

FAMILY LIVING IDEAS

November 2005

Are You As Good As You Will Ever Be

When we hear the phrase "character education" we usually think of the responsibility and opportunity of parents and primary school teachers to teach young children the difference between right and wrong and inspire them to choose what is right.

But what about older children, young adults and even mature professionals? Is there a time when a person's character has been formed, when the clay, so malleable in early youth, hardens like stone and character education becomes futile? Lots of people think so, not only about other people but about themselves.

While working to integrate ethical decision-making strategies into police and military academies, I've seen conclusive evidence that this notion of a fully developed or fixed character is not only wrong, but wasteful. Character development is a lifelong process and all humans have the capacity to be better today than they were yesterday.

Police and military academies explicitly recognize that good moral character is as vital as competence. And while they try to select only young people of sterling character, they don't leave it at that. In fact, a large portion of their training is designed to instill or enhance moral qualities associated with good character — and it works!

And it's not that hard. Guided discussions, simulations and supervised field experiences all can be used to generate attitudes and habits that make new officers more committed to honesty; better able to control negative impulses; more willing to treat people — even ones they don't like — with respect; more diligent, thorough and accurate; and more likely to summon the moral courage to do the right thing even when it may be personally costly. This is simply high-level character education.

So what about you? Are you as good as you will ever be?

Source: Michael Josephson, Josephson Institute of Ethics

Easy, rider

Motorcycles are more popular than ever in the U.S., and the age of the average rider has gone up. At the same time, helmet use has gone down. Here are the latest stats:

There were about 9 million motorcyclists in the U.S. in 2004, up by more than one-third since 1997.

Nearly 4,000 Americans died on motorcycles in 2004—85% more than in 1997.

About 9% of all motor-vehicle fatalities occur on motorcycles (up from 5% in 1997).

The median age of riders was 41 in 2004, compared to 27 in 1985.

About 45% of motorcycle deaths involve riders over 40, compared to 9% in 1985.

In 1975, 47 states mandated helmets for *all* riders. Now only 20 do. Another 27 have weakened their laws so that they cover only some riders, usually those under 18.

When there is no helmet law, about 50% of motorcyclists wear helmets. With a universal helmet law, nearly 100% do.

A motorcyclist who does not wear a helmet has a 40% increased risk of dying in a crash.



When California's motorcycle-helmet law took effect in 1992, deaths dropped by 37%.

Source: UC Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, August 2005

We don't know who we are
until we see what we can do.

Q **Do vegetable oils need to be refrigerated?**

A Not for safety reasons. But refrigerated oils will last longer. The same is true for nuts, nut butters (including peanut butter), and seeds, because they contain a lot of oil.

Natural antioxidants in vegetable oils help fight spoilage. Still, all oils eventually turn rancid, developing an off smell and taste. How soon this happens depends on the type of oil, how it has been processed, and how it is stored. While some oils have a shelf life of one or more years under normal conditions, natural or unrefined oils last four to six months.

To keep oil fresh longer:

U Keep it away from heat (don't store near the stove), light (keep in a dark place or in opaque containers), and air (transfer oil to smaller containers as you use it). Seal tightly.

U Buy only what you will use within a few months. If you buy a larger size, you might want to refrigerate it. (Chilled oils may form harmless crystals, which clear when the oil warms to room temperature.)

U Flaxseed, sesame, almond and walnut oil have a short shelf life, so keep them refrigerated.

U If your oil smells or tastes rancid, it won't make you sick, but discard it anyway.

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, October 2005

One Potato, Two Potato...

Did you know?

- @ Today potatoes are grown in all 50 states of the USA and in about 125 countries throughout the world.
- @ The sweet potato belongs in the same family as morning glories while the white potato belongs to the same group as tomatoes, tobacco, chili pepper, eggplant and the petunia.
- @ The average American eats about 124 pounds of potatoes per year while Germans eat about twice as much.
- @ In 1974, an Englishman named Eric Jenkins grew 370 pounds of potatoes from one plant.
- @ According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the largest potato grown was 7 pounds 1 ounce by J. East (1953) and J. Busby (1982) of Great Britain.
- @ Thomas Jefferson gets the credit for introducing "French fries" to America when he served them at a White House dinner.

