

e BUBBLE *Life*

L a u g h • L o v e • L i v e

Your Authentic Lifestyle Magazine

24th Edition

Give your kids a
superpower
against bullies

Feed your head & skin
health at the same time

The role of **social
media** as evidence
during a divorce

Choosing **respect** and
dealing with bullying

Home **toxicity** and
how to reduce it

Dealing with
**BULLYING/
CYBER BULLYING**

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Editors Scribbles



Here is another bumper issue, packed full of amazing articles from finance in which we learn how to pay off our debts to having more holidays. In our organics section we look at toxicity and how to reduce our exposure to them.

Though the main thread of this issue is looking into the issue of bullying and cyberbullying, as it is a growing issue today. We have several articles looking into the issue and what we can do to deflect or allay the impact of this scourge upon ourselves and our families.

This is a huge issue we are joined by a few more contributors on-board who have become part of the

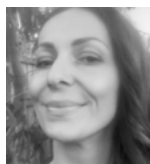
E-Bubble Life family, welcome, and enjoy the journey. Soon you will be able to access all of our articles online, with the dedicated E-Bubble Life web platform, which we are excited about here in launching. As always, we promise to work hard each issue to develop the magazine, with slight adjustments here and there, all designed to produce the ultimate publication focused to your needs.

Please enjoy this edition, any comments or feedback is appreciated, please forward through to admin@bubblemuffin.com

Keep looking after yourself, your family and friends, eat healthy and exercise daily,

Kevin Kapusi Starow

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Her nurturing assists people to understand and identify their unique mind-body-joy link to support you during life's challenges.



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"As a mother of two, Nikki struggled with the challenges of being a mum, and made it her mission to find practical tools and support to live a happier, balanced life as more than just a mum. Nikki now empowers other women on their journey through motherhood. Nikki has spent over 10 years in adult leaning and development, has degrees psychology and wellness, and is a qualified wellness coach. Nikki is also the author of 'More Than A Mum: Rediscover the Woman Within for A Happier, Balanced Life'



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He's helped singles, couples & families through the best of times and sometimes the worst, that's when you truly need someone who cares. Eriks is a loving single dad of a teenage daughter & enjoys looking after 7 cats and their dog called Rex.

SUBMISSIONS

If you are interested in writing for e-Bubble Life, and feel you have the expertise in a particular area, or field we ask you to proceed as follows:

1. Send a short email message to Bubble Muffin describing the article you would like to publish, your qualifications, and a brief sample of your writing.
2. If the editors respond by expressing interest in you, we will request a complete article be submitted via email, in word format

attachment to Bubble Muffin. Please include your full name, contact information (address and telephone number—to be used by the editors only), a short bio, and dedicated headshot.

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Escaping the judgement OF MOTHERHOOD

Being a mother comes hand-in-hand with being or feeling judged these days, particularly with the prominence of social media. It's much more common than you think it is, with 6 in 10 mums in a recent report declaring they have been criticised for their parenting skills¹. But shaming a mum doesn't seem to be limited to her ability to be a parent, with targets also including the decisions she makes regarding her lifestyle, work life and social life.

Shaming, judgement and criticism are just some of the ways adults bully other adults. Instead of using physical aggression or name-calling, like you often see in cases of child bullying, mother bullying can include alienation from other mums, rude behavior, dirty looks, spreading rumours, and gossip.

Mums can face bullying quite substantially across their entire journey through motherhood and, sadly, it can come from strangers, other mums, friends, and even family members.

Becoming a mother can already be an incredibly lonely

and isolating experience, and full of self-doubt. You instinctively try to reach out and connect with others, both offline and online, for normalisation, confidence and socialisation. It can, therefore, be quite overwhelming and stressful to face the amount of judgement other people, including other mothers, throw towards you in this new experience. Often this stems from a decision you've made that doesn't align with someone else's values and beliefs - anything from breast versus bottle, co-sleeping, baby-led weaning, using the 'cry-it-out' method, returning to work early versus being a stay-at-home mum... there are so many critics! As a result, this can put you off connecting with other mums altogether when you are already your own worst critic; constantly judging and second-guessing your choices as a parent.

Fortunately, there are ways to escape the judgement and bullying that comes with motherhood, outside of approaches that involve avoidance or confrontation.

MINDFULNESS MATTERS

You've probably heard the term 'mindfulness' floating

around for a while now, but possibly never fully understood what it involves. It's a concept that has existed for thousands of years, however, over the past decade, mindfulness has become quite popular in Western society thanks predominantly to Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn, as well as developments in neuroscience and growing evidence supporting the benefits of mindfulness practice in today's complex world.

Mindfulness is deliberately being present in the moment, with openness rather than criticism.

The non-judgemental component of mindfulness practice promotes self-acceptance, as well as the acceptance of others. Rather than simply avoiding people and situations that provoke bullying behaviours, you can find it easier to see another person's point of view and develop empathy and compassion towards that person in the process.

Over time, with ongoing cultivation of mindfulness practice, we are able to see past the judgement from others and accept that this is sometimes part of being a mother in today's society.

We start to see the bigger picture more clearly; that is, people are out there making choices based on their own knowledge, instincts, experiences and values, and other mums, in particular, are making every decision out of pure love for their children - just as you do.

Mindfulness can be practiced in many ways and doesn't take much time; you're probably already doing it, to some extent. Some mindful activities may feel more natural than others, and some may take a little more time to get used to. With practice, becoming mindful of yourself and your surroundings will come with less effort.

Here are some effortless examples of mindful moments for you to try:

- Next time you go for a walk, focus on feeling your feet on the ground as you take each step
- Take a deep, full breath in between phone calls and meetings at work
- Instead of tuning into the radio, tune into the thoughts and feelings you are experiencing as you drive
- Visit the beach or walk through a local park without shoes and focus on feeling the sand/grass/dirt as it connects with your feet
- Agree to put your mobile phones away next time you are out for coffee or dinner with friends and family
- Pay attention to your partner's facial signals
- Step outside your office or house during the day and spend a few minutes observing the smells, sounds, temperature, colours and interactions occurring naturally around you. You could even do this whilst waiting in line for a coffee or the bus.
- Spend one meal a day savouring each bite of food; experiencing its taste, smell, texture and the way it feels as it enters and travels through your body
- Colour-in with your kids

KEEP CREATING NEW CONNECTIONS

The greatest influence on your ability as a mum to create new relationships is to overcome the fear of being judged as a parent, especially after you have already endured bullying. Being a mum is a tough gig, but it's vital for you to remember that there is a great deal that actually unites us in this journey through motherhood.

Take a look at some of the most popular mum-related videos and blog posts online. The vast majority of these highlight parenting 'fails' or imperfections. Mums love seeing or reading about other mum's failing or struggling; not because we enjoy gloating about not failing, but because it reminds us that other mums struggle as much as we do - they are going through the same fears, worries, and joys as you.

We may all differ in some way; make different decisions, have different interests, have different daily routines, have different priorities... but reaching out to make new mum friends shouldn't feel as scary as it does, despite the prevalence of bullying. It's all about finding what connects you to someone else.

There are an endless number of ways that people, in general, meet new friends. Here are 7 key ways to find new, worthwhile friends as a mum:

1. If you work, make a new connection with another mum by asking about their kids, sharing a story about your kids, or simply talking about the trials and tribulations of parenting
2. If your kids are young, join a parents group or baby class and chat about age-related challenges, then arrange to meet up again for a coffee date
3. Smile at every mum you meet; it may be the only smile she gets all day and could lead to a conversation
4. Visit a local park or play centre and start a conversation with a mum there on her own about your children, then arrange for future playdates at the same location
5. If your children are older, strike up a conversation with a mum on her own also attending an extra-curricular or sporting event, then swap phone numbers or connect on Facebook
6. Sign up for the free Mush app (a bit like Tinder for mums!), create your profile and scroll through other profiles to connect with like-minded, local mums in your area
7. Find a reason to leave the house and talk to people that you may have something in common with; a new class that interests you, or join a group of like-minded people

The key is to get out there and start talking to people without the intention to make new friends but to simply connect. Friendships will grow with those that you feel most comfortable with - the right people (i.e. ones that won't be looking to bully you in any way) - from a continuous connection over time.

Written by Nikki Cox

Bullying and CYBERBULLYING



Topic Bullying / Cyberbullying is definitely a big issue that can harm the environment in schools, workplaces and friend circles. It doesn't only happen between children but also between adults.

Bullying can happen literally anywhere. It can happen in schools, at home, at work, in online social spaces, via text messaging or via email. It can be physical, verbal, emotional, public statements and behaviour online intended to cause distress or harm (also known as cyberbullying).

But no matter what form bullying takes, the results can be the same: Stress and pain for the person being bullied!!

TYPES OF BULLYING

There are three different types of bullying such as:

Verbal Bullying: saying or writing mean things like teasing or threatening to cause harm.

Social Bullying: includes hurting someone's relationship

or reputation such as spreading rumors or embarrassing someone in public.

Physical Bullying: involves hurting someone physically or their things.

WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING?

Just as the use of technology itself has evolved, so has the ability to bully. Bullying, once only happening in school or neighborhood, has now moved into the online world. Bullying online is referred to "cyberbullying."

Young people used to spend time playing with friends in the neighborhood, now they are engaging with each other in the cyber world as well, talking with and about each other, often without parental monitoring.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can happen through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying

includes sharing negative and mean content about someone else. Sometimes it can even cross the line to criminal behavior.

The most common places where Cyber Bullying can happen:

- Social Media Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram etc.
- SMS
- Emails

ISSUES OF BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying can lead to serious problems. It can possibly create dependable issues related to mental health such as a constant state of anger or sadness, increase the feelings of depression and loneliness, can affect your energy and loss or interest in activities once enjoyed, the appetite and even sleep. And if the person affected also suffers from depression or anxiety it can become even more serious leading to suicidal thoughts.

Also people that suffered cyberbullying or any kind of bullying will more likely have risky behaviors using drugs and alcohol.

These problems won't go away until the bullying stops, it can persist for a very long time bringing social and emotional issues.

People who are bullied are more likely to experience:

- Depression and anxiety
- Health complaints
- Decreased academic achievement. They are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school.

THE WAYS TO REDUCE THE EFFECTS OF BULLYING

How to behave as a parent when your child is being bullied?

- Parents play a key role in responding to bullying. If a parent knows or think that their child is being bullied, there are several resources that may help.
- Parents have to recognize warning signs that the child is involved in bullying. They could be being bullied, bullying others, or witnessing bullying. Many times kids won't ask for help, so it is important to know what to look for. If the child is at immediate risk of harming himself or others, the parent should get help right away.
- If the parent knows that bullying has occurred, it is important to find out what exactly happened with the child. Communicating with school or community officials can also help in these situations.
- If the bullying is happening at school, it is important to learn about what the state requires schools to do in the state's anti-bullying law.
- Kids are often too scared to tell adults about bullying

as they feel embarrassed and ashamed, or are worried that their parents might be disappointed. If a child tells the parent about being bullied, the parents should listen calmly and offer comfort and support.

Tips on how to make the child feel better:

- It is important to praise the child for doing the right thing and talking about the bullying.
- Reminding the kids that they are not alone because a lot of people get bullied at some point in their lives. It is the bully who is behaving wrong and not the child.
- Making the child feel that the parent will help to make the bullying stop is one of the most important parts of reducing the effects of bullying.



HOW TO BEHAVE AS A PERSON THAT IS GETTING BULLIED?

No matter what the age, a cyberbullying experience can incur significant damage, but there are a few things that can be done to help with the situation.

- **LET IT GO:**
Sounds pretty hard right? If it's not being let go this horrible feeling of hate or even anger against the bully, will always hold some kind of power over the person that got bullied. Understanding that a person that spent its precious time of life to bully others, shows that this person has a lot of self-issues, this can help to forgive the bully and let go. Forgiveness will free from all thoughts of anger, hate and even revenge.
- **NOT BEING TEMPTED TO BULLY BACK:**
The last thing someone in this situation wants to do is to sink to the bully's level. While it is helpful to point out why they're bullying and find holes in their argument no one should sink to their behaviors. That's just another way of giving them power. It makes someone as bad as them.
- **REPORTING ALL BULLYING TO AN AUTHORITY FIGURE:**
Considering parents, school guidance counselor, principal, boss, the police, or someone else who can deal with or punish the bully. For people who are being bullied it is important to come to people and talk about the problems, it is not cowardly: it is brave to come forward.

Give your Kids a SUPERPOWER AGAINST BULLIES

We all know the saying “Sticks and stones may break your bones, but words can never hurt you”. This used to be said to kids who were upset by what other kids said about or called them. The reality, however, is that words can hurt, and sometimes very deeply and, in some cases, affect kids for life.

How can we protect our kids from bullying when we're not there to protect them? How can we give them the skills to be resilient and confident in the big outside world and not let words hurt them?

Firstly, let me define exactly what bullying is.

‘Bullying occurs when words or actions are repeatedly used to harm someone’s wellbeing’.

Sure, there are times when we accidentally say or do things that are hurtful to others, however it's important to understand that bullying is a deliberate behaviour. It's done on purpose to make a person feel intimidated, threatened or powerless, and is often ongoing day after day after day.

And now before I get into the tips for raising resilient kids let me define exactly what resilient means.

“Resilience is the ability to bounce back from stress, adversity, failure, challenges, or even trauma.”

It's not something that kids either have or don't have; it's a skill that kids develop as they grow. resilience can be defined as the ability – and tendency – to “bounce back.”

Kids reactions to bullies can range from being devastated by the comments to other kids where the bullies comments mean nothing at all. Of course, there are also others where the bullies impact lies somewhere between these two extremes. This is why building resilient kids is so important, it's so we can future proof their reactions to comments made by bullies. How does building resilient kid's future proof them from bullies? It all comes back to the bullying definition if the bullies don't get the reaction they want, intimidation, fear etc, they tend to give up and move on.

