success, whether it's vegetable servings, minutes walked, days without a cigarette, time spent doing something important to you, or letters or phone calls to loved ones. For some habits, you may want to make a graph or a chart; for others, a note in a diary or journal may be more appropriate. 'What if I'm not making progress?', you may ask. Rarely, does anyone keep their resolutions 100% of the time. Keeping a record of both progress and setbacks can help you identify factors that resulted in the setback and develop new, creative strategies for tomorrow's success.

Reward yourself.



In the same way that you want to word your resolutions positively, you also will be more likely to succeed if you find ways to reward your progress, rather than feeling deprived. For every negative behavior you take away, find something positive to replace it with. It may be a direct replacement. For example, leave sugarless candies in the locations where you used to keep your cigarettes. Find a new treat that is healthier, like fresh pineapple or macadamia nuts, and snack on those instead of former, unhealthy snacks. Or, it may be more of a reward – 'when I exercise seven days in a row, then I will set aside an hour to read, get my nails done, or watch a favorite show.'

Have coping strategies to deal with the problems that come up.

Persistence pays off. Only 40% of people who achieve their number one resolution, do it on the first try. The rest make multiple tries before they succeed. Keeping track of your progress can help you identify the problems that kept you from succeeding. Identify the barriers and figure out a better plan to help you succeed. If you can identify likely problems, you can work on coping strategies in advance. If your resolution is to quit smoking, you'll need to work with others in your household who are smokers. If your resolution is to change your diet, that will affect others, if you are cooking for the family or someone else is cooking for you. If your resolution is to resolve conflict with a loved one, you may want to consider enlisting a third party to facilitate the communication. Perhaps a clergy person or counselor – either private or through the hospital or clinic.

Resources to help you achieve your New Year's Resolutions

The Duke Cancer Patient and Family Resource Center is available to assist you with health and wellness-oriented resources. If you are looking for something beyond the resources below, feel free to contact us by phone or email.

Resources to consider when your New Year's resolution is...



...to eat a healthier diet

- § The Resource Center has numerous books available for check-out on healthy diet after cancer. Visit us for these titles, or order through your favorite bookstore:
- *Cancer and Nutrition: A Ten Point Plan to Reduce Your Risk of Getting Cancer* by Charles B. Simone, MD
 - *Cancer Survivor's Nutrition and Health Guide: Eating Well and Getting Better During and After Cancer Treatment* by Gene Spiller and Bonnie Bruce.
 - *The Complete Book of Juicing* by Michael T. Murray
 - *The Breast Cancer Prevention Diet* by Robert Arnot, MD
 - *Dr. Gaynor's Cancer Prevention Program* by Mitchell L. Gaynor, MD and Jerry Hickey
 - *What to Eat When You Don't Feel Like Eating* by James Haller
 - *What to Eat if You Have Cancer* by Maureen Keane and Daniella Chace
 - *The Cancer Recovery Eating Plan* by Daniel Nixon
 - *The Cancer Survival Cookbook* by Donna L. Weihofen

See the July 2003 *In the Know* for reviews of the last three books.

- § AICR – American Institute for Cancer Research – read and order nutrition brochures online at [Click Here](#) or call for mailed brochures at 1-800-843-8114.



...to exercise more

- § The Resource Center has several resources available for

check-out on exercise and fitness after cancer. Visit us for these titles, or order through your favorite bookstore:

Videos

- *Catherine MacRae's Gentle Fitness*
- *One Move at a Time: Exercise for Women Recovering from Breast Cancer Surgery*
- *Alicethenics: Exercises to Increase Freedom of Movement after Breast Surgery*
- *Carol Dickman's Seated Yoga*

Books

- *The Force Program: The Proven Way to Fight Cancer through Physical Activity and Exercise* by Jeff Berman
- *It's Not About the Bike: My Journey Back to Life* by Lance Armstrong

See the September 2003 *In the Know* for reviews of these resources, as well as exercise-related webpage reviews.



...to stop smoking

- § The Duke Cancer Patient Education Program can provide you with information about local smoking cessation resources. Contact us at 919/681-5288.