Source: The Well Workplace, October 2005

Don't eat raw sprouts, especially if you are in frail health or have an impaired immune system—that's still the advice of the FDA. And don't feed sprouts to young children. This includes not only alfalfa sprouts, but also red clover, wheat, radish, soybean, mung, broccoli and others, including organic sprouts. The problem: the seeds themselves may be contaminated by *Salmonella* and *E. coli* bacteria, and the bacteria grow as the sprouts germinate. Simply washing the sprouts doesn't help. The only way to ensure safety is to cook sprouts thoroughly, but that destroys the most appealing qualities of salad sprouts.

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, October 2005

Did you know?

What's mâche? Bagged salads and fancy greens have enabled consumers to easily and deliciously bump up their vegetable intake. The ever-expanding variety of leafy green vegetables has broadened our concept of "lettuce" from iceberg to the many types we can now put on the plate. Not too many years ago, radicchio and frisee were new products to consumers. A relative newcomer to farmers' markets and supermarkets is a new salad green called mâche (pronounced MAHSH). The narrow, dark green leaves of this plant are tender and have a tangy, nutlike flavor. It can be used raw in salads, and also can be steamed and served as a vegetable. Also called corn salad, it has nothing to do with corn except that in the U.S. it can be found growing wild between rows of corn. Other names: field salad, field lettuce and lamb's lettuce.

Source: Food Lover's Companion by Sharon Tyler Herbst

Cooking vegetables? Water-soluble nutrients such as vitamin C may leach into cooking water, especially if a lot of water is used and the vegetable has a large surface area, such as spinach and kale. To minimize losses, microwave in a small amount of water, steam or stir-fry. If you boil in water, you can recover some lost nutrients by using the cooking water in soups and other dishes.

Source: Dennis D. Miller PhD, Cornell University

Americans are eating more spinach than at any time since the 1950s,

according to the USDA. We're mostly eating fresh spinach these days—five times more than in the 1970s—thanks to the popularity of bags of prewashed spinach, especially baby spinach. Sales of frozen spinach have been flat, and canned spinach (which put the pop in Popeye's muscles) has dropped off the map. Spinach is very nutritious, of course, particularly rich in carotenoids such as beta carotene and lutein. It's rich in iron, too, but the iron actually isn't well absorbed (sorry, sailor).

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, August 2005



DWY: driving while yakking

Talking on a cell phone while driving is risky business—even if you use a hands-free device. Here's what recent studies found:

■ A study from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety concluded that drivers using cell phones are four times more likely to be in crashes that cause injuries resulting in emergency room visits. This is true for men and women of all ages, no matter if they use hands-free or hand-held phones.

■ In a University of Utah study that used a driving simulator, drivers who talked on hands-free cell phones took 18% longer to brake when the car ahead braked (increasing the risk of rear-end collisions) and 17% longer to pick up speed after slowing (a danger because it interrupts traffic flow).

■ In that same study, younger drivers (age 18 to 25) talking on phones had the same slower reaction times as older people (65 to 74) not talking on phones.

■ What about talking to passengers in the car while you drive— isn't that just as distracting as talking on a cell phone? Not according to another study by the Utah researchers, which compared hands-free phone conversations with passenger conversations. It found that adult passengers adjust their conversation based on real-time driving demands; they may even help the driver by pointing out hazards and helping to navigate.

Bottom line: It's the act of talking on a phone—not just handling the phone—that seems to be most dangerous. If you must make a call, pull over to the side of the road first.

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, October 2005

To handle rude cell-phone users

without being rude yourself: *Be forthright and polite*—"Could you please set your phone on vibrate? The ringing is disturbing us." *Act as if the user does not know what he/she is doing*—"I'm sure you don't realize it, but you are speaking loudly. Could you please lower your voice?" *If the user gets annoyed*, explain that you are not trying to offend him/her—just asking him to lower his voice. *Be direct if the user is someone you know*—"Please hang up so we can talk to each other." *Complain to a manager* if a cell-phone user is ruining an experience for you, such as a movie or a meal. *Do not apologize* for bringing up the problem...and don't use hostile language.

Source: Barbara Pachter, coauthor of *The Jerk with the Cell Phone*

The Internet has become an important resource for health information, and the government is increasingly using it to supply information about its programs. **But only 31% of people over 65 have ever gone online**, compared to 70% of those age 50 to 64, according to a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation. Only 21% of the 65+ group have used the Internet to look for health information, versus 53% of the younger group. Medication is the No.1 online health topic for older people, with many of them using the Internet to compare prices and/or purchase prescription drugs.