The most important step in helping our children persevere when being bullied or facing other life challenges, is giving them a solid foundation of emotional resilience.

Teaching our kids, the ability to adapt, handle and overcome tough situations like bullying and other situations they will encounter in their life, needs to begin at home.

TIPS TO BUILD RESILIENCE

OBSERVE AND LISTEN REALLY LISTEN

One of the biggest challenges in stopping bullying is that many children feel they can't talk about being



bullied because they feel it's their fault. As a parent the most heartbreaking thing to see is your child being the victim of bullying and them feeling that they are the ones at fault. Let them talk honestly about how they feel, don't interrupt really listen to their feelings and emotions.

The emotions they are feeling are very real to them even if you feel what they are saying is minor. It's so important for kids to get their feelings and emotions out so you can then start to deal with them. If you shut them down with comments like 'I've heard enough I'm doing something now' or 'I don't think that's sounds right' we miss the opportunity to show our children we listen really listen to them and that's it's safe for them to share how they really feel.

resilient you are a perfect tool against bullies who can seem to be able to smell unhappiness or anxiety in kids giving them easy targets to bully.

EXTEND FAMILY SUPPORT

Some children might not be comfortable talking to their parents about being bullied or other concerns, or they feel their troubles may upset their parents. Building relationships with extended family is very important for your kids. Relationships with Grandparents, Aunts or Uncles or even a close family friend gives your child more opportunities for sharing emotions and feelings about bullies and receive the support they need. Building positive and open relationships outside the actual family unit also builds confidence and thus even more resilience.



When we encourage our kids to talk about bad things that happen to them, we help them make sense out of these experiences. Listening to their fears, stress or anger also helps them learn to express how they feel and once talked about reduces the pent-up anxiety around it.

BUILD POSITIVE EMOTIONS

It is so important to give kids many opportunities to have positive emotions. Sounds weird and too simple doesn't it? Why and how do positive emotions build resilience? Providing our kids with many opportunities to be joyful truly and simply joyful simple and easily build resilience. Often as parents we are so busy parenting, making sure our kids change their clothes, brush their teeth, and do their homework, that we forget to have moments of sheer happiness and joy in our daily lives.

It's been proven time and time again through research that the happier you are the more confident you feel which also gives you the benefit of bouncing back after times of challenges. The happier you are the more

ENCOURAGE POSITIVE THINKING

To give our kids the tool resilience we need to build their skills in looking at the wider picture and also their responses to situations. If a child faces a bullying situation, it is important to sit down with them and listen to what they are saying without the emotions of rage, injustice and protection you naturally feel. Listen to what they are saying as it will provide you with pointers about not only the support you can provide but also how serious things may or may not be.

Encourage them to think about things they may be able to do if the situation occurs again. Try to get them to make a list of things they can do in the future which immediately gives them some sense of control around future situations.

For example, if they are being bullied in the yard at school, what can they do? Encourage them to come up with solutions. On their list they might write things like

- Try not to get angry and breath
- Ignore the comments and not "take the bait"



- Stay in a group with friends so bullies don't have a chance to be nasty
- If I see a bully coming up to me and I can walk over and stand near the yard teacher
- Play group games with my friends

By showing kids there are options we teach our children to look at problems in many ways, so they learn to see they do have some control and may have ways to solve it. Giving your children these skills builds resilience very quickly as they soon learn there are many ways to adapt and avoid challenging situations.

BUILD SELF ESTEEM

When children are bullied their self-esteem becomes lower and lower and they start to believe what the bullies are saying to them. Having a healthy self-esteem is really important for all children and especially more so when they are being bullied. So how do you build a child's self-esteem?

Praise the effort and actions they take for things they do rather than the end result. For example, if they are trying to shoot goals, praise them for the time they have taken to practice, the way they tried different positions and hand skills, instead of praising them for the goal. By showing them, you've seen the effort and time they put in builds the self-esteem so much more than praising the end result.

Encourage them to try new things and again praise them on the effort taken rather than the end result, it's all about the time and persistence that builds the self-esteem as they see that their efforts are noted, and this then builds confidence and their self-esteem even more so.

TEACH MINDFULNESS

Children who can calm themselves down when they feel their world is falling apart is very useful, not only in a bullying situation, but also for life itself. Bullies love and thrive on reactions and if your child uses mindful techniques it may assist them to reduce feelings of anxiety and in some cases reduce any aggressiveness they may also be feeling.

Mindfulness teaches children techniques to become aware of themselves and their emotions, while also learning to self-control their reactions. Mindfulness is the best stress buster ever and teaching your child simple methods such as breathing and inner focus can support them in as little as three to five minutes, very useful in a school ground situation.

You can find a great mindfulness method called '3 Minutes to Calm' that is very easy to learn and great for children of all ages (and parents to!) ready to download here for free. I created this method myself as a tool to use anytime and anywhere and to get results quickly and easily for all ages. Mindfulness helps our children to not only be able to recognize their own reactions but to better understand others, so they can more effectively cope with bullies.

EXERCISE

When children are sitting in front of a TV or a device, they can often sink deeper into replaying situations that occurred during the day over and over in their little heads which can raise more anxiety in our kids. Physical activity is not only enjoyable, but it calms our children's bodies by releasing endorphins and dopamine happy hormones that make them feel better naturally. And of course, the happier they are and the less stressed they are the more resilient they become.

Physical exercise in a social setting works well as in addition to the benefits of exercise they are put in another social circle where they can build more confidence and lift their self-esteem. Find an activity they like and encourage participation and building of friendships from this circle.

Resilience helps kids navigate stressful situations. When kids have the skills and the confidence to confront and work through their problems, they learn that they have what it takes to confront difficult issues. The more they bounce back on their own, the more they internalize the message that they are strong and capable.

As parents, we may not be able to protect our children from the bullies that exist in the world, but we can help our kids build the resilience required to not allow bullying to have the devastating impact it is capable of having on a child's life. And thus, providing them with an essential coping tool they can take with them that will serve them well right into adulthood.

*Written by Joy Fairhall
Positive Psychology and Wellbeing specialist*

Quinoa Stuffed Butternut Pumpkin

I have quinoa and I am not afraid to use it! Whether it be black, white or red, I am there. There is an Australian grower of quinoa now and if you can source it, you should certainly try as it is larger, plumper, and of course, we love to support our Aussie farmers. Try this on for size, it certainly proves that real men DO eat quinoa...hearty, and full of flavour.

Ingredients

2 small or 1 large	butternut pumpkin
EVOO	as needed
Pink salt flakes	as needed
Handful fresh	oregano leaves, plus some more
1 red capsicum,	deseeded and quartered
70g quinoa,	rinsed and drained
1L water	for steaming
50g eschalots,	diced
2 cloves garlic,	minced
Handful flat leaf	parsley, roughly chopped
20g	EVOO
100g pistachios,	shelled
½ punnet grape	tomatoes, halved
100g feta,	crumbled
Juice 1	lemon
Additional chopped herbs for garnish	

Method

1. Preheat oven to 220°C and line a baking tray with paper.
2. Prepare butternut by halving and scooping out seeds. Place on lined tray with red capsicum. Brush vegetables liberally with EVOO, sprinkle with salt and divide oregano leaves between pieces.
3. Roast in hot oven for 20 minutes or until softened.
4. Meanwhile prepare the filling by steaming the quinoa in a double boiler until fluffy. Transfer to a large mixing bowl.
5. Place eschalots, garlic, parsley and EVOO into a frying pan and gently saute. Toss through the cooked quinoa.
6. Remove roasted capsicum and pumpkin from oven and allow to cool slightly. Cut the capsicum into pieces.
7. Add to quinoa, with pistachios, grape tomatoes, feta and lemon juice and stir through.
8. Fill the centre of each piece of butternut with filling and drizzle with EVOO.
9. Return to the oven for 10 minutes or until toasted and fragrant.
10. Serve garnished with additional oregano leaves.



MAKE IT ALL ABOUT YOU...

The 10 best self care tips I recommend for ALL women



1. DRINK WATER

At the very least 8 glasses a day for woman and 10 for men. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding you need more – so at least 9 glasses. Mix it up by adding some fresh fruit or herbs like mint to your water and drink one glass before every meal.

2. PRACTICE YOUR PELVIC FLOORS

They are an absolute must for ALL women and I recommend exercising them every day. Read more on your pelvic floor [here](#)

3. 30 MINUTES OF EXERCISE EACH DAY

This doesn't mean you need to sweat it out, the best way to tackle things is to mix it up. Swimming, yoga, walking, and running are all good options. Change things around between low and high intensity. The most important part is to move and make sure you enjoy it!

4. SLEEP!

The amount of sleep we need varies between individuals, but for the most, adults aged between 26 and 64 should be getting between 7 to 9 hours each night. Getting a good night's sleep is important for our mental and physical health and wellbeing.

5. EAT WELL

Make sure you plan your meals and stock up your fridge and cupboard. This will ensure you also always have that go to meal in the cupboard/fridge or freezer

ready for you! Grab yourself some healthy snacks and keep them with you – nuts are a great option for that go to, on the go snack!

6. SAY NO

You can totally do it! And it is OK to do it too. If it means more time for you to have you time, family time or just time in general then do it. No need for explanation or justification. It is truly ok!

7. ASK FOR HELP

This one can be just as hard if not harder to do that saying no. but just as above... it is ok. It is important to make sure we get the support we need.

8. CATCH UP WITH FRIENDS

Make that time. Go on – set up a catch up with your friends!

9. TAKE YOURSELF SOMEWHERE...

Beach, mountains, your favourite spot. Get away from the hustle and bustle, even if that means a 10 minute drive. There are no rules except make it for you!

10. Make time just for you

Quiet coffee at your favourite café or time on the couch with your book, take yourself to a movie or maybe a manicure. Put time aside, put it in your calendar and lock it in. You are worth it!

Written by Dr. Joseph Sgroi



Feed your head & skin health at the same time

Adults and children alike are absorbing more brain-damaging chemicals today than in the sixties. Our body's largest organ, our skin, absorbs toxins not only from what touches the skin but from what we eat and what we are exposed to. Research suggests poor nutrition increases our risk for mental disorders, obesity, and brain atrophy. But did you know, the process of accelerated chronic lifestyle choices may slow metabolism, decrease cognition and increase premature aging?

Chronic Lifestyle Choices can include:

- eating on the run,
- exposure to chemicals that mimic hormones,
- a poor gut microbiome,
- a sedentary lifestyle,
- living with constant stress,
- and lack of adequate sleep.

5 TIPS YOU CAN USE TODAY

1. Precious time is freely spent and taken over by addictive habits. Estrogen dominance can be caused by endocrine disruptors, which in turn are causal in fat gain, low libido, diabetes, water retention, and

bloating. This process can increase our risk for poor cognition, brain fog, wrinkled skin, and premature aging. Why? Because our brain and skin health can be influenced by hormonal imbalances. Endocrine-disrupting chemicals are found in perfumes, skincare products, foods, pesticides, alcohol, and more.

Tip

Hormone mimicking endocrine disruptors play a pivotal role in estrogen dominance and can lead to skin and other cancers. We can increase wellbeing by decreasing chemical assaults in our life to achieve different results.

1. More serotonin is found in our gut than our brain. If our body lacks certain nutrients, there can be serotonin deficiency, which in turn can lead to increased depression and belly fat. But most importantly, "serotonin influences gastrointestinal blood flow and is involved in multiple physiological processes of digestion." That leads us to stress. Stress hinders wellbeing and can increase our risk for poor cognition, digestive disorders, and premature aging of our skin.
"Our skin and gut are uniquely related in purpose

and function.” And so, with low serotonin levels, the body can’t regulate blood sugar levels, which has connections in diabetes, aging, and poor cognition.

Tip

“Research suggests that exercise increases brain serotonin function.” Exercise has antidepressant qualities and also ensures beautiful skin.

1. A fat to forget. Trans fats can be found in fried chicken, french fries, fried shrimp, donuts, cookies, and junk foods, causing neurodegeneration. Trans fats harm our central nervous system and brain,

incidence of tumor” particularly brain tumors in rats.” Dyes have also been linked to ADD. They are found in candies, colored beverages, cereals, sodas, snow cones, and other junk foods. Artificial food dyes can be a by-product from petroleum and other toxic chemicals which may cause inflammatory conditions in our skin.

Tip

Make it a habit to read labels.

1. Being tired all the time is not normal and can be a contributive factor in poor mental performance and



causing significant adverse changes in mood and mitochondrial health. Trans fats have an association with increased aggression, diabetes, obesity, and skin aging.

Tip

Say no to toxic oils, including trans fats. Take necessary steps to increase the intake of antioxidants and dietary fiber for brain and skin health.

1. Advanced glycation end-products (AGEs) are the result of a chain of chemical reactions after an initial glycation reaction. Food manufacturers have added AGEs to foods, especially in the last 50 years, as flavor enhancers and colorants to improve appearance. Dyes in our foods can harm our brain. Take, for example, Blue dye # 2. This dye is known to cause “significant

Alzheimer’s Disease. There are more than fifteen multiple components responsible for fatigue. These include but are not limited to imbalances in circadian rhythms, consuming pro-inflammatory foods, poor metabolism, immune system disorders, an abundance of free radicals, oxidative stress, obesity, depression, lack of movement and more. Interestingly enough, IBS has a high comorbidity with high-stress levels, poor skin health, and low energy levels.

Tip

Reduced cognitive function, skin disorders, obesity, and immune system imbalances can threaten the productivity of nations. Get the support you need and take personal actions to build immunity and rejuvenate your skin and brain health. Connect with me today!

