End of Life Conversation Can Be Hard, But Necessary

With the start of a new year, many people find themselves organizing, cleaning, decluttering, making new plans and generally making a fresh start.

Many families just spent the holidays together reminiscing about times gone by and where things are headed in the future. While these moments are typically centered on happy conversations, it is a good idea to talk about when change brings tough times, said Whitney Bailey, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension caregiving specialist.

“When families find themselves coping with a crisis, whether it be a loved one’s illness, challenges with mobility or the worry as to whether or not it’s safe for a family member to travel, it’s better for everyone involved if you have made some sort of plans in advance,” Bailey said. “I’ve experienced the angst of sitting with families when they’re tasked with speaking for their loved one who was no longer cognitively or physically able to express their own wishes. Each and every one of them expressed regret or frustration that preparatory conversations didn’t take place within the family.”

While it may not seem the best time to have that conversation while getting 2014 started off on a positive note, there is no time like the present.

Bailey said the Pew Research Center recently found 29 percent of American adults have a living will or a statement of wishes document. Of those 29 percent that do have legal documents stating their medical directives, some have not shared those wishes with their family members. So, while the documents exist, the next of kin/family members who will likely be present when decisions are made are likely unaware of the wishes their loved one has expressed.

“Keep in mind any adult over the age of 18 should have an Advanced Directive,” she said. “An Advanced Directive functions best when it has two parts. The first part is a formal statement of wishes describing what medical methods you want made on your behalf. The second part is a designation of at least one other person who will make medical decisions for you in the event you are unable to make them for yourself. This person will serve as your health care proxy or attorney in fact. Finally, it’s critically important your physicians have copies of your most recent documents.”

To get started, Bailey recommends Oklahomans use the following resources: 1) The Oklahoma office of the Attorney General http://www.oag.state.ok.us/oagweb.nsf/advancedirective, and 2) AARPs Prepare to Care workbook http://assets.aarp.org/ww/aarp.org/artic es/foundation/a66r2_care.pdf.

Bailey said it is critical to discuss your wishes for times when you may be medically frail or unable to make decisions for yourself. Have this conversation with a trusted loved one who can and will ensure your Advanced Directive will be honored. In addition, be sure to let others know who has been named as your health care proxy or attorney in fact.

“Advanced care conversations can be very hard for families to have, but they are so important to ensure a person’s wishes are followed,” Bailey said. “The beginning of a new year is a wonderful time to get your plans in place. Helping a loved one plan for themselves or expressing your own wishes can be comforting and rewarding.”

For more information about establishing a plan of care and putting together an Advanced Directive, contact your local OSU Cooperative Extension office.
It’s amazing how fast our hands seem to go from their usual relative suppleness to a nightmare of dry. Dry, cold winter air strips all of our skin of nourishing oils, especially the face, lips and hands.

If summer sandals have done a number on your toot-sies, try this minty foot scrub recipe:
Combine 1 cup sea salt, 1/3 cup olive oil, and 6 drops peppermint essential oil. Scrub feet, then rinse. The salt exfoliates and mint’s menthol soothes sore muscles.

It might sound counter-intuitive to suggest you strip away layers of skin at this dry time of year. But it’s great hand-protector to do so regularly, because those dry, cracked areas of your skin are actually dead…and once they’re gone, fresh, nourished skin can show itself. You can make a home exfoliator by just mixing a small handful of kosher salt with a few glugs of olive or grape seed oil-moisture and exfoliation in one shot.

If it’s cold outside, your hands should be covered up before heading out, period. Not only will your gloves keep heat from escaping your body, they will act as a barrier between your skin and the bracing elements. Better still, slather on some moisturizer before you slide your hands into your gloves or mittens (the cuter the better.)

TIP OF THE DAY: Don’t let colder weather keep you from being active outdoors. Dress appropriately and comfortably for cold weather exercise. Multiple layers will initially keep you warm and you can easily remove them, one at a time, as your body heats up. Consider a fabric like polypropylene, wool or wool/synthetic blend closest to the body as it will wick moisture away from the skin. Wearing nylons protects you from wind and rain. Wearing a hat prevents substantial heat loss through the head and can be easily removed.
Winston Churchill once said, “A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.” It is extremely easy to become overwhelmed with obstacles we are given each day. When you are down in the dumps, do not allow negativity to embody you. Positivity is a powerful element that you can maintain. Here are seven ways to surround yourself with positivity.

1. Display a fresh bouquet of flowers on your desk or on your dining room table. Allowing nature to come indoors will help you feel refreshed and give you something to focus on.

2. Place quotes on your fridge, mirror, desk, phone, computer, dashboard and where ever else you look each day.

3. Gaining a visual perception of positivity is important. Frame pictures of your loved ones and the good memories that you’ve shared or display a picture that will motivate you to reach your goal.

4. Music is magical; it is a very powerful outlet. Put together a playlist or grab CDs that exuberates positive energy.

5. Pick up a good book. Find a hero and try to adapt their qualities to your journey.


7. There are a number of ways your can share positivity—give someone a compliment, be genuine. The list is endless in ways to spread positivity.

