

Happy New Year

I hope you all had a wonderful break. As cliché as it might sound, many of us do ponder our goals as we head into a new year- those age old “New Year’s Resolutions!” Thus, I revisit this theme each New Year. When it comes to wellness goals, we can often fall into the unhealthy trap of setting too high a goal or asking for change from ourselves in too many areas. “For this year, I will eat better, exercise regularly, connect more with family and be more disciplined with my studying.” If that sounds like you, because it certainly sounds like me, please stop right there. We are setting ourselves up for disappointment and self-criticism.

It is important to be very specific and realistic about your goals. It is helpful to start with one behavior you might want to change. Start with a small goal and a realistic objective. If including more physical exercise is a goal, for example, asking yourself to go to the gym every day could be too extreme a goal. If you instead try to incorporate one physical activity a week and build from there, you might be more likely to reach your goal. Focus on **SMART goals**: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely. Most certainly maintain self-compassion. If you don’t reach the goal, pause and ponder how to modify and reset again.

The American Psychological Association offers some helpful strategies that promote good behavior change.

Make a plan that will stick. Your plan is a map that will guide you on this journey of change. You can even think of it as an adventure. When making your plan, be specific. Want to exercise more? Detail the time of day when you can take walks and how long you’ll walk. Write everything down, and ask yourself if you’re confident that these activities and goals are realistic for you. If not, start with smaller steps. Post your plan where you’ll most often see it as a reminder.

Start small. After you’ve identified realistic short-term and long-term goals, break down your goals into small, manageable steps that are specifically defined and can be measured. Is your long-term goal to lose 20 pounds within the next five months? A good weekly goal would be to

By Dr. Margaret Rea

lose one pound a week. If you would like to eat healthier, consider as a goal for the week replacing dessert with a healthier option, like fruit or yogurt. At the end of the week, you’ll feel successful knowing you met your goal.

Change one behavior at a time. Unhealthy behaviors develop over the course of time, so replacing unhealthy behaviors with healthy ones requires time. Many people run into problems when they try to change too much too fast. To improve your success, focus on one goal or change at a time. As new healthy behaviors become a habit, try to add another goal that works toward the overall change you’re striving for.

Involve a buddy. Whether it be a friend, co-worker or family member, someone else on your journey will keep you motivated and accountable. Perhaps it can be someone who will go to the gym with you or someone who is also trying to stop smoking. Talk about what you are doing. Consider joining a support group. Having someone with whom to share your struggles and successes makes the work easier and the mission less intimidating.

Ask for support. Accepting help from those who care about you and will listen strengthens your resilience and commitment. If you feel overwhelmed or unable to meet your goals on your own, consider seeking help from a psychologist. Psychologists are uniquely trained to understand the connection between the mind and body, as well as the factors that promote behavior change. Asking for help doesn’t mean a lifetime of therapy; even just a few sessions can help you examine and set attainable goals or address the emotional issues that may be getting in your way.

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/lifestyle-changes.aspx>



Wellness Events

Work Life and Wellness Events

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

UC Living Fit Forever

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

The Schwartz Center Rounds

A multidisciplinary forum where clinical caregivers discuss social and emotional issues that arise in caring for patients. Occurs the 4th Tuesday of every month at the Cancer Center Auditorium:

<https://intranet.ucdavis.edu/palliativecare/schwartz.shtml>

UC Davis Health Farmers Market

Wednesdays 3-7pm
Ed. Bldg. Outdoor Quad



Wellness Tip: Meditation to Foster Forgiveness

As discussed above, there is a good chance that many of us might not meet all our goals for 2020 or have setbacks and need to recalibrate. In that context, it is so very important that we don't layer that disappointment with self-criticism and anger. Thus, I am offering a meditation for forgiveness as a supportive tool. Explore this practice to let go of the tendency to add to our suffering during challenging situations.

1. **Find yourself a comfortable posture**, or take a moment lying on the floor, or a bed.
2. **Bring your attention to the physical sensation of breathing**, noting whatever is grabbing your attention, or whatever you're feeling now, and without judgment, bringing your attention back to the rising and falling of your breath.
3. **Picture something that comes to mind that you judge yourself for**. Maybe you feel regret, or irritation, or sadness. Notice how it feels even bringing it to mind. Then focus on these three phrases, not forcing anything but setting an intention: *I forgive myself for not understanding. I forgive myself for making mistakes. I forgive myself for causing pain and suffering to myself and others.*
4. **Bring your attention back again and repeat the phrases**. For a few moments instead of the breath using these phrases as a focus for your attention. This type of practice may become too painful. At any time, without judging yourself, come back and focus on the breath. Allow yourself to settle and return when you're ready, now or maybe some time in the future.
5. **Our mind naturally holds onto instances where we feel mistreated by others**. There may be experiences

that were entirely wrong or traumatic or that concretely require our attention or action. At the same time, we can practice avoiding the second arrow. *I forgive you for not understanding. I forgive you for making mistakes. I forgive you for causing pain and suffering to me and to others.* Letting go of the tendency to add resentment and judgment and everything related to challenging and unpleasant situations. Again, if it's too much to consider, return to breathing, or if you prefer, focusing on compassion for yourself instead.

6. Practices of this kind can be quite challenging, so in these last few moments, on each in-breath, noticing and accepting whatever you feel right now. On each out-breath, as you would for a close friend, offering yourself relief, or freedom, or strength, or whatever first comes to mind.

Forgiveness doesn't mean being passive or not taking action. It doesn't mean standing down when we need to protect ourselves or someone else from harm. Do what needs to be done—that might mean taking a pause, settling the mind, and trying to see things as clearly as possible before taking skillful action. Continue to practice forgiveness, over and over again, letting go of whatever holds you back

<https://www.mindful.org/10-minute-guided-mindfulness-meditation-foster-forgiveness/>

Community Recipe



I figured it is about time I jumped into the recipe section. I am the Director of Student and Resident Wellness at the Schools of Medicine and Nursing and Graduate Medical Education. I have been at UC Davis for 15 years (yikes) and was at UCLA before that. My passion and focus are on student and trainee wellness and additionally I do research and training on interventions for adolescent depression and suicide.

I am admitting to all of you, I do not like to cook! However, I am setting my balanced goal for 2020 to eat healthier by cooking two new healthy dishes each week. Since my cooking skills are weak, I am turning to the UC Davis Department of Integrative Medicine and Dr. Olivera for recipe ideas. The first one I am trying is a **Creamy Bean and Cauliflower Soup** and I am going to pair the soup with an **Avocado Citrus Salad** as I have tons of citrus in my garden. I will let you know if I keep up with goal.

<https://ucdintegrativemedicine.com/recipes/creamy-bean-and-cauliflower-soup/#gs.n8rcms>

<https://ucdintegrativemedicine.com/recipes/avocado-citrus-salad/#gs.n8rlou>

Wellness App: Mood Tracker

I encourage to check out the Healthy UC Davis Open Access Resource page that contains many resources that can promote your mental and emotional well-being.

<https://healthy.sf.ucdavis.edu/mental-emotional-wellbeing/resources/general/moods>

One app from the list of resources is the t2 Mood tracker:

T2 Mood Tracker



[i](#) [Tunes: Free](#)

This app comes with six pre-loaded topics: anxiety, depression, general well-being, head injury, post-traumatic stress, and stress. You can also add customized scales on any topic (e.g., a pain scale and use simple sliders to rate yourself in these categories; the app automatically graphs your inputs. You can also make notes describing things that may have affect your moods. This provides you and your health care provider with a tool to help you uncover patterns in how you are feeling. It may help you to evaluate the impact of daily events or the effects of treatment on your mood