Written by Connie Rogers Published Author, CHC

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS EVIDENCE DURING A DIVORCE



It isn't news to anybody that social media has played a huge part in shaping the way today's society operates, including our forms of communication, interaction, shopping and many other significant aspects of life as we know it. If we were to take a snapshot of daily interaction between friends and family from 20 years ago, the picture would be significantly different to what we would see today. Interestingly, what surprises many people is the drastic effects that social media has played in divorces worldwide in more recent years. In fact, research shows that posts on social media are used as evidence in at least 75% of divorces.

You might be wondering – how could social media possibly contribute as a legitimate form of evidence that can seriously affect the outcome of a divorce case in court? What posts of yours can contain such substantial information that it works against you in deciding the custody of your children? What impact can online 'friends' have in your divorce case and can their evidence carry

more weight than the word of your 'real-life' friends? The reality is that social media has the ability to completely turn any divorce case upside down and completely against you – and most Australians are not taking this fact seriously enough.

INTERNET ADDICTION

A common starting point for many marriage breakdowns across the world is internet addiction – a condition where an individual's online behaviour causes detriment to their offline personal relationships (ie - real-life relationships). Although the internet is an integral part of life and we can't remember times without it, the reality is that the internet is still a relatively new concept.

Internet addiction has contributed to Australian divorces in a variety of ways. Most commonly recognised is the reality that those who are addicted to the internet are more likely to engage in promiscuity with people they have met online. This is because social networking offers the convenience of interaction while maintaining anonymity.

Facts such as these really shouldn't be a surprise when we find out that around 12% of Australians have admitted to using social media as their preferred avenue for relieving stress. And when relationship issues are such a common factor in stress levels across the board, it isn't hard to make the correlation between the two statistics.

So how, exactly, can our social media behaviour be used as evidence against us in court when going through a divorce?

ARE YOU FIT TO BE A PARENT?

There have been many reported cases where one parent's right to custody of their children has been severely impacted due to photos that have been posted on their social media accounts. If you are fighting to have a specific amount of custody of your children, and the courts are considering character evidence to prove which parent should be allowed more time, your social media timeline can be taken just as seriously as a written statement from a family friend.

For example, in one case, two parents were fighting over who should have sole custody of their child. Images that were taken off Facebook of one of the parents partying, doing drugs and consuming alcohol during "their" parenting time was put forward as evidence, which resulted in that parent having significantly less time as they were deemed to not be as fit a parent as the other.



HIDDEN ASSETS

Another setback that people experience stems from claiming to have fewer assets than what is actually the truth. It is common to hear of cases where one spouse claims to be unemployed and 'living from day to day', whereas their social media accounts show them living it up on lavish holidays, bragging about new cars and even flaunting about their 'high' income on dating apps.

It can be as simple as revealing an upcoming bonus or a new job – if it hasn't already been mentioned in court but has been found through social media, this can be used against you as evidence that shows you are not being honest in your financial declarations.

Tips to avoid social media being used as evidence during your divorce

With all of this in mind, it is important to know ways in which you can protect yourself.

Firstly, you can expect very close scrutiny by your spouse and their lawyer when going through a divorce. This should influence anything that goes online from your end. A divorce is a common time for your social accounts to be investigated, so keep this at the forefront of your mind. Similarly, remind yourself that anything you post should be something you would be comfortable showing not only to your spouse and their lawyer, but also to a judge. This isn't just in the case of a divorce – this applies in all aspects of your life.

As always, keep in mind that your digital footprint lasts forever. It is good to keep in mind, divorce or not, that the content you post online can never be completely erased.

Get some solid advice from your family lawyer to help you better understand the issues that can be created by social media. No one better understands what can happen during a divorce than the people who hold your hand in court! A good lawyer should be able to explain things to you in a way that you can understand, and work with you

to create an outcome that does not make you feel uncomfortable.

With that in mind, here are a few more tips that you can implement yourself in the case that you are working through a divorce with your spouse.

GET OFFLINE

Spending too much time on socials can be a red flag during a divorce. If you limit your time online, you greatly reduce the risk of posting anything that could be used against you or make a judge question your credibility.

BE CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT YOU POST

If you can't get off-line completely, then you may consider some of these other ideas. The first of which is being wary of the content you post to your pages. It is important to remember – absolutely anything can be taken out of context. Don't complain about your spouse or talk about the legal case, and ensure you ask your family and friends to be careful about what they are posting. You don't want anything online to paint you in a negative light.

RETHINK PRIVACY

Your privacy settings are an important part in protecting your information. However, many people don't realise how regularly privacy setting can change, making it incredibly difficult to manage your privacy across multiple platforms. You should proceed with the assumption that absolutely anyone can see your posts, regardless of how secure you have made your privacy settings. Keep in mind that your posts can be shared to friends' pages, which greatly increases the reach and accessibility of your content.

CHOOSE YOUR FRIENDS WISELY

It is incredible easy for your spouse to gain access to your 'private' online information – simply by duplicating the profile of one of your friends, or by logging into/using the account of a mutual friend of yours. Married couples have mutual friends, who have been known to change 'sides' during the course of a divorce and disclose information to one partner that was revealed in confidence by their spouse.

In conclusion, if you are going through a divorce, think wisely when it comes to social media. You don't want your inappropriate use of various platforms to jeopardise your desired outcome.

This article provides general information and does not constitute legal advice. It is always important to seek professional legal advice.

Written by Marie Fedorov of FEDOROV Family Lawyers



Your home did not sell?

Don't be bullied along the way!

Selling a home is a detailed process, but it isn't rocket science either. Sometimes real estate agents and their sellers try to simplify it too much and miss the important steps.

Every day new homes are listed for sale. However, many of the finest homes are not sold and 'expire' after being on the market for months and longer. There's a number of reasons this happens. It's extremely important for a seller to analyse these and work out why.

Here are some common reasons including the next steps to take.

WAS THE HOME OVERPRICED?

The number one reason a home doesn't sell... it's overpriced, period. Being 'Bullish', 'Ambitious' with price or 'Giving a high price a shot' is another way of saying 'Price it high, watch it die'. When a home comes on the

market, it is critically important to price it correctly!

The price a home is listed for is central to the marketing. In fact, if it is overpriced, the best real estate agent with the most extensive marketing plan is less likely to sell the home! High prices are achieved in a competitive buyer environment, not by overpricing.

The buyers entering the marketplace on a daily basis are far more educated than 10-15 years ago. The primary reason is the internet... there is so much information available to purchasers now. They often know when a property is overpriced compared to others. Buyers simply won't waste their time viewing these properties.

This is regardless of how great the photos look. Are the first 2, 3 or 4 weeks a home is newly listed the most important? Absolutely.

If a home is not getting offers within the first 2-4 weeks of



being listed, it's evident the price or something affecting price, is wrong and a reduction needs to be made.

WHO WAS THE REAL ESTATE AGENT SELLING THE HOME?

Another huge reason homes don't sell and expire is probably the second largest reason. The real estate agent or company selling their home was not the right one for the job.

In every community, worldwide, there are hundreds or even thousands of real estate agents. Some good real estate agents, lots of terrible real estate agents, and a few great real estate agents.

It is extremely important when selling a home, the seller selects the 'right' real estate agent to sell their home. When a home expires and a seller is reflecting on their real estate agent, they need to ask themselves, did we interview multiple real estate agents? In most cases, it is important to interview more than one.

WHAT SORT OF MARKETING TOOK PLACE?

A lack of Social Media and Online Presence by a Real Estate Agent could be a major reason a home didn't sell and expired!

The strength of marketing needs to be considered.

- Was the real estate agent internet savvy?
- Did the real estate agent utilize social media?
- Did they utilize a website only featuring their property which was for sale?

These are only a couple of the questions that a seller whose home expired should ask themselves.

With over 90% of buyers beginning their home search online, it is extremely critical a seller's home is able to be found online, whether it's via a Blog, Facebook page, links or other online websites.

What other forms of Marketing were used? There are likely many more that you are not even aware of? Many agents do not even know about some of these either.

WHAT IS THE COMPETITION OF OTHER SIMILAR HOUSES?

The level of competition is another possible reason why a home expires. The more homes that are for sale that are comparable feature-wise and possibly more price appealing, means the lesser the chance the overpriced one sells.

If the level of competition is high, a home must have something that sways potential buyers to select that home. Pricing a home correctly from the beginning is even more important to a seller who will face a strong level of competition and is just one way a home is able to be sold before their neighbours!

Otherwise, it's making the others appear at better value. Do levels of competition change throughout the year?

Absolutely!

Depending on the time of year, the number of homes for sale varies from community to community. Competition when selling a home cannot be avoided but certainly can be reduced, so a seller whose home expired should know what the competition level is and also ways to reduce it!

- Ask how many homes are on the market?
- What is the average time in days on market?
- Enquire how many homes that were advertised in a month or a quarter actually got sold?

WHAT WAS THE FEEDBACK?

When a home is listed for sale, feedback from potential buyers is very important.

- Did the agent actually follow up with these buyers?
- Did they have a way of staying in touch to give updates or notify them of changes?
- Did they ask questions?
- Was there any feedback or constructive advice?
- What was the feedback?

Some things can easily be corrected, such as odours and minor updates. If they are not rectified however, they can become the reason a home didn't sell!

Many sellers don't even know what type of feedback to expect from showings, because they never receive any!



Some traditional real estate agents still rely on putting a sign up in front of a home and then pray it sells.

WHAT PREPARATION WAS DONE?

Often-times homeowners rush getting their home on the market and don't properly get it 'market ready.' There are small and inexpensive things a seller can do before listing their home to make it more desirable!

What about the things which may have been overlooked prior to listing a home?

Odours can be a huge reason why a home doesn't sell. Whether it is a lingering pet odour, smoke, mould or something else that potential buyers continue to give as feedback. These must be corrected!

What was the feedback being provided during the previous listing period about any of these?

Were there items that could have been corrected to make a home more saleable? Preparing and styling a home for showings can be the difference between a home selling or expiring. Negative feedback can be avoided before a potential buyer walks through a home, with the correct preparation.

Real estate agents sometimes neglect to educate their sellers on several ways they can prepare their homes for showings in a push to get it on the market faster! Preparing a home for sale is like laying a solid foundation to build on.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Now that a seller's home has expired, what are the next steps? The first thing is to re-evaluate the possible reasons why their home didn't sell and is now expired.

THERE ARE 15 FACTORS WHICH CAN INFLUENCE A SALE!

Was it overpriced? In many cases, sellers don't believe their home is overpriced when in reality, it is.

Ask for other opinions on price from other top real estate agents in the area. Ask for sales evidence! Are these top real estate agents recommending a price less than what your home was last listed for? If so, price could have been the primary reason for an expired listing. Be wary of some just telling you the price is okay, to 'buy' your listing, then start working you down on price later anyway.

A common trend for expired listings is to be re-listed by the same real estate agent. Doesn't this seem a bit foolish? If a real estate agent did not sell the home during the first period, what are the chances they will sell it during the next? At the very least, before re-listing with the same real estate agent, interview, interview, interview! If a seller neglects to interview, it is very possible their home will end up on the dreaded expired list again!

Many homes remain unsold for well over a standard 3-month listing period. Some have been on-market for well over 12 months.

Unfortunately, there are sellers who recently listed their home for sale who will end up on the expired list. The above-mentioned reasons can help them avoid the same frustration of not selling.

SO, IS IT TOO LATE FOR YOUR HOME TO BE SOLD? NO!

Has your home recently become expired? Are you unsure why your home expired and want to know the 15 Factors Which Influence a Sale?

Written by Eriks Draiska

KING OF BEANS

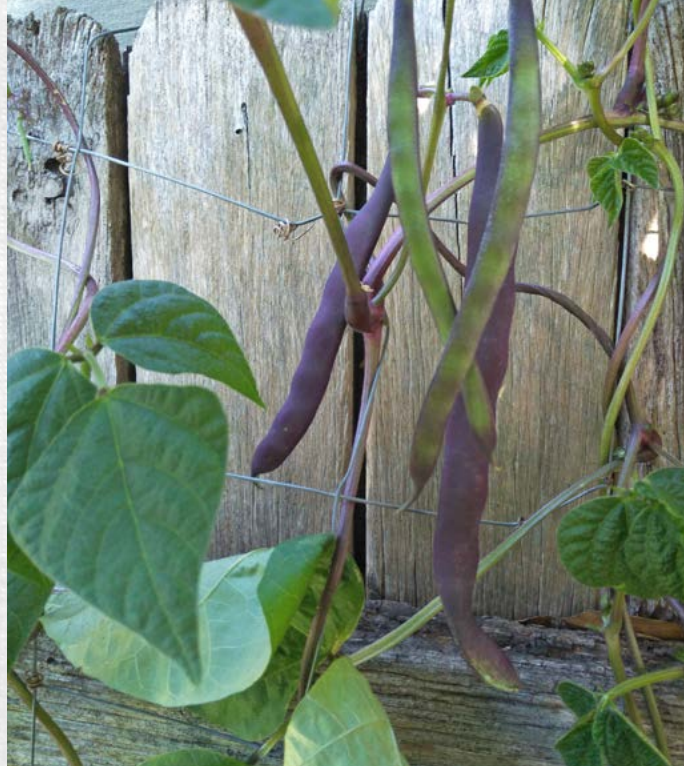
If there's a reason why purple is reserved for royalty, it must be because of this bean. Purple Kings are the king of the garden - easy to grow, prolific and terrific in taste.

As I'm writing this, winter is making its last ferocious stand, with torrents of rain and cold. But as soon as the chill fades I'll be out in the garden to plant a few rows of Purple King beans. Even my fussiest middle child who refuses all green vegetables nods vigorously at the suggestion of a Purple King straight off the vine. I agree with him. Purple Kings just taste better. It's a 'wilder' bean, a flavour that you can't buy from the shops but can easily grow at home. He's too busy eating them to notice they're still green on the inside, with all the natural fibre and vitamins (including folate, essential for brain development) of fresh beans to go with it.