10 Common Health & Fitness Mistakes

1. **Skipping meals:** Breakfast jump starts your metabolism. Avoiding lunch or dinner can cause calorie-loading late at night, when your body is slowing down. Eat sensibly, with three balanced meals & at least two snacks daily. It will help you maintain a healthy body weight.

2. **Avoiding gluten:** While people with celiac disease or gluten sensitivities have to avoid gluten, many others banish gluten in the name of weight loss. This can lead to nutrient deficiencies. Think about it. Grains that contain gluten (like wheat, barley, rye, etc.) also contain beneficial micronutrients like iron, magnesium, folate, and fiber.

3. **Eating huge snacks:** Keep snacks to between 150 and 200 calories. Large snacks may cause weight gain.

4. **Overdoing fiber:** Get fiber from real foods like whole grains, beans, legumes, nuts and seeds, fruits, and vegetables. Limit the processed inulin-fiber-enhanced products – too much can stress your intestines.

5. **Focusing on the scale:** Skip the daily weigh in. Instead, focus on how your clothes fit. You can also measure the inches on your waistline instead of the pounds on the scale.

6. **Dining Out Instead of Cooking at Home:** Learn how to whip up simple and healthful meals. Dining out offers large portions and myriad temptations to overeat.

7. **Relying on Packaged Foods:** Although packaged meals can be calorie-controlled, encourage only occasional use of processed foods. Instead, foster a greater reliance on whole foods.

8. **Fasting or “cleansing”:** A three-day fast may be beneficial for some (as long as they are adequately hydrated), but what happens when it’s over? If people are juicing and getting nutrients in that way, that may be fine – but have a plan once the fast or cleanse is over. Without healthful habits, successful weight management is extremely difficult.

9. **Believing that the gym is only place to exercise:** Get moving wherever you are – physical activity counts anywhere. A bout of 10 minutes of stretch bands or 20 push-ups or even squats while you wash dishes – it all counts in the long run.

10. **Skimping on sleep:** Shut-eye is such an important part of your health routine. In fact, good sleep can help with weight loss. Try to aim for at least 7-9 hours every night.
No Knead Whole Wheat Bread

1 1/4 cups (10 oz.) nonfat milk, lukewarm (100—110°F)
1/4 cup (2 oz.) orange or apple juice
3 TBS honey        1 tsp salt
1 packet instant yeast (about 2 1/4 teaspoons)
2 cups whole wheat flour  1 1/4 cups all purpose white flour

Directions: Grease the sides and bottom of an 8 1/2 x 4 1/2-inch loaf pan with nonstick spray or spread. Combine the lukewarm nonfat milk, juice, and honey in a large bowl. Add the remaining ingredients. Beat vigorously for 3 minutes. Dough will be very thick. Scoop the dough into prepared pan. Cover the pan with a clean towel. Let the dough rise in a warm place for 45-75 minutes, until almost double. Time varies according to room temperature. When dough is almost doubled, preheat oven to 350°F. Remove towel and bake bread for about 30 minutes. Dough will pull away from sides of pan when bread is done. Let bread cool 30 minutes.

Nutrition Facts: Per slice. Calories 110, Calories from Fat 5, Total Fat 0, Saturated and Trans Fat 0, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 150mg, Total Carbohydrate 23g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Sugars 5g, Protein 4g.

Chocolate Surprise Cupcakes

1 can (15 oz.) pumpkin       1 box (18 oz.) chocolate cake mix
3 eggs       3/4 cup (6 oz.) apple juice
1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Directions: Prepare oven to 350°F. Grease or spray muffin tins. Combine the pumpkin, cake mix, eggs and apple juice in a large mixing bowl. Beat batter well. Fill muffin tins 2/3 full of batter. Sprinkle walnuts on top. Bake according to package direction for cupcakes (about 20 minutes). Cupcakes are done when a toothpick inserted into a cupcake comes out clean. Let cool on rack for 5-10 minutes. Remove from tin.

Nutrition Facts: 1 cupcake. Calories 130. Calories from Fat 50. Total Fat 6g, Saturated Fat 1g, Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 25mg, Sodium 190mg, Total Carbohydrate 19g, Dietary Fiber 1g, Sugars 10g, Protein 3g.

I would like to thank each one of you for the wonderful Christmas Party 2013. The food, ornaments, participation, and fellowship was wonderful. Hoping that our OHCE 2014 will be another great one. Diann Hunter

Our OSU Pittsburg County Staff wishes each of you a Healthy & Happy New Year 2014

Upcoming Dates 2014

January 10 Baby Fair Kick Off Meeting—8-9 a.m. Pittsburg Co Health Dept.

January 11 Mak’N Tak—Moppines Pads 10-Noon @OSU Auditorium. Pre-enrollment by January 4—call our office 423.4120. There will be a $10 charge.

Feb 1 Deadline for County Achievement Awards, Heart, Member, Rookie

Feb 14 Baby Fair Meeting—Health Dept. 8-9 a.m


Feb 25 OHCE Award Banquet—Co Council Meeting. 10-1 p.m. OSU Auditorium

March 5 OHCE District Meeting 9 a.m. Durant—Depart from here 7 a.m.

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