Stay Active, Stay Mobile in Older Age

If you're over 70 and don't want to develop problems walking or climbing stairs, stay active. Researchers from the Netherlands say it is never too late to become active. The researchers interviewed 3,075 men and women aged 70-79, all of whom reported no problems walking a quarter of a mile or climbing stairs. Over the course of 4 1/2 years, 47 percent of the women (and 34 percent of the men) said they developed problems walking and climbing stairs. Those people who were inactive were twice as likely to have such problems as those who got regular exercise. People who didn't do formal exercise but had active lifestyles had a somewhat higher risk of developing mobility problems compared to people who exercised regularly. But even if generally inactive people walked just a little bit (a little over an hour per week), they had a lower risk of mobility problems, according to the report in the May issue of the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*. Remaining active will help prevent problems (such as feeling breathless during simple activities), increase your strength and muscle mass, and help maintain the balance you need to navigate stairs as well as to prevent falls.

Source: Food & Fitness Advisor, October 2005

Long-term care (LTC) insurance rates are rising.

Some of the rate hikes are very large—to compensate for faulty cost assumptions made by insurers when they started offering policies. New policies will be priced higher, but future rate hikes are possible—the longer the term, the greater the risk. Self-defense: Consider limited-pay policies, which let you pay for a set period, for instance, 10 years, after which the policy is paid in full. If you have cash-value life insurance, find out if your insurer will allow you to tap into the benefits for LTC costs before you die.

Source: Thomas Henske, CFP, CLU, and partner/speaker on life insurance topics, Lenox Advisor, Inc.,

Did you know that...

...less than half the people who need flu shots

get them? It appears that there will be adequate supplies for the upcoming season. Shots are recommended for everyone age 50 and older...children age six months to 23 months...pregnant women...health-care workers...and people with heart or lung disease, diabetes or compromised immunity. *For those who don't like shots*: Ask your doctor about the nasal spray flu vaccine, which is as good or better than the shot.

Source: Bottom Line, October 1, 2005

MASTER GARDENER COORDINATOR RETIRING



Colleen Irwin, Master Gardener Coordinator for WSU Grant-Adams Area, is retiring in mid-November. The Master Gardener program began in the bi-county area in 1983. Colleen was a member of the first class and was then hired as the program coordinator a year later in 1984. On average, about 25 interns and 20 veteran Master Gardeners participate in the program each year. Under Colleen's leadership 983 people have completed the program since 1984.

A retirement reception will be held in Colleen's honor on Thursday, November 10 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. in the Law and Justice building on the courthouse campus in Ephrata. Please join us in celebrating Colleen's 23 years of dedicated service to education and the residents of the Grant and Adams Area.



Better year-end tax planning: Itemizing deductions doesn't always pay. You might save money by bunching two years of deductions into one and taking the standard deduction in alternating years. Certain deductions can be accelerated with this strategy—write checks to charities at the end of one year, not the start of the next...make January mortgage payments in December (make sure the bank credits the payment in the correct year)...pay property tax that is due in January before the end of the prior year. Ask your accountant if this is appropriate for you. *Caution:* Taking these steps may cause you to be subject to alternative minimum tax (AMT). Consult a tax adviser.

Source: Bob D. Scharin, editor, RIA's Practical Tax Strategies

To limit your intake of cheese, do what the Dutch do—use a hand-held cheese slicer.

Americans are eating three times as much cheese as they did 30 years ago. Cheese is a concentrated source of calories (averaging 100 per ounce) and is a leading source of artery-clogging saturated fat in the U.S. diet. Using a knife, it's hard to cut slices thinner than 1/4 inch, but with a slicer (also called a cheese plane) you can cut much finer slices for sandwiches or salads—making an ounce go further. A cheese shredder also does the trick.

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, August 2005

10 Good Sleep Habits

In managing fatigue and staying alert, good sleep habits are essential. The following 10 recommended sleep habits are suggested.



1. Keep regular sleep/wake times when possible.
2. Develop and use a regular pre-sleep routine.
3. Protect sleep time; minimize other demands.
4. Avoid work/worry in the bedroom.
5. Eat a light snack if needed.
6. Maintain a dark, quiet environment.
7. Regulate temperature for comfort.
8. Obtain a comfortable sleep surface.
9. Use relaxation techniques.
10. After 30 minutes of tossing and turning, get out of bed until sleepy.

Source: Dr. Dennis Holland of Union Pacific Railroad

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