The purple is caused by plant pigments called anthocyanins, which also can be found in red cabbages, purple cauliflower, purple asparagus and hydrangea flowers. It deteriorates in light and heat, so if you cook them, your purple beans will turn back to green. And the purple may vary in intensity depending on the season, the genetics of your seeds, and where you grow them, as the anthocyanins are sensitive to the acidity of the plant sap and soil. The more acidic the soil, the more purple they'll be.

You can buy seeds for the bush variety, but why limit yourself to a short crop? I've always grown vines, which can easily reach 2 or 3 metres in height over a few months. Every 15cm or so will spring a new little bunch of beans to eat, so the bigger vines are better for me! Growing them up a short fence? No problem! Once they reach the top, just train them back down. New growth bends easily and with five minutes of daily attention (while you're harvesting beans for the day's lunchboxes) you can train them down or across. What a spectacular living cover for your tired fence!

Leaves can grow to the size of a hand, are dark green, and tend to grow thickly, capable of providing a good summer shade to other vegetables if you train them to grow over a sturdy trellis. They remind me of solar panels, loving the sun. Or you can grow them into a bean tepee, as a summer shade for your kids. Simply attach four or five poles at the top with a rope, and spread the poles at the



base. Thread some twine or wire between the poles as support that the beans can grab as they grow. Plant seeds at the base of the poles and encourage them to spread around the tepee, leaving one section as an entrance open for your kids to crawl in and harvest! I've also grown them up the poles of my trampoline!

Find a sunny position and prepare the soil with compost, or blood and bone. Soak seeds overnight in water, with a few drops of Seasol or worm wee for invigoration. Plant seeds in damp soil to a depth that's twice the length of the bean, about 2cm deep. Don't water for a few days after planting as seeds are prone to rot. They'll burst through the soil in a week or so. Mulch around them once they're up. They seem resilient to pests (at least in my garden), and are good companion plants to brassicas, carrots, parsley and lettuce - who value the shade. In about 10 weeks they'll start to flower, with delicate purple and white flowers erupting in clusters from the vine. From flower to harvest takes about 9 days, and it's so much fun to watch the daily change.

Baby beans start green. They reach 'adult' size at about 15 – 25 cm before they ripen to the purple colour, with some seed development (like little bulging muscles). Pick while they're still 'snappable' and the 'muscles' aren't too big. If you leave them too long they'll get bigger but tougher, and you'll have to either cook them or wait until they dry out to harvest the seeds. However be warned: once you let your beans dry on the vine, the vine will start to die (its reproductive mission being over), so harvest frequently for a longer vine life.

You can cook Purple Kings like any other green bean - steamed, baked, or save them in the freezer. We boiled them once, just to see the colour change. Because we can't resist eating them straight off the vine, or at our most restrained, we run them straight to the lunchbox as a midday treat.

Written by Melanie Notaras

Collaborating for the environment



Nowhere is collaboration more important than in meeting the needs and challenges of the environment. There are many natural resources readily available for us to use, although, with this comes the responsibility of ensuring they are maintained. Managing them is the responsibility of all society's businesses, towns and countries, and for that to happen we need collaboration.

Today, increasing pressure is being placed on businesses to do their bit for the environment and society. As a result, organisations are now banding together to take on the challenge of sustainability to reduce their environmental footprint¹. In business, collaboration is vital on so many levels. Internally it helps develop productive and respectful workplace relationships. As people work together they appreciate each other's skills more and celebrate the successes they achieve as a team.

Companies which work in multiple countries must build this collaboration across many languages and cultures. With good management practices and effective communication, everyone can work towards a common goal.

We know how effective partnerships can be in tackling what some might see as unmanageable problems, to bring to light potentially unimagined solutions.

Every industry has challenges so big they cannot be solved by one business alone, but by a multitude of partners and organisations – who respect each other and collaborate with positivity and belief that the end goal is achievable. It is becoming more and more common for businesses to collaborate to reach a common sustainable goal. For

example, the Australian Forest Products Association, who have collaborated thirteen hubs around Australia to reach their goal of one billion new plantation trees by 2030². Addressing forest protection and restoration is everyone's responsibility. We, the world community, should not only use the resources provided for us, we also have a responsibility to protect, nurture and restore the parts that we have taken.

On the other hand, P&G in partnership with Coca-Cola, Heinz, Ford and Nike have created the Plant PET Technology Collaborative (PTC), focused on developing and using 100 percent plant-based PET materials and fiber in their products in an aim to reduce fossil fuels which have a large impact on the planet's biodiversity and climate.³

It is important to remember that whilst collaboration may not seem to change the world, it has changed something. Whether that be the way some part of the system works and delivers outcomes, if it is in a positive way, it is still a change in the right direction.

We will be successful together, or we won't be successful. So, what can you be doing?

Written by Steve Nicholson

¹<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/sustainability/our-insights/creating-partnerships-for-sustainability>

²<https://ausfpa.com.au/media-releases/13-regional-forest-industry-hubs-needed-to-reach-one-billion-trees-goal/>

³<https://news.pg.com/blog/pg-corporate-brand/pg-helps-push-toward-plant-based-plastics>



Thinking of renovation or building a new home?

Simple tips to ensure your designs pass the water-efficiency benchmark. Reducing the amount of water a house uses is not only good for the home owner's bank balance, it means that the chances of passing a BASIX assessment with the minimum of fuss are very high. And a real bonus is that it's good for the environment too, particularly with so much drought around and the threat of possible water restrictions to come.

The Principal of Frys Energywise, Ian Fry, has many years of experience serving the building industry and believes it is a straightforward process to design, build and equip a home to use the least water possible so that the end user can reduce their reliance on town water and contain water bills throughout the year.

"BASIX requires a pass mark of 40% for the water capacity and usage elements of an assessment," says Ian Fry. "So in order for the architect, builder or developer to be able to meet or exceed that target, the aim is to reduce the amount of water that the home uses."

This assessment is conducted from the size (square metres) of the area of land on which the house is sited and the amount of soft landscaping, excluding driveways and paths, which you want to construct, with the assumption that this area will need to be irrigated. It's a smart move to have plans that also nominate the plants to be used that will require less water (usually native and indigenous plants).

Tapware is another key element of design plans that affects water use and Fry's main tip for tapware is to check its Wels Rating. "All tapware sold in Australia must have a Wels Rating," explains Mr Fry. "This rating is described in stars, and the higher the star rating the lower the flow rate, resulting in reduced water use."

You must also declare whether you're using an alternative water supply. By alternative water, BASIX defines that as water that comes in the form of a water tank or a connection to reticulated recycled water, if available to the street. Check your site address to see if recycled water is available. "In most cases, to meet the 40% benchmark of BASIX, some form of alternative water use is required," says Ian.

Typically, a rainwater tank is the most common use of alternative water, so including a suitably sized tank in the design plans to be assessed, is always a great idea.

"Most new home builders now include the supply of a water tank as a standard inclusion, unless recycled water is available," Fry reveals. "Water is supplied to the tank by diverting the gutters on the roof of the tank."

The tank is also connected to the town water supply, so in the event the tank is empty, the fittings being used by the tank always have continued supply."

Written By Ian Fry

Become a parents who knows what is out there

Parents usually understand the idea of bullying in the playground, where one child repeatedly mentally intimidates or physically harasses another child, but cyberbullying can be a different story. If you were born before the 1990's, you've probably never experienced cyberbullying at school because nothing was online then.

Cyberbullying is different from bullying because the bully doesn't need to be in the same location as the one being bullied. Often, cyberbullying is anonymous and it can occur 24/7. Cyberbullying has a wider reach and can be more silent. Parents, friends and sibling may not find out that a child is being bullied if they are not looking in the right places. Kids don't come home with a black eye or broken schoolbag rather cyberbullies attack a child's emotions and reputation online.

How can parents help their children deal with cyberbullying? Rather than just burying your head in the sand or stopping technology being used in your house become a knowledgeable parent. Find out what your kids are using, talk to other parents and search online for information about online communication. Become

a parent who knows what is out there so that you can understand how to tackle cyberbullying before it occurs.

FOUR ONLINE GATEWAYS WHERE CYBERBULLYING CAN OCCUR:

- 1. SMS, Messaging and Emails** - Most school kids have an email address. A high percentage of children also have a mobile phone. It's no longer an option to just stop emails and texts. Children communicate with teachers and other students with this form of communication but it can be an easy access path for cyberbullies. Once someone has your mobile phone number or email address they have the potential to bombard you with messages, so always make sure your kids know not to give out email address and phone numbers easily. Also, encourage them to exit chat groups in places like WhatsApp where they feel uncomfortable or have not requested to join. As a last resort you can speak to your phone provider about changing your child's mobile number. At Jeenee Mobile, we always want to help out in a situation like



this and under these circumstances would allow a change of number free of charge.

2. **Apps** - Apps offer a convenient way to play games and connect with others but they have a high risk of being an avenue to bullying. They open the doorway to communicating with anonymous people who may turn out to be predators and bullies. Apps such as Whisper allows kids to post secrets anonymously and also allows them to chat with other users in their area. Kids may think that because they have posted anonymously that they are protected but bullying still occurs. Nasty comments and reactions can damage a child's self-esteem and if these comments are persistent they can cause high levels of stress. As a parent, don't just assume that if you don't see the app on your child's phone that they aren't using it – there are many apps out there like 'Poof' that can make apps disappear from the homepage view. As a parent, keep on top of the apps out there. Discover some of the most dangerous apps for 2019 at EducateEmpowerKids. (LINK <https://educateempowerkids.org/dangerous-apps-2019/>) New apps are being developed all the time. Video, dating and chatting apps are constantly morphing and changing names so parents should read up on new apps as well as speak with other parents to see what their kids are using.

3. **Social Media** - OK, so this think you've got this one covered. You're on Facebook and you are friends with your son or daughter so you think it's all OK but beware! Firstly, kids are turning away from Facebook and using more 'youth- popular' social media like Snap Chat, Instagram and KIK. Find out the huge range of social media apps out there at cyberbullying.org. (LINK: <https://cyberbullying.org/most-popular-social-media-apps>)

But why are they dangerous? Something like Snap Chat allows photos to be sent that quickly disappear when they are seen. Imagine how this could be a vicious tool for a bully to bombard a child with harassing or embarrassing pictures and how that could affect a young person. Even a popular social media site like Instagram allows people to post photos and videos then tag others in. If they are inappropriate pictures or have added derogatory copy, this can cause great stress to someone being bullied because so many people could see it in a matter of minutes.

Encourage your kids to stick to age restrictions and not sign up too young. Also encourage your kids to let you know if inappropriate photos are posted. You can always report issued to

administration of the social media service. Remind your children to only be friends with people they know and trust and not just accept a friend request from a friend of a friend.

4. **Online Gaming** - The internet allows us to play games with people not just in our neighbourhood but all around the world and with the good also comes the bad. Playing games with people you don't know (not always kids) can lead to abusive messages, harassing play, players ganging-up against other players, being bullied by 'greifers' who are people who play games simply to hurt and upset other players and in some cases people who hack into a player profile. All this information can be extremely overwhelming as a parent. It's such a temptation to just throw away the X-Box and say that your kids can never play a game online but this is not the reality for most families. Instead, encourage your kids to only play with people they know. When playing against strangers, simply don't communicate to them, if possible. Discuss gaming with your kids and come up with some strategies to handle situations that might occur and if possible, don't let your kids play online games behind closed where you can't see what's going on. The Kids Helpline (LINK: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/cyberbullying>) is a great place to start to find more information.

As parents, we might feel we trust our kids to make all the right decisions when interacting in the online world but when you are online you are not alone, and kids will be open to attack from many areas. The best thing you can do as a parent is to educate yourself about what is out there and where your kids might be at threat from cyberbullying. Once you educate yourself, you can then have a better conversation with your kids so they know that you understand the digital world and you can come up with better strategies for stopping cyberbullies together.

Written by Vicki Radford





Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying was once considered a normal part of growing up. But name-calling and spreading rumors are more than an unpleasant childhood experience. It's bullying, and no one should have to endure it. Unfortunately, the rise in technology and smartphones have brought it to a whole new level.

According to a Pew Research Center study, 59% of teens have been bullied or harassed online. It's a growing problem that affects more than the victim. Bullying and cyberbullying can have a lasting influence on our families and the community, too.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying has taken many forms over the years. Sometimes it's dismissed as teasing. Teasing tends to be harmless. It can even help create a bond or form a relationship when done in the right spirit.

Bullying crosses the line into being hurtful or threatening. And it can be physical, verbal, or electronic.

- **Physical bullying** - This is what most people think of when the topic of bullying comes up. It's hitting, kicking, or pushing someone. It also can include hazing, harassment, humiliation, and stealing or ruining someone's things.
- **Verbal bullying** - The adage "sticks and stones will break my bones but words will never hurt me" simply isn't true - it's verbal bullying. It can include name-

calling, mocking someone's words or actions, insults, or other verbal abuse.

- **Relationship bullying** - Common among middle schoolers and adults alike, relationship bullying is when someone refuses to talk to you, coerces you into doing something you don't want to, excludes you from groups or activities, or spreads lies or rumors behind your back.
- **Cyberbullying** - Using technology such as smartphones, computers, laptops, tablets, or other electronic communication to bully someone is cyberbullying. It can be verbal such as through a phone call, message recording, or video program, or written in an email, text message, or using social media.

STATE AND LOCAL ANTI-BULLYING LAWS

Law enforcement recognizes the devastating impact bullying has on the community, especially in the school system. No federal law exists that specifically applies to bullying. But each state in the U.S. has some form of anti-bullying law or regulation. Some identify harassment as a lesser offense than bullying, and others use the terms synonymously.

State law and school policies are clear on paper but difficult to apply in real life. It isn't always easy for schools to know what counts as bullying. For instance, what if

there's no formal complaint? Or if a teacher sees students poking fun at another child but dismisses it as playful banter, does that count as bullying?