Helpful Websites

- [Quit Now NC!](#) (click)
Go to "Online Resources" for a county-by-county listing of smoking cessation resources. Don't neglect to scroll down!
- American Cancer Society:
1-800-ACS-2345
Click here on [Quit Smoking](#)
- American Lung Association
(800) 586-4872 or 212-315-8700
See their online smoking cessation program called [Freedom from Smoking](#) (click)
Or [Quitting Smoking](#) (click)

- National Cancer Institute Cancer Information Service
800-4-CANCER or 800-422-6237
[Q & A about Smoking](#) (click)



...to improve how I cope with stress

- § The Duke Cancer Patient Education Program can provide you with information about Duke stress management resources, as well as an interactive booklet '*Don't Let Stress Get the Best of You*'. Contact us at 919/681-5288 for information or to have a booklet mailed to you.
- § The Resource Center has several resources available for check-out on stress management. Visit us for these titles, or order through your favorite bookstore:

Audiotapes

- *Health Journeys for People Experiencing Stress* by Belleruth Naperstek
- *Health Journeys for People Undergoing Chemotherapy* by Belleruth Naperstek
- *How to Meditate: Four Classic Meditation Techniques* by Lawrence LeSham
- *Meditations for Enhancing Your Immune System* by Bernie Siegel
- *Meditations of the Heart: Classic Meditations Based on Four Noble Truths of Buddhism* by Jack Kornfield

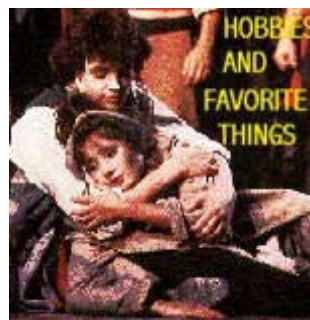
Video

- *Guided Imagery for Health and Wellness* (video) by Belleruth Naperstek

Books

- *Head First: The Biology of Hope* by Norman Cousins
- *Healing Heart: Antidotes to Panic and Helplessness* by Norman Cousins
- *Living Beyond Limits: New Hope and Help for Facing Life-Threatening Illness* by David Spiegel
- *Meditation, Imagery, and Cancer* by Barbara Wilkins
- *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life* by Jon Kabat-Zinn
- *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress and Pain* by Jon Kabat-Zinn
- *Coping with Cancer Stress* by Basil A. Stoll

...to spend more time doing the things important to me and learn to say no to things I don't want to do



- The Resource Center has several books available for check-out with strategies for living your priorities. Visit us for these titles, or order through your favorite bookstore:

Books

- *How to Say No Without Feeling Guilty: And Say Yes to More Time, and What Matters Most to You* by Patti Breitman
- *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty* by Manuel J. Smith
- *Don't Say Yes When You Want to Say No: Making Life Right When It Feels All Wrong* by Herbert Fensterheim and Jean Baer

Helpful websites

- [Stages of Learning to Say 'No'](#)
(click)
- Learning to Say No - [Arthritis Society](#) (click)

...maintain connections with people I care about and work to resolve conflict with someone important to me



§ The Resource Center has several resources available for check-out that focus on relationships. These may be helpful as you work to maintain connections or resolve conflicts. Visit us for these titles, or order through your favorite bookstore:

- *Love & Survival: The Scientific Basis for the Healing Power of Intimacy* by Dean Ornish
- *Life-Skills: 8 Simple Ways to Build Stronger Relationships, Communicate More Clearly, and Improve Your Health* by Virginia Williams
- *Anger Workbook* by Lorraine Bilodeau

§ The Cancer Patient Support Program offers short-term individual and family counseling that can be helpful in resolving conflicts or opening up avenues of communication. These services are offered at no cost to Duke cancer patients and families. Their phone number is 919-684-4497.

...seek space and time to focus on my spiritual concerns; seek companionship on my spiritual journey



§ The Resource Center has several resources available for check-out that focus on spiritual issues. These may be helpful to you on your spiritual journey. Visit us for these

titles, or order through your favorite bookstore:

- *Cancer And Faith: Reflections On Living* by John Carmody
- *He Cares, He Comforts* by Corrie Ten Boom
- *On Wings of Light: Meditations for Awakening to the Source* by Joan Borysenko
- *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* by Harold Kushner
- *When God Doesn't Make Sense* by James Dobson
- *Who Needs God* by Harold Kushner
- *Why Me, Why This, Why Now: A Guide To Answering Life's Toughest Questions* by Robin Norwood
- *Wrestling With The Angel: A Memoir of My Triumph over Illness* by Max Lerner

Practice of New Year's resolutions is over 4,000 years old and began with the Babylonians, who believed that what a person does on the first day of a new year will affect them throughout the year.

Millennia later, we are still trying to get it right!

Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2004!

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