

Finding Wellness Through the Arts

By Dr. Margaret Rea

This month's reflection comes from Debbie Ward, PhD, RN, FAAN, Dignity Health Dean's Chair for Nursing Leadership and The Interim Dean & Clinical Professor at Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing. Please take a moment to read.

I'm standing (!) at my computer with my first upper respiratory infection of the season (wash hands!) after welcoming two groups of School of Nursing students now starting their fall quarter classes. Instead of shaking their hands in our Welcoming Ceremony, I elbow-bumped our incoming master's-degree and doctoral leadership students – one small step for wellness.

For the medical students, family nurse practitioner, master's-entry nursing and physician assistant students, classes and clinical rotations are well underway. Their school year in the School of Medicine and the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis started back in June. As school starts or continues for all of us on the Sacramento campus, I'm thinking of ways for all of us to stay healthy and even enhance our wellness.

I know all our Sacramento campus students, staff and faculty could recite some of the boxes to check off on a wellness inventory: sleep, exercise, nutrition. Maybe many of you would also include building and maintaining your support network of friends and family. But how about including art and literature in that inventory?

We have rich art resources here in Sacramento – starting with the Crocker Art Museum (<https://www.crockerart.org/>) and our many galleries in town. But how many of you have taken your own or a friend's child (ages 0-7) to Art Beast (<https://www.artbeaststudio.com>)? Art Beast is an arts exploration space where kids make art happen -- painting, glue-ing stuff and mud play with a real (unworking) stove outside to bake those pies in. (And the proceeds go to programs for homeless children and youth.) When you take your kids there, you may well be inspired to create

something yourself.

Have you have been to the new Manetti Shrem Museum of Art on the Davis campus (<https://manettishremmuseum.ucdavis.edu>)? It's free for all. And when you're in Davis, I hope you find a concert to take in at Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts (<https://www.mondaviarts.org/events/upcoming-events>) – one of my favorites is the Ukulele orchestra of Great Britain appearing in April. In November, the women a Capella quintet from Zimbabwe, Nobuntu, has three performances.



This is a remarkable group that will really take you away from whatever is taking up too much space in your head. Student discounts are a whopping 50 percent off single ticket prices (student verification required).

What are you reading – even for five minutes a day – to take you out of yourself and give you fresh views? One book I think we all should read is *The Other California* by Gerald Haslam. Even for a girl from Bakersfield, I knew so little about the great Central valley that should be the focus of so much of our efforts in health equity. And the campus community book this year is by none other than the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu – *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World*. Their co-author and interviewer Douglas Abrams will be at Mondavi in February to speak about this work, a book that has been a text in the Psychology of Emotion course taught by UC Davis Professor Bob Emmons.

Art and literature can transport us – I hope you take a little time to be moved.

Wellness Events

Work Life and Wellness Events

<http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/hr/wellness/index.html>

UC Living Fit Forever

http://intranet.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/clinops/resources/living_fit_forever.shtml

Fall Food Festival

Tuesday October 2nd, 2018
11am –3pm
Vanderhoef Commons

Wellness Workshop:

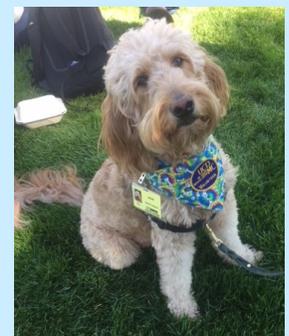
“Don't Let the Imposter Voice Fool You”
Dr. Maggie Rea, Ph.D
October 18th, Noon
Edu Bldg. 2205
First 30 students receive lunch

Yoga on The Grass

Tuesdays 12-12:50PM
Vanderhoef Commons Starting
August 7, 2018
All Levels Welcome

The Therapy Dogs

October 17, 2018
11:30am-1:30pm
Vanderhoef Commons



Wellness Tip: Turn an Art Museum Visit Into Mindfulness Meditation

It seemed like a good fit to Dr. Ward's piece about the role of art and wellness, to consider a practice of mindful art exploration. This exercise talks about using mindfulness when observing visual art but could be applied to music or other art explorations.

"Just as witnessing the breath in meditation connects us to the here and now, the process of observing artwork is a doorway to the present moment.....Like meditation, looking at a work of art forces us to slow down, to shift from rapid and habitual patterns of thinking, and to become more streamlined and focused. To stand in front of a work of art requires the ability to be still and engage in the act of seeing—taking in color, line, movement, the obvious details and the subtler undertones the way you might take in the breath, sensations in the body, and energy of your thoughts during a seated meditation. Through the simple process of seeing the art, the observer can enter a higher state of consciousness.

Observing art allows us to step outside ourselves and open to something beautiful, something different, something unexpected. Art makes us vulnerable and forces us to consider possibilities. There's a nonverbal language that exists between a work of art and the viewer. Art communicates what words cannot; and in that exchange, awareness and compassion (the two wings of mindfulness) can unfold.

How to Practice Mindfulness While Observing Artwork

1. Carve out a window of time and heading to your local art museum or gallery. Bring a journal and pencil.

2. Give yourself time to become settled and set an intention to be observant.
3. Allow yourself the opportunity to walk slowly through the gallery space.
4. Notice your surroundings: the lighting, the layout of the space, the sounds (or silence) around you, and of course, the art.
5. Find a work of art that you are naturally drawn to.
6. Stand or sit far enough away to take in the entire work.
7. Soften your gaze and relax your jaw, neck, and shoulders.
8. Let your eyes move slowly across the surface of the work. Notice where your gaze naturally rests. Observe the colors, shapes, lines, textures, and forms.
9. Notice what arises as you observe. Be receptive to the thoughts, emotions, memories, and ideas that surface.
10. Stay for several full, deep breaths, taking in the art the same way that you take in the breath.
11. Consider writing or drawing in response to the artwork. Write or draw freely, without inhibition. Give yourself time and permission to explore.
12. As with meditation, give yourself plenty of time to wrap up so that the BY

<https://www.yogajournal.com/lifestyle/12-steps-to-turn-an-art-museum-visit-into-mindfulness-meditation>

All students, staff and faculty are encouraged to contribute wellness stories, tips or recipes to the newsletter.

Monthly Recipe from the UC Davis Community

This month's recipe comes from Susan Gardinor, Preclinical Curriculum Manager, Office of Medical Education at UC Davis School of Medicine. The school is so very fortunate to have had Susan as part of the School of Medicine team for 15 years. Her compassion for our students and commitment to their success is inspiring to us all. Susan provided her recipe for [Fettuccine with Spicy Raw Tomato, Herb and Caper Sauce](#). It looks delicious and I am planning on taking her advice to not stress about the carbs:

"I was visiting my girlfriend from high school and we made this dish together one night. I have made it several times since. It is a really satisfying pasta dish with fresh flavors. I love cooking with fresh herbs, although I currently do not grow my own. That is a goal of mine! Try not to worry about the carbs and enjoy with a nice green salad."



Wellness App: The Mindfulness APP

Start your journey to a more relaxed and healthier state of mind with The [Mindfulness App](#). Whether you are just starting out or experienced in meditation, The Mindfulness App will help you to become more present in your daily life.



Used by millions of meditators in over 130 countries, included in The Mindfulness App you will find:

- Get Started: 5 day guided practice and introduction to mindfulness
- Timed Sessions: guided & silent meditations from 3 to 30 minutes
- Personalized Meditation: customize your meditation with guided introduction and bells
- Meditation Reminders and Mindful Notices: help you to be mindful throughout the day
- Statistics: keep track of your meditation journey

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Axl3QXmptyY&feature=youtu.be>