BULLYING AND SUICIDE

When you're bullied, it affects more than your self-esteem. It's often cited as leading to suicide among young people. Experts aren't so sure that bullying has a direct effect on suicide, according to StopBullying.gov, the official U.S. government's anti-bullying website.

Whether you're the victim, the one doing the bullying, or a witness, it can have lasting effects such as:

- Feeling hurt, helpless, ashamed, angry, and guilty.
- Being more likely to experience depression, anxiety, or adult onset PTSD.
- Having a lower GPA or standardized test scores.
- A tendency to abuse alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
- Missing, skipping, or dropping out of school.
- A criminal record.
- More likely to be abusive in romantic relationships as an adult.

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT BULLYING

There's no simple solution to stop bullying from happening. It's important to know it isn't your fault. No matter what a bully says or does, don't blame yourself. Instead, find support from trusted people who love and appreciate you for who you are. Parents, educators, community members, teens, and kids can all play a part. Here's what you can do.

DON'T RESPOND

If you're a victim, don't reply or retaliate to what's being said. It can make the situation worse by provoking the bully. Depending on your words or actions, you might get into trouble, too.

SCREENSHOT, BLOCK, AND REPORT

Catching evidence of cyberbullying is sometimes possible by taking a screenshot of the bullying behavior. Most online social platforms allow you to block and report bullying, and that's a good step to help document it.

TALK ABOUT IT

Being a victim of bullying might feel humiliating. Still, it's important to talk about it. There's no need to face the bully alone when you can seek support from others. Also, asking for help serves as another source of documentation for the behavior, and that can play a pivotal role to put a stop to the bullying.

TEACH RESPECT AT HOME

Parents should model respectful behavior for their



children. Teaching the importance of respect for other people regardless of age, appearance, social or income status, or other features can help to prevent bullying.

RECOGNIZE WARNING SIGNS

You should always address behavioral or emotional changes you notice in your child or other children. Cyberbullying is increasingly common and can involve countless witnesses. Talk to your kids to see if they're a victim, are bullying others, or might have seen someone else get bullied.

KNOW WHAT BULLYING IS AND WHAT IT ISN'T

Teachers and educators are responsible for contributing to a supportive and safe school environment. Know what the state law and school policy say about bullying and harassment, and learn to recognize the warning signs of bullying behavior.

PUT AN END TO BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING

Bullying isn't new. It has seen many changes in recent years as people are publicly sharing more details of their lives online than ever before. Increasing awareness and keeping an open line of communication between you, your kids, and others in the community are essential. If everyone knows what bullying looks like and can pick up on the warning signs, together, we can work to prevent it from spreading.

Written by Marguerita Cheng

Spring has **SPRUNG!**

With the warming weather, increase in outside adventures and escalation of play dates it's time to do a quick clear out of the winter clutter and prep for the good times. From a deep clean to a medication check and grooming, there's lots that can be done to ensure the well-being of pets as the weather blossoms. Dr Evan from FleaMail give us some tips on how to make this one a summer to remember right from the get-go.

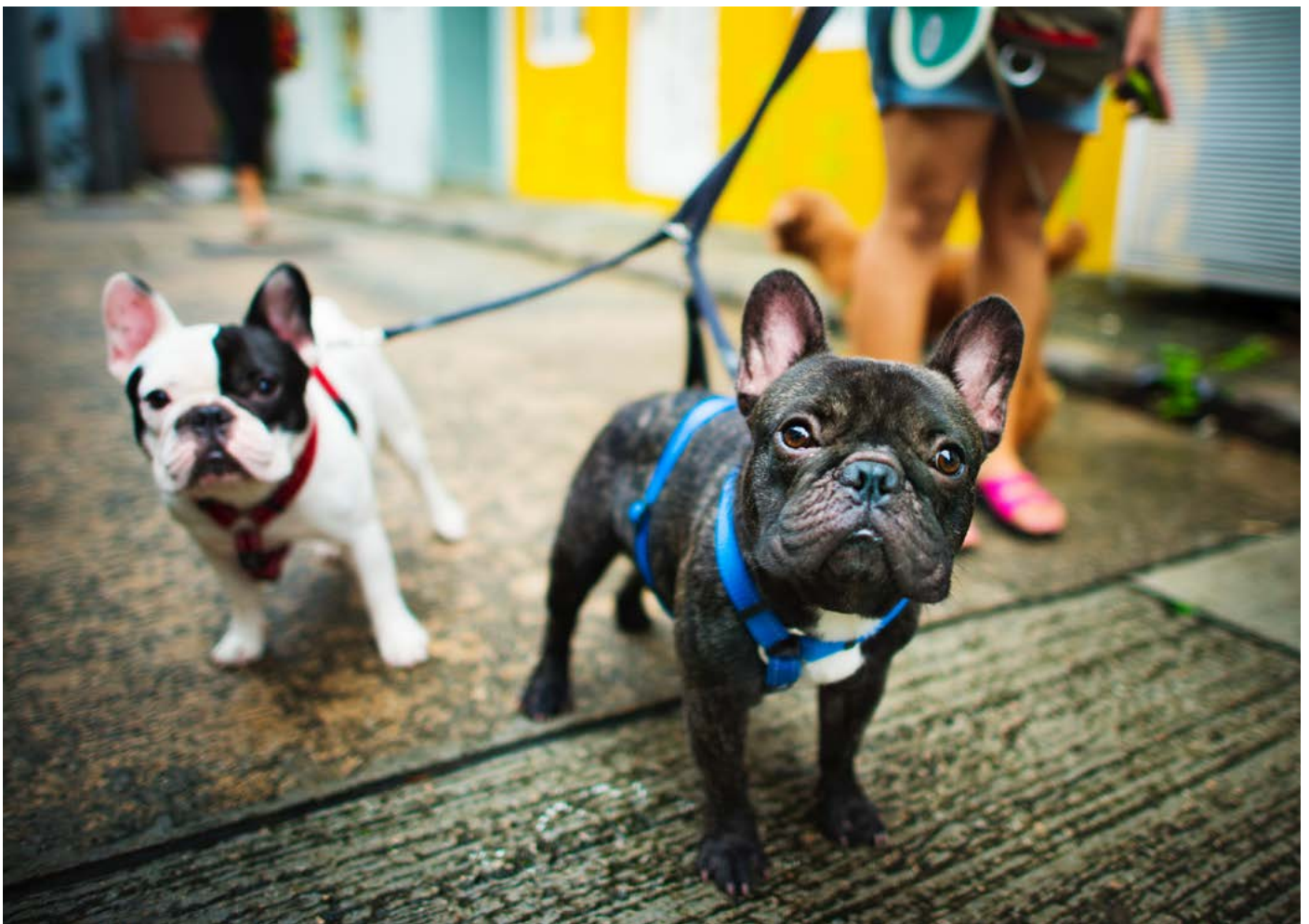
WASH EVERYTHING

If Fido's favourite teddy is starting to get woofy, throw a load of toys in the wash! Use an all-natural, unscented detergent, not bleach; line-dry or on low without a scented dryer sheet, and check for loose parts before returning to its owner. Dr Evan adds: "Even toys with squeakers and crinkles can make it through the washer unscathed, although let them air dry to be perfectly safe. Spring is as good a time as any to take an accounting of exactly what a pet is playing with, what a pet has heavily damaged and what has been dismissed. If you find things

that your pet has not used for ages, why not make a donation to a pet rescue group?"

Over winter with everyone indoors the fluff and dust well and truly piles up especially in your little buddy's bed. Dr Evan explains; "Like people-pillows, a pet's bed should be renewed each 1-2 years if it contains foam or stuffing. Fleas, dust-mites and other vermin love a dirty bed as they are full of dead skin, saliva and hair which is like a buffet to a critter." Ewwwwww!! "To deodorise and clean, a simple sprinkle of baking soda over carpet and other vacuum-able surfaces will absorb pet smells and kill bacteria. After applying, let it sit for half an hour then vacuum thoroughly, making sure to reach every nook and cranny."

Dr Evan also urges owners to toss pet food bowls and plastic toys into the dishwasher but skip the heated dry setting to avoid a complete meltdown. For heavy duty rubber toys, he suggests a 15-minute soak in one part vinegar to two parts hot water for 15 minutes before hand scrubbing





DRESS DOWN AND GROOM UP

Nothing says spring like a new hair-do and some new attire, meaning it's time to loosen the jackets and get that hair-did! "A groom of the winter coat will help your pet regulate heat, keep them clean and combat the nasties that want to munch on your bestie," says Dr Evan. "Brushing your dog or cat not only makes them look dapper it is essential for healthy coat maintenance. Long-haired pets need brushing regularly to remove any knots or tangles that can become painful matts."

A good old-fashioned grooming session at home is not only a great opportunity to bond with your buddy, but also to check their skin for fleas, ticks, cuts, scabs or lumps. Particularly fluffy pets should be brushed outside, where extra fur can become one with nature."

HEALTH AND MEDICATION CHECK

Spring's warmer weather means that fleas, ticks, and other parasites will be making an appearance soon. These pests can cause trouble for pets, especially if they spend quite a bit of time outdoors. Parasite prevention helps protect your pets from potentially serious illnesses and other health issues. Dr Evan explains, "Fleas might be more of a nuisance than a major health threat for most pets, but some have allergic reactions to flea bites. Then there are the deadly ones. Heartworm can lead to life-threatening health problems and paralysis tick just outright kills pets. Having your pet up to date with prevention is far cheaper than the cure. You might wonder if your pets even need

any parasite prevention if they stay indoors all or most of the time. Keep in mind that even indoor pets get heartworm, tick and flea problems by catching parasites catching a lift on you."

"While you are at it, if your pet is on medication you should check they are all up to scratch. Lots of factors shorten the shelf life of pet meds. There are use-by dates, of course, but also environmental factors like humidity and temperature extremes which Australia is very accustomed to. Administering medications that are degraded can have dangerous health results for your pet," Dr Evan says. "Some may be ineffective because they're expired."

Now is also a good time to browse through your pet health paper to evaluate when you need to take him or her to the vet for a check-up too.

WATER. WATER EVERYWHERE

And finally ... Dr Evan advises; "As the weather gets hotter make sure your pets have a ready supply of clean water at all times, both in and outside. Remember to change frequently as with warmer weather bacteria build up a lot faster, which can make our little buddies quite sick. Choose a non-toxic disinfectant to ensure that you do not compromise your pet's health and have more than once source of water per pet."

Written by Dr. Evan Shaw

BEING YOUR WILD & WONDERFUL SELF IN YOUR ONLINE BUSINESS



When we were young, we would go to the playground and just be ourselves. We would dance like we wanted, we would say whatever we felt like saying and we didn't have any concerns about whether someone was going to take offence, be rude or get the wrong impression. But then as we grew up, things were said, comments were made, judgements thrown around and we start to show up as lesser versions of ourselves.

Fast forward and this can become one of the biggest limitations we have with showing up with ease as online entrepreneurs/personalities/influencers or simply from a space of wanting to share our passion projects or interests.

As a Business Coach, Social Media/Online Optimiser and Lightworker, I show my clients and tribe how to create their businesses, strategy and content from flow and by leveraging the most unique part of their businesses – themselves.

But this isn't always straightforward. So often they have been pushed down by the expectations of others and are actively dimming down their own light so that they can

fit in to the crowd and avoid the attention of those that would try to knock them down.

When we limit our own potential it is often because we are in self-protection mode (consciously or unconsciously) because of past experiences, lessons or warnings. This then comes up in the way we choose not to capitalise on what makes us truly fascinating and in what could make our message particularly potent and attention grabbing.

If this IS the case, we will undoubtedly have a million surface layer excuses as to why this is e.g.

'I don't have the time'
'My children are too demanding'
'The timing isn't right'
'I don't know how my boss will receive it'
'I'm waiting for an investment to come through'
'I need my website/sales page/accreditation/photo shoot pics etc. first'
'I'm worried about what my parents or friends will think'

But that's all just surface layer BS. If we kept asking ourselves why we were choosing for that to stop us,



a deeper reason would always come out. It could be because we were victimised by bullies or hurt or made fun of or shamed, embarrassed or ridiculed in some way when we were younger. Whatever the reason, once we know the WHY and the origin of what is stopping us from moving forward, we can then take action, heal and choose to rewrite the story for the future.

Because here's the thing ... if we don't move out of the shadows and allow our unfiltered selves out online – we will likely STILL experience negative comments/backlash PLUS we won't necessarily experience any success with attraction marketing. There's this great saying (and I can't remember who it's by) that goes a little like: 'When you try to please everyone, you please no-one' and this is so true.

People will take offence regardless of what you do and no matter how perfectly you try to say it and no matter how much you try to be part of the herd PLUS you'll end up fading out of attention for the people who would have simple been attracted to YOU in the first place.

So. Once we recognise the real reasons why we aren't being ourselves online and are ready to amp up our online presence ... how can we get over the very real possibility that there will still be backlash?

1. Firstly, if you do KNOW that certain people are going to be reactive then you could always make the decision to proactively block/remove them depending which platform you're using or change the visibility of your posting to exclude them. If this is what gets you over the first hurdle to posting online with more of your own essence – do it and then see if you can let go of your concerns regarding those key people over time.
2. Two, remember, it's never about you when someone says something online – positive or negative. When

someone does react it's generally because they're being triggered by what you've said or done and it's brought up feelings from a past experience for them OR it's holding up a mirror for them about what they're NOT doing in their lives that they wish they were. They then project that toward you accordingly.

3. When someone is triggered by you and says something, guess what? Your message was not intended for them. There are billions of people in the world and we were not designed to be compatible with everyone. If we were then we wouldn't be so varied and individual. We only have the ability to hold space for a certain amount of people and we only have the energy to elevate a certain amount of people online. So, if someone is not meant to be part of our tribe and you are not the person to trigger them in the RIGHT way – that's ok. They/you get to move on and allow for the right person/people instead.
4. Whenever someone does say something rude, inappropriate or otherwise this is a chance to create content. It's an opportunity to draw a line in the sand and state exactly what you're here to do despite what others might say. It's an opportunity to do a post about who your ideal client/tribe is and who it is not. It's an opportunity to point out how important it is to do the work regardless of negative opinion. It's an opportunity to filter out the people that were never going to be easy to work with or necessarily ever buy from you in the first place.

And, it's an opportunity to celebrate how you are NOT like everybody else.

Afterall, the number one way to increase engagement with your posting and online presence is to allow your uniqueness out.

People come online to be amazed, amused, excited, get value and connect – they will not be able to do all of these things if you are only showing a one dimensional, watered down version of yourself. It would be like rocking up to a party with 10% of your personality and expecting people to actually want to hang out with you. They wouldn't. They would get bored, tune out and then walk away without RSVPing to your next shindig.

This is why despite what the few might say, we should still do, be and say anything WE want to online and exactly in our own flavour – because we are interesting and we CANNOT fade into the background when we are allowing ourselves to show up in all our glory.

Make no mistake: YOU are what makes your business stand out from the one next to yours. You will always be the most unique identifier and selling point of what you do online and, there's no telling what you'd achieve today if you actually chose to allow that to come through.

Written by Jessa Lewis

Choosing respect and dealing with bullying



The word respect can be defined around “treating others with care and consideration”. This is an essential part of successful communication and interaction with others. As a “value” ...then ‘respect’ is a significant component of human interaction - it allows us to consider another’s position and situation and combined with empathy can allow for positive and successful inter-relationships

Several key areas where respect is important are the family, the workplace and school. It’s important that adults can be good role models for children - both in the home and in the community. When children experience respect and are helped by their parents and other significant people in their life, then they can develop and understand why it is important in life.

As humans we are all “relational beings” -this means that connecting with others is actually really important for us and for our survival. Sure, there are some people who’s personality is more introverted, who may like their own time and space, and other people (usually the exception)who may have social anxiety -worries and fears about either being In social places or concerns about what others think about them (often these fears are irrational, out of context or based on a previous traumatic experience, that then impacts on that persons future). So think about that little baby, it needs people, as a growing child.....surrounded by caring people, into a young person and then an adult -part of a family, a community-with friends and other interactions.....so....all of us, need each other!

So, for all of us, being with friends, or family, colleagues or partners is actually an important part of life. Another important part of life Therefore, is feeling valued, being connected and cared for. So respecting others is a natural part of life and important to our survival. It’s important to be able to interact with others, to collaborate and to connect.

Many of our original cultures are systems that consist of individual, couple, family, extended family and community. In all those aspects, interacting together is essential for survival - for survival of the individual and the group.

Therefore, negative behaviours would be unusual and usually not tolerated by the group, or the individual. It’s important for people to work together and that helps everyone!

As people, we are all “individual” with different personalities, different interests, different views. So, we won’t always agree with another person, or get along with them. But we can be polite and respectful- understanding that they have a different view or a different interpretation of something.

Helping our children with bullying behaviour then involves considering actions, responses and behaviour in a broader context. The first step Is not treating the other person the way they have treated us. So, not responding with negativity or criticism or sarcasm (when that is what is given). A typical response is usually about not engaging with the person -which may mean leaving the situation or going somewhere safer. It maybe about giving a neutral response such as “wow, that’s tough” or “ I didn’t know that” or “ that’s a surprise”.

One key component of dealing with another person’s bullying behaviour is whether. we take on board the negative or hurtful comments. Being able to separate the “behaviour” from the person is essential. So understanding that What “bob” said, it’s not true, and clearly there’s something in his life going on that means he is directing his anger and frustration at others.....

As adults, we can be strong, respectful of others, and resilient. Our children too can learn important values and develop resiliency. We can help our children understand others better, and learn respectful responses which can improve the interactions of everyone in our community.

Written by Jay Anderson

The ego wants quantity, the soul wants quality

Close your eyes and picture what you want in life, what comes to mind? I bet it's not piles of money, but something far simpler. Maybe it's quietly reading under a tree with your dog nearby. Perhaps it's sitting on the beach with your toes in the sand while sipping on iced tea and chatting with friends. Or a work shed where you can tool around after work creating and fixing things like your grandfather.

Wealth is what is valuable to you, nothing more. While all of these things seem like something only the wealthy could do, not a single one screams you need piles of money and a lot of materialistic things. You need just enough and the willpower to get there.

Easily said, right? It's not as hard as you think. There are two key factors: Defining what is "enough," and developing the willpower to create the life we want.

DEFINING ENOUGH

"Enough" is something that only you can define personally and together as a family. Defining what is enough for you means you're not chasing more that won't make you happy. This is hard enough as adults being told what we want through enticing marketing. As parents and caretakers, we have a delicate problem. Children will always want to chase things that they think will put them in a good place within their social circle on top of that marketing.

It's a give and take with children. We need to help them learn strength as well as create their own definitions. We can set an example by fighting the urge to keep up with the Jones' by taking pride in being a trend-setter in little ways. Living for yourself, not for other's expectations, is probably the best example you can give.

Seeing your actions and the happiness it can bring, gives children a sense of something beyond the normal tug-of-war between societal expectations and self. I have seen this in action most powerfully among the poverty stricken area where I've worked. There I see how they make more out of what they have by focusing on love and togetherness, travelling only locally, and not really focusing on material things they don't really use.

One of the most fun, frugal, psychologically beneficial things I've seen families do is a make ice cream at home with a Kickball Ice Cream Maker. A laughter-filled family game of kickball turns into a dessert, then everyone sits

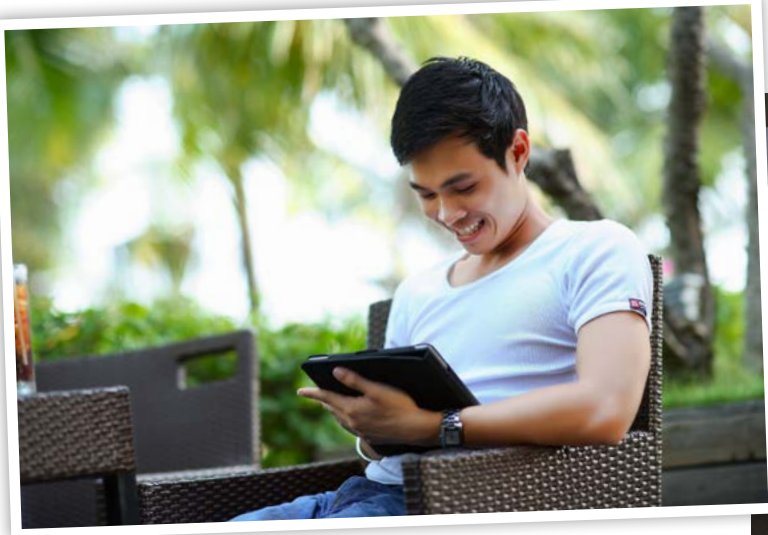


around enjoying a sweet treat exhaustedly happy. Not only did they get a burst of healing laughter and family time, but they also learnt an invaluable psychological trick: delayed gratification.

THE LINK BETWEEN DELAYED GRATIFICATION, WILLPOWER, AND SUCCESS

The marshmallow test as it's become known, was a behavioural psychology test given by researchers to young children. The children were left alone in a room with a marshmallow. They were told that they could have the marshmallow, but if they waited 15 minutes, they could have two of them. Mischel revisited these same children later on as adolescents to find that those that delayed gratification tended to be more successful (Mischel, 1989).

As you can guess, there have been other studies on willpower and the marshmallow test. These tests show that it's not what you have as a family, but how your character



matters. This willpower does not come from having money. It comes from having a wealth that is more intangible – being able to trust those around you in every day life to be fair and reliable (Kidd, Palmeri, and Aslin, 2013).

Children can start sensing trustworthiness as early as a few months old, but toddlers start making connections. Children watch everything from everyone, though. Michaelson and Munakata (2016) noted that it's enough to see adults being dishonest and mistreating one another to start this feeling of distrust with adults.

We, as adults, have a lot of responsibility to be able to raise our children with the mindset where wealth is possible in the simple. So, how do we do it?

Don't be dishonest, even if it's uncomfortable.

I'm a licensed professional that people see as an expert. I'm also an educator. My job is to know things. Yet, when I find I don't, being honest about it wins more respect. A simple, "I'm not sure, let's find the answer together" goes a long way with all ages and expertise.

Work on projects as a team.

One of my fondest memories was working with my grandfather as he worked through how to fix a boat motor. He would talk to me as if I was his peer, even though I was in 2nd grade. As I asked questions, he would answer. He would give me tasks to complete without hesitation. Not only did I get close with my grandfather and learn about boats, but I also learnt what it took to take care of things around the house.

Plan things out with them, especially when it requires money or hard decisions.

One of the hardest lessons we all learn in life is money – and that we can't afford all the things. My family never taught me this lesson, so at the lab I've opened up the book for all the students and staff.

Through this we've learnt cooperation, to discuss priorities, and interestingly enough, how to be creative with the things we already have to achieve more.

The 1940s mend and make do attitude is in full force when they don't want to relinquish their dreams, but at the same time can't get the newest, shiniest technology or

toy just to make it easier.

Explore things fully with all your senses with your children.

Working with a variety of families over the years has taught me invaluable lessons. One of them is to find joy in the little things while experiencing life with all five senses.

One family practised this for years with their children. Once their teen taught us how to find joy in a situation when all chaos was breaking loose. A machine had failed, spewing sewage out. They pointed out joyfully that while the smell was atrocious, it made a musical pattern as it was coming out. So, while they waited for the pressure to go down and we could approach the machine, they invented a dance to go with the beat.

Volunteer, focusing on helping others.

Research on altruism (Post, 2005) has shown that when people do good without over taxing themselves, they feel emotionally better, enjoy better health, and tend to live a bit longer. Being a little more compassionate and giving can help individuals feel success and get a boost in self-esteem – the very things that we think wealth brings.

Written by Grace Conyers

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CYBERBULLYING IS REAL, INVASIVE AND IMPACTING YOUR KIDS... even if you don't know about it...

First let's understand what cyberbullying is – according to the ESafety Commissioner it is the use of technology to bully a person or group with the intent to hurt them socially, psychologically or even physically.

I know as the mother of 3 teenagers – 18, 15 and 13 that it is only too real. And helping my kids navigate has so far has not been easy.

The types of things your kids are experiencing on a daily basis are things like abusive texts or emails, hurtful messages, imitation of them online in a hurtful way, exclusion online – for example where a chat group is created that you aren't a part of, a party invitation that is open to everyone except you and where the bully says 'don't tell this person about it!' Humiliation online and nasty gossip and chats.

And that's before we even get started with hurtful platforms whose sole purpose is to hurt people like Sarahah.

And what's making it worse is that there is simply no escape – in a recent discussion with a psychologist I was advised that past a certain age – to take technology away from children who are already anxious is not an option – because you are excluding them from the social circle and this is likely to exacerbate exclusion and anxiety.

It really does seem as though we are slaves to technology and as a parent – the question is how do you protect your kids from cyberbullying. How do you help them to navigate this invasion of privacy that follows them into their house and into their bedroom every day?

I believe that we must start with two key principles:

1. Mindset; and
2. Openness

From a mindset perspective encouraging our children to be strong individuals who believe in themselves and who have a strong self-belief that is built up daily by the important people in their lives will help your child to be more resilient in shaking off cyberbullying impacts.

Building them up with strong affirmations and also providing them with things to do regularly that get them away from their technology such as dance, team sports, family walks, walking the dog are also important. And I am a believer in switch off of the wifi at a set time every night – say 10pm. This provides a parent enforced break overnight – I have heard from my own kids that often they have friends who are on their devices at 2am – this is definitely not healthy or recommended.

And on openness? For me this is all about being open to talk to your kids every single day. Creating opportunities to share and talk without judgement – will help your kids to open up to you and to ask for guidance. Try not to feel like you have to solve everything – listening and empathizing are recommended. Take them for coffee, breakfast, ice cream or out for lunch. Take the dogs for a walk together – encourage them to leave their phone at home.

As a parent we also have to talk about the hard stuff and how we want our kids to respond in these situations – for example when dealing with requests from other kids to send naked selfies, when confronted with receiving one of these – and I assure it is happening, my 15 year old daughter receives regular requests from boys. How they should respond when they are the victim of cyberbullying – what to do and what not to do.

I highly recommend that you visit the website of the eSafety Commissioner found here <https://www.esafety.gov.au/esafety-information/esafety-issues/cyberbullying> as they have a full checklist with a link to Kids Helpline too – a fantastic organisation who your kids can reach out to about anything – anytime.

WHAT NOT TO DO

As a parent I encourage you not to bury your head in the sand and pretend it isn't happening to your kids. Review the tips I have provided and take action today to ensure that your children know you are there for them and what options are available to help them.

Written by Annette Rose



Using the Power of Play to BOOST SELF-ESTEEM

According to Albert Einstein “Play is the highest form of research” and he isn’t wrong, but I also believe that play is an extremely useful tool when it comes to boosting children’s self-confidence and self-esteem, which will better equip them to handle challenging situations in the future such as peer pressure and bullying.

The term “play” can mean different things to different people which is ok because play is a truly multifaceted activity. For today’s article I would like to focus on a form of play that is not often spoken about: adult-lead play with children.

The power that playing with children (and I don’t mean playing with them on Xbox, Playstation or just watching them play at the park) is quite remarkable. It’s a great opportunity to connect, build rapport with and teach them many different important physical and emotional skills, as well as boost their self-esteem and confidence. It truly is positive for both mind and body for the child.

These benefits can be best achieved by including a mix of play and games that allows them to experience both success and failure, leaning towards one or the other depending on the individuals needs at the time (i.e. a child who has low self-esteem and confidence will be better suited to a level of play that will allow them to achieve success and to feel capable and good about

themselves. Whereas when a child is a little too confident and strives maybe too hard to always win, they may benefit from experiencing losing).

SOME OF MY FAVORITE GAMES TO ENCOURAGE THESE BENEFITS INCLUDE:

ROUGH-HOUSING: General rough-housing is one of the most undervalued activities when it comes to free play. It allows the child the opportunity to explore their own strengths in a controlled manner as well as teaching them some empathy and understanding of how it feels to have someone to be a little rough with them so they can better appreciate their own strength towards others.

Rough play can be as simple as wrestling, play fighting, pushing and pulling. When an adult rough-houses with a child they too need to be mindful of their own strength and match it to the abilities of the child as to try not to injure them but without going ‘too easy’; sometimes winning over the child, sometimes letting the child win.

CLIMBING TREES: This is a great way for children to develop their self-awareness, build their confidence and improve their problem solving abilities. The key for adults to do this with a child is to remember not to tell them how to climb, but lead by example and let them work out their own paths.



A child who doesn't usually climb trees and get involved in this type of activity may feel more comfortable giving it a go when they see an adult doing it. Very rarely do adults climb trees (sadly) so this something a child would view as something they want to mimic.

(Tip: always maintain 3 points of contact for safety)

BALANCING: Balancing can be done just about anywhere. You can balance on rocks, logs on the ground, tree branches, park benches or railings. For kids who are new to balancing it's a good idea to start the practice by balancing on one leg on the ground, then swapping over, to gain foundation strength and stability before making it harder.

Balance is a great way for children to work on their spatial awareness and confidence, it's also a great mindfulness activity.

Adults can balance as well (again, start with the basics if new to this activity) or assist the child by being there to steady them if they need it but mostly encouraging them to do it themselves and to keep trying. The key with balancing is to choose a spot further out in front of you and focus on it, not look down at where the foot is next stepping to, and being barefoot is better for grip and connection).

BULL IN THE RING: This is another form of rough-housing but put into a game. The idea of this game is to draw a big circle on the sand (or mark a circle out on grass) and trying to push or pull each other out of the circle. This can be played with just two people, or a small

group, whoever is the last one in the ring is the winner. The more children playing this the better!

This is a great game to play to improve awareness, confidence, strength, stamina, teamwork and empathy (understanding how it feels to push people out and be pushed out).

I TALK A LOT ABOUT OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES, BUT WHAT ABOUT INDOOR PLAY?

Indoor play is ok, but outdoor play is far superior. When playing outdoors both the adult and the child are exposed to various weather conditions and environments (natural and human-made). The main advantage of this is building resilience; being able to handle adverse conditions and becoming comfortable with being uncomfortable.

It also allows children the opportunity to thrive in less than ideal situations, can help build empathy and care for the environment and the animals that live in it, as well as relieving stress for both children and adults. Modern life is full of synthetic and comfortable conveniences and time spent mostly indoors, humans need more 'less comfy' outdoor exposure in order to adapt, grow and thrive.

There is no denying the many benefits of play for both children and adults, so now is a good time to put down your tech device and go play!

Written by Clint Bauer

Mentor + Trainer, Primal Influence, Family bonding, Sibling bonding

How to turn your 20 days annual leave into 52 days OF HOLIDAYS IN 2020



As a financial planner for the last 20 years, planning is now well and truly part of my DNA. And between you and me, once you know the core fundamentals about money planning; working with numbers, projections, legislations and financial product features all day can at times get a bit dry and dull.

So given that today is a Friday, I'm in Cairns and the weekend is just ahead, I thought I'd take a break from the daily grind (while still firmly in my roll of planning) and research the following juicy question.

HOW TO TAKE MORE TIME OFF AND STILL BE PAID FOR IT?

What I discovered is that with a bit of planning, getting your holiday requests in early (before other staff) and a

flexible boss. You can easily extend your 20 days annual leave all the way out to 52 days a year, or a 260% increase in leisure time.

The following maximising your leave and holidays is based on for Queensland Australia public holidays. If you are in another state please check your relevant state holidays there as they may differ slightly i.e. different Labour Day, Queens Birthday, Show Day dates.

Note. For completeness calculations begin from 1st Jan 2020 which is a Tuesday however if you drew on annual leave on the 31st December the first holiday would extend an additional 3 days for a total of 9 instead of 6.

Additional note. If you also took Friday the 27th December off (leave without pay) this could extend the

Christmas break length of holidays from 6 days to 9 days (inclusive of weekends, two days annual leave and a day leave without pay).

So let's begin!

JANUARY

Tuesday 1st January is Public Holiday (New Year Day)
 Wednesday 2nd January. Annual Leave
 Thursday 3rd January. Annual Leave
 Friday 4th January. Annual Leave
 Saturday 5th January. Weekend
 Sunday 6th January. Weekend

1st Break total 6 days. Drawing down 3 days annual leave.

Saturday 26th January. Weekend
 Sunday 27th January. Weekend
 Monday 28th January. Public Holiday (Australia Day)
2nd Break. Total 3 days. Drawing down 0 days annual leave.

APRIL

Saturday 13th April. Weekend
 Sunday 14th April. Weekend
 Monday 15th April. Annual Leave
 Tuesday 16th April. Annual Leave
 Wednesday 17th April. Annual Leave
 Thursday 18th April. Annual Leave
 Friday 19th April. Public Holiday (Good Friday)
 Saturday 20th April. Weekend
 Sunday 21st April. Weekend
 Monday 22nd April. Public Holiday (Easter Monday)
 Tuesday 23rd April. Annual Leave
 Wednesday 24th April. Annual Leave
 Thursday 25th April. Public Holiday. (ANZAC Day)
 Friday 26th April. Annual Leave
 Saturday 27th April. Weekend
 Sunday 28th April. Weekend

3rd Break. Total 16 days. Drawing down 7 days annual leave.

MAY

Saturday 4th May. Weekend
 Sunday 5th May. Weekend
 Monday 6th May. Public Holiday (Labour Day)
 Tuesday 7th May. Annual Leave
 Wednesday 8th May. Annual Leave
 Thursday 9th May. Annual Leave
 Friday 10th May. Annual Leave
 Saturday 20th April. Weekend
 Sunday 21st April. Weekend

4th Break. Total 9 days. Drawing down 4 days annual leave.

AUGUST

Saturday 10th August. Weekend
 Sunday 11th August. Weekend



Monday 12th August. Annual Leave
 Tuesday 13th August. Annual Leave
 Wednesday 14th August. Public Holiday (Queensland Royal Show day)
 Thursday 15th August. Annual Leave
 Friday 16th August. Annual Leave
 Saturday 17th August. Weekend
 Sunday 22nd August. Weekend

5th Break. Total 9 days. Drawing down 4 days annual leave.

OCTOBER

Saturday 6th October. Weekend
 Sunday 7th October. Weekend
 Monday 8th October. Public Holiday (Queens Birthday)

6th Break. Total 3 days. Drawing down 0 days annual leave.

DECEMBER

Saturday 21st December. Weekend
 Sunday 22nd December. Weekend
 Monday 23rd December. Annual Leave
 Tuesday 24th December. Annual Leave
 Wednesday 25th December. Public Holiday (Christmas Day)
 Thursday 26th December. Public Holiday (Boxing Day)
7th Break. Total 6 days. Drawing down 2 days annual leave.

Total leave taken 20 days. Total holiday length (including weekends) 52 days.

The only things you have to decide now is what you're going to do now with your extra holiday time.

Written by Peter Horsfield, as such they are his personal views.

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How to pay off your DEBTS ASAP

It's common knowledge that debt and financial problems are the number one cause for stress and worry in our lives. Recently I met with "Frank and Ernest" who had amassed combined total debts of \$127,000 across their credit cards, home loan and personal loans.

Frank told me that they expected to be debt free in fifteen years (based on his mortgage etc).

"How does being debt free within the next five years sound?" I asked.

A FRANK AND ERNEST CONVERSATION

Frank: "You can't be debt free in 5 years or less if you own a home".

Me: "Really, do you mind if I use you as an example?"

Frank: "This will be interesting"

Me: "Can you save 10% of your gross income?"

Frank: "If it means I will be debt free in 5 years absolutely."

The following table shows the Frank and Ernest's financial income and expenses position

CLIENTS	GROSS	TAX APPROX	NET	SPEND
Frank Income	\$55,000	\$10,000	\$45,000	\$2,400 (Fixed)
Ernest Income	\$35,000	\$4,000	\$31,000	\$2,000 (cash)
				\$1,900 Other exp
TOTAL	\$90,000	\$14,000	\$76,000	
Per Month	\$7,500		\$6,300	\$6,300

Frank and Ernest agree to save 10% of their gross income per month = \$750 and they find this by making savings within on their current expenses etc...

The following is the sequence to pay down individual loans so to be debt free in less than 5 years.



As with many things in life the simple the strategy, the easier it is to implement and the more profound its impact.

Starting with the debt with the least owing, pay this off and then with the interest you are now saving (by paying off the debt) add this towards paying off your next debt etc... lather, rinse, repeat until all your debts are paid off.

SUMMARY OF DEBTS HELD BY THE CLIENT

ITEM DESCRIPTION	MAJOR DEBT	MONTHLY REPAYMENTS	INTEREST RATE	(FACTOR)	PAYMENT RANKING
House	\$100,000	\$1,100	10.5%	90	5th
Car	\$20,000	\$450	15%	44	4th
Myer/Store Card	\$2,000	\$350	21%	5.7	2nd
Credit Card	\$1,300	\$300	19%	4.3	1st
Personal Loan	\$4,500	\$200	23%	22.5	3rd
TOTAL	\$127,800				

ITEM DESCRIPTION	REPAYMENT PROGRESSION	DEBT CLEARANCE	TIME LINE
1st Credit card	Outstanding balance \$1,300 repaid at \$1,050pm = \$300 (repayment rate) + \$750 savings	1.5 Months	Month 1.5
2nd Store Card	Outstanding balance \$2,200 repaid at \$1,400pm = \$1,050 from available savings i.e. \$750 per month + \$300 repayment saved as 1st Credit card paid out + \$350 (repayment rate) on store card.	1.5 Months	Month 3
3rd Personal Loan	Outstanding balance is \$4,500 repaid at \$1,600pm = \$1,400 from available savings i.e. \$750 per month + \$300pm repayment saved as 1st Credit card paid out & \$350pm repayment rate on the Store card + \$200 personal loan monthly repayment rate.	3 Months	Month 6
4th Car Loan	Outstanding Balance \$20,000 repaid at \$2,050pm = \$1,600 from available savings i.e. \$750 per month + \$300pm repayment saved as 1st Credit card paid out + \$350pm repayment on the Store card + \$200pm repayment personal loan rate + \$450pm repayment car loan rate.	10 Months	Month 16
House Loan	Outstanding Balance \$100,000 repaid at \$3,150pm = \$2,050 from available savings i.e. \$750 per month + \$300pm repayment saved as 1st Credit card paid out + \$350pm repayment rate on the Store card + \$200pm repayment personal loan rate + \$450pm repayment car loan rate + \$1,100pm repayment home loan rate.	32 Months	Month 48

Some people may argue one can also achieve the same outcome by consolidating all your loans into one big loan at a lower interest rate. While this may be so in theory, the real issue is that people become more laissez-faire, thinking they can now slack off in their repayments or go out and spend more.

The human tendency is to again go out and spend on the card or on an unforeseen expense or emergency (if they don't have an emergency expense savings account). Due to the minimum debt repayment set by the financial institution (compared to what the individual is paying as a whole now) and simply because its available, yes you guess it... it goes on to the credit card again and ultimately the borrower ends up in more debt.

By implementing the debt reduction method of one debt at a time; one's confidence builds through reinforcement as the evidence of progress reveals itself, (releasing debt burden) one debt at a time. Paying off debt and never owing it again is a truly liberating experience. I encourage you to embrace this approach if you are lost and confused when it comes to how to best pay out your debts.

Written by Peter Horsfield

They are his personal views. This information is of a general nature only and neither represents nor is intended to be specific advice on any particular matter. Infocus Securities Australia Pty Ltd strongly suggests that no person should act specifically on the basis of the information contained herein but should seek appropriate professional advice based upon their own personal circumstances.

Home toxicity and HOW TO REDUCE IT

These days we are surrounded by so many chemicals that we have often been exposed to hundreds of toxins before even leaving the house. While there is little that can be done about outside contaminants, you can significantly reduce your chemical load by watching out for the following common household toxins.

FURNISHINGS, PLASTICS AND ELECTRONICS

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) are a class of chemicals found in new furnishings and carpet along with plastic, fresh paint, new electronics, or any materials which have been dry cleaned. If you have recently redecorated your home, you may have introduced a plethora of toxic chemicals. Fortunately, good ventilation will significantly reduce the concentration of VOCs in your home. You can start by opening up the windows and allowing fresh air to flow through the house. If you have freshly painted walls or new carpet, open up the doors and windows and turn the fans on to direct VOCs outside.

SCENTED CANDLES AND ROOM SPRAYS

Room fragrance products are a big contributor to unnecessary chemical exposure in the home. The synthetic fragrance used in reed stick diffusers, candles, room sprays and wall plug-ins act as endocrine disruptors, increasing the likely hood of hormone-related health conditions. Along with artificial fragrances, many candles are made using paraffin wax which actually creates carcinogens when burned.

Soy wax candles are a much safer option. If using scented candles lookout for 'fragrance' on the label, as this indicates synthetic fragrance. Instead, use candles that are scented

using natural essential oils, or use pure oils in a diffuser or oil burner.

CLEANING PRODUCTS

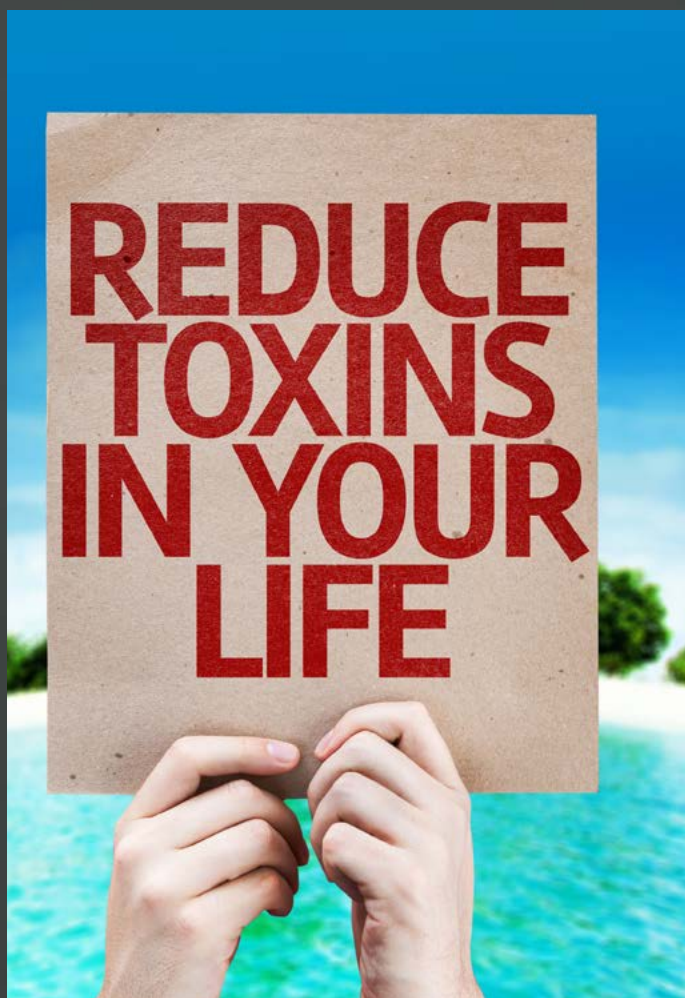
Some common chemicals found in commercial cleaning products include chlorine, ammonia, sodium hydroxide and triclosan. Exposure to these chemicals can occur through inhalation or direct skin contact and contribute to conditions such as contact dermatitis and asthma in otherwise healthy individuals. Think about what you wash your dishes with, wipes benches, clean windows and scrub toilets with. All of these products are contributing to chemical exposure on a daily basis.

Using natural cleaning products in the home is simple and need not be expensive. Vinegar is a fantastic cleaning agent and it is cheap! Simply decant into a spray bottle and use as a surface spray and bathroom cleaner. Bi-carb soda can be used where you need to scrub with a little muscle to remove shower scum, and if you have any lemons handy the citric acid works wonders at breaking down and removing grime. Try this trick to clean your kettle: put half a lemon into a kettle of water and boil, then rinse and you will notice how fresh your kettle looks on the inside.

PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

Sodium laurel sulphate (SLS), sodium laureth sulphate (SLES), polyethylene glycol (PEG), and aluminium are just a few of the most well-known chemicals lurking in personal care products. Shampoo, makeup, body wash, deodorant etc. Absorbing these chemicals through the skin has the ability to affect hormones and alter





cell DNA transcription. Sufferers of skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis will often see a reaction after using commercial skin products containing too many harsh chemicals, making natural skin care a must for sensitive and reactive skin.

MOLD

Mycotoxins produced from mold have the ability to cause serious neurological and neuropsychiatric conditions. While food that contains mold is often visible, mold in the home is not always so. Conditions that are warm and moist are ideal for mold growth, which is why places such as the bathroom and laundry are common mold hot spots.

Over exposure to mold mycotoxins suppresses the immune system, causing an array of health complications. The brain is one of the main organs effected by mycotoxin exposure, resulting in neurological conditions such as headaches, poor memory, brain fog and depression. To avoid mold growth in the home, proper ventilation and water drainage is paramount.

PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES

The use of pesticides in agriculture may improve crop yields and lower produce prices, however we pay for this trade off with our health. While you may not notice immediate symptoms, long term exposure to pesticides



and herbicides through food have the potential to damage the gut lining and destroy beneficial microflora, paving the way for the development of or worsening the body's disease process.

While organic food may be expensive, it is worth investing in your health early to prevent illness. Understandably, many families simply cannot afford to buy all organic food, however, it is helpful to know which food products contain the highest levels of pesticides so you may decide where to invest your money.

The dirty dozen and clean fifteen is a list of fruits and vegetables containing high or low levels of pesticides (as some crops are sprayed more than others). This list can help you prioritise which foods you buy organic and which you can get away with buying non-organic. While the body that governs this list is based in the US, farming practices and pesticides used are similar to what we use here in Australia. (www.ewg.org)

PLASTIC BOTTLES AND FOOD CONTAINERS

Do you use a plastic water bottle or heat food in plastic containers? Stop right there! BPA (Bisphenol A) and other chemicals leached in plastic can interfere with hormones and nutritional status by binding to zinc (and other minerals), ultimately reducing zinc levels in the body. Low zinc is associated with lowered immunity, polycystic ovarian syndrome, acne, hair loss and more.

HOW TO REDUCE CHEMICAL EXPOSURE IN THE HOME

A non-toxic home can be achieved by following these five simple guidelines.

1. Ventilate your home adequately and regularly open up windows to let fresh air circulate.
2. Invest in some indoor plants. Plants not only look nice, they also help to naturally purify the air.
3. Go natural. Choose chemical free personal care products, and use natural essential oils for aroma instead of synthetic fragrances.
4. Eat as much organic food as you can.
5. Use natural eco-friendly brands or make your own homemade cleaning products.

Ingredient Feature

SPELT

Spelt can be referred to as one of those ancient grains, as it has been in some sort of cultivation since 5,000 bc, which is anywhere between 7,000 to 10,000 years back. This is confirmed in texts dating back to this time found in present day Iran. The grain is also known by the names of hulled wheat or dinkel wheat.

This little grain was an important staple food source within Europe from the Bronze age to medieval times, after which it began to fall out of favour. Today it is gaining in popularity though still not to the extent of its former dominance or even close to that of the common wheat in production today.

There was a time when many people thought Spelt to be Gluten Free, and I presume there are still some out there who tote this belief. Unfortunately for all of the gluten intolerant people, spelt is not Glute Free. Though the difference lays in the originality of the grain, it has been shown, from genetic evidence, to be a naturally occurring hybrid of a domesticated wheat variety, Remained the same for thousands of years, and unlike our more common general wheat variety, spelt has not been genetically modified. So theoretically it is in its original state as it was some 7 to 10 thousand years back.

According to Greek Mythology the goddess Demeter gifted spelt to the Greek people, a nice story to contemplate. Archaeological evidence of the consumption or use of spelt dates back to the fifth millennium BC. Though it was not until the ninth century till spelt developed into a major crop throughout many parts of Europe. This was probably due to its adaptability to cold weather, and harsh conditions.

FOR COOKING

Spelt can be used in any recipe that requires flour, from breads to cakes, pastas, sweet and savory baked items.

Spelt has for me a light feeling with no residual heaviness sometimes associated with cooked products containing common wheat flour.

In Germany, and Austria you can purchase Dinkelbrot, loaves and bread rolls in supermarkets and bakeries made entirely from spelt flour. He unripe spelt grains can be dried out and eaten as a green grain, apparently, they are delicious, though I haven't had the opportunity to try this for myself yet.



HEALTH BENEFITS

Although there's no panacea for eternal youth or health with this grain, there is a pool of vital minerals and vitamins present that will assist in supporting a healthy diet. It is an excellent source of dietary fibre and has slightly elevated levels of zinc and protein, as opposed to regular or standard wheat. It has a spread of several B vitamins as well as manganese and phosphorous.

It is important to realise that this is a grain which retains mostly all of its original nutritional values. It has not been genetically modified, to ensure greater yields or the like at the moment. So my advice is to take advantage of it whilst it is still in its original state.

Unfortunately, today the Spelt Grain is more of a speciality grain crop than the better-known common wheat which is mass produced today. Though the popularity of spelt is growing, and more and more you can find spelt grains, flours and products in bakeries and supermarkets throughout the world.

Written by Kevin Kapusi Starow

Spelt Chocolate Chip Cookies

Crisp on the outside and tender on the inside, these Spelt Chocolate Chip Cookies are a fun twist on the traditional chocolate chip cookie with a slight salty bite from the almonds.

Makes 15 cookies

Ingredients

4 tbsp	butter, softened at room temperature
½ cup	stevia or monkfruit sweetener
1 tsp	vanilla extract
Pinch of salt	
1 large	egg
1 cup	spelt flour
½ tsp	baking powder
¼ tsp	baking soda
¼ cup	sugar free chocolate chips
¼ cup	lightly salted almonds, roughly chopped

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 350 deg F
2. Prepare a cookie tray with non-stick spray or a non-stick baking mat.
3. In a large mixing bowl, cream the butter and stevia/monkfruit sweetener.

4. Add in the vanilla extract, salt and egg, and whisk together thoroughly.
5. Add the spelt flour, baking powder and baking soda into the bowl. Mix the dry ingredients into the creamed butter mixture.
6. Add in the chocolate chips and chopped almonds, and fold into the dough. You may need to use your hands to knead the chocolate and almonds evenly into the dough.
7. Take a large spoon and scoop a tablespoon of the dough. Roll the dough into balls and place on the prepared cookie tray. Repeat with remaining dough.
8. Flatten the balls to approximately 1 inch thickness.
9. Bake in a preheated oven for 10-15 mins till lightly golden brown.
10. Cool on the baking sheet for about 5 mins before eating!

Note: Store cooled cookies in an airtight container for up to 1 week.



Recipe by Renata Trebing

COMMUNITY engagement ON SAFARI

Gone are the days when “Safari” was only for the elite of Britain’s colonial population. Nowadays the Dark Continent is accessible to anyone on any budget. And it is no longer about hunting or simply wildlife spotting. Increasingly, travellers are looking for ways to connect with people, to find out how other cultures live, what they eat, what their houses are like, and what jobs they do.

Of course, travellers coming to Africa want to see wildlife, but sprinkle a smattering of meeting people through the safari and you enhance the experience and bring more life to the trip. Although community-based tourism is relatively new in Africa, there are some great experiences

you can include in your safari to break up the game drives. One of the simplest, and most overlooked, ways of getting to know a culture is to talk to your guide. Many people fly in and out of the game reserves and don’t have time to interact with a guide on the ground (they might talk to their driver on a game drive).

Travelling by road rather than flying gives you more opportunity to see more of the country and ask your guide lots of questions. Moreover, you can choose a tour company that uses local guides in some places on your itinerary meaning that your tourist dollar is spread more widely and you are getting the expert knowledge of someone who lives in that area.



Examples include:

- In Kenya at Lakes Naivasha and Baringo there are local guides who can take you on a boat or for a walk
- MCF Panairobi (<http://mcfpanairobi.or.ke/>) offers walking tours with street kids in the Nairobi CBD
- In Cape Town and Johannesburg you can do township tours
- In the Okavango Delta in Botswana you can take a mokoro (dugout canoe) trip with local polers

You get the benefit of the experience of someone who has grown up in that area and they get access to some tourist dollars. If you are travelling with a tour company, ask them if they use local guides.

Home stays or just a meal with a family gives you a perfect opportunity to see real life in your destination. If you are not completely comfortable with imposing yourself on a family, you can request your driver-guide take you to a local restaurant instead of the tourist restaurants. If you do go for a meal with a family, there is sometimes the opportunity for a cooking lesson before the meal and you all eat what you produce. Mwenya Uganda (<http://www.mwenya-uganda.org/>) is a community organisation that hosts such an experience as a day trip from Kampala.

Home stays are not for everyone, but there are some places that provide a great balance between having your own privacy while being part of the community. Maji Moto (<http://majimotomaasaicamp.com/>) near the Maasai Mara in Kenya is one example: you have your own hut close to the Maasai village, your meals are prepared by the Maasai and you participate in village life during the day.

Visiting community-based organisations is becoming a popular offering of many tour companies. You might spend a day teaching English in a school, tutoring students in a library, playing with children at an orphanage or planting trees. Or you can simply visit the projects to see the positive development work occurring

in the communities. If you want to bring donations, visit Pack For A Purpose (www.packforapurpose.org) and search for your accommodation and/or tour operator. There you will find a list of supplies you can donate to the projects your tour operator/ accommodation supports. Investours (<http://investours.org/home/>) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania is a day experience where your fee becomes a micro-loan for one entrepreneur who you choose through the course of the day as you visit several small businesses and get to understand daily life.

There are many tribes throughout the African continent that have a representation in the form of a cultural village or a living museum. In Kenya there are several Maasai villages around the Maasai Mara, Samburu villages around Samburu National Reserve, an El Molo village at Lake Turkana, and a Kikuyu cultural centre at Githunguri. In Namibia there is a Damara living museum near Twyfelfontein and a Himba village near Kamanjab. In Tanzania you can visit the Bushmen near Lake Eyasi and in Botswana there are also opportunities to see the San Bushmen around Ghanzi.

Festivals are a great way to experience local culture if you can time your trip well. The Lake Turkana Cultural Festival in northern Kenya occurs each May and brings together fourteen ethnic groups in a flurry of singing and dancing. Lake of Stars in Malawi and Rift Valley Festival in Kenya are two contemporary music festivals both happening around August or September each year. There are plenty of festivals which can usually be found on the internet or by asking your tour operator.

As you can see volunteering for two weeks is not the only way to engage with communities as you travel. Throughout the African continent there are various opportunities to meet local people and learn their cultures and traditions. As you plan your African safari keep your eye out for different experiences – trawl travel forums, blogs and ask your tour operator – so that your safari embraces all aspects of the country.

