



In this issue...

- **Managing Stress in 2004**
- **More Tips that May Help Prevent Recurrent Vaginal Candidiasis**
- **+Nurse Mind**
- **Transforming Your Relationships**

The purpose of life is to matter-to count, to stand for something, to have it make some difference that we all lived. (Leo Rosten)

Managing Stress in 2004

David J. Sterken MN, CNS, CPNP

I often find that the only time that I have to catch up on reading is while I am flying on an airplane. Recently while skimming the January 2004 copy of Muscle and Fitness - I did not claim that all my "reading" was scientific journals - I found an article written by Joe Weider entitled "Five Ways to Leave Stress Behind". I found the concepts to be very helpful and so I thought I would share them with you.

❑ **Set boundaries.** Know how to draw a line between your job and the rest of your life. Recognize that the work will always be there, waiting for you, no matter how much time you spend at it, and co-workers will actually have more respect for you if you say no once in a while. Take-home tip: Try to get out of the office at least once a day - for lunch, a workout or just a short walk. It will do you good.

❑ **Understand what you can control and what you can't.** It's important to understand that life is not a computer program, and rarely do things turn out exactly as we envision them. Sometimes, if we have an open mind, they actually turn out better! Take-home tip: The next time a plan takes an unexpected turn, go with the flow and see where it leads you.

❑ **Switch it up.** One thing that can make life unpleasant is the tedium of

routine. When your days take on a rigid pattern, it can leave you with nothing to look forward to, and no motivation to dive headfirst into new challenges. Take-home tip: Make one deviation from the norm each day, or at least once a week. Eat your lunch somewhere else, take your workout outdoors, buy a new CD - change something.

❑ **Distinguish between quantity and quality.** With all the fast trackers out there, it is easy to get trapped on the treadmill of trying to cram as many activities as possible into every day. That is great, but if you are unable to truly focus on or savor anything because of all the other things you are doing simultaneously, you become nothing more than a rat on a wheel. Better to do a few things well than a hundred things poorly. Take-home tip: For starters, try not to do more than three conscious activities at once; work your way down from there.

❑ **Take a break.** As nurses we do very well when it comes to taking care of other people, but often fail to take care of ourselves. I'm the first to say there are definitely times when the best thing you can do, for yourself and others, is kick back and relax. Take-home tip: You deserve some time off, so spin a globe and start daydreaming about your next vacation today. Enjoy

Reference

Muscle & Fitness, January 2004, Editorial, p. 22.

More Tips that May Help Prevent Recurrent Vaginal Candidiasis (Vaginal Yeast Infections)

Thom Thiele, ACRN, IBCLC

I don't feel enough can be said about vaginal yeast infections in HIV+ women. This is a very common annoyance for healthy women and even more so when the woman that is HIV positive. Here are some helpful hints in an attempt to prevent this infection.

There is some concern that sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) might speed up the rate of HIV progression. Therefore, common sense alone would dictate that barrier protection should always be used when HIV is in question.

Don't douche! Douching changes the vagina's natural acid level (called pH level) and causes inflammation, both of which may increase the risk of further infection, including STD's. Your body has a natural douching system - let it work.

Avoid the use of scented soap, bleach and fabric softeners when doing laundry. Scented laundry soap contains chemicals that can aggravate a yeast infection. Residual bleach in your clothing may destroy healthy bacteria that help your body keep fungal infections at bay. Fabric softeners block moisture absorption, causing moist areas of the skin to stay damp, thus encouraging bacteria, etc.

Avoid tight fitting clothes. Tight clothing blocks air flow and yeast infections grow best in most environments. Thus, loose fitting clothing,

which allows airflow provides a dryer environment.

Wear cotton underwear. Unlike synthetic materials such as polyester, lycra and nylon, cotton breaths better, which means it lets air in and doesn't trap moisture.

Avoid washing the vaginal area with deodorant soaps and soaps that are heavily scented or perfumed. Some women claim that when they stop using scented soaps in the shower or bath, yeast infections heal better and don't recur as often. This would include avoiding bubble baths.

Try a non-soap cleanser like unscented Nutribiotic Non-soap with aloe vera to slightly moisturize the skin and promote healing. Soap can have a drying effect on the skin and can further aggravate the vaginal area affected by a yeast infection. Non-soap cleansers can be obtained at most health food stores and many supermarkets.

By using a little common sense and alteration in your daily hygiene habits you can take more control over your own general health in the areas of disease prevention. It's a small thing to do involving what could be considered a huge burden when dealing with HIV infection.

References

<http://www.projinf.org/fs/gyn.html>

http://www.projinf.org/pub/Ww1/ww_0006.html

http://www.projinf.org/pub/Ww1/ww_9903.html

<http://www.projectinform.org>

You are here for a purpose. There is no duplicate of you in the whole world. There never has been, there never will be. You were brought here and now to fill a certain need. Take time to think that over. (Lou Austin)

" +Nurse Mind"

David J. Sterken MN, CNS, CPNP

I have developed a habit. It is a good habit I believe that I started about 4 months ago. Over the course of the last year I have collected boxes of cards with inspirational sayings from various well-known authors - Marianne Williamson, Louise Haye, Miquel Ruiz. Each morning when I get up before I start my day I draw a card and allow my mind to meditate on the truth of the statement. One of the boxes of cards that I particularly enjoy is my Zen Deck. Most recently I drew a card that has allowed me to look at life from a fresh perspective. The card I drew was entitled Zen Mind -- Experience all things with the enthusiasm of a child, as if you were seeing it for the FIRST time. This is the Zen Mind, always new, always aware, always that of a beginner.

I must admit to not feeling the enthusiasm of a child when I drew this card during my time of meditation this morning. After all it was 4:30 a.m. and it is difficult to feel enthusiastic at that time in the morning. But I have learned that it is the attitude with which you start the morning that sets your pace for the day. Enthusiasm here I come!

My muscles probably wondered -- "what's going on" -- as I concentrated on each muscle group and fiber during my workout. I am certain that the blueberry muffin, bunch of grapes, glass of cranberry juice, and protein shake had no idea what they were in for this morning. I carefully listened as I broke the muffin in half -- you could hear how moist it was, its texture tickled my tongue, and the blueberries were oh so sweet. I giggled as the grapes burst in my mouth, their juice sweet. The cranberry juice was a mixture of tart and sweet almost making my mouth pucker. The protein shake -- well we all know how

those taste, like eating a piece of chalk -- oh well, what 40 year olds go through to stay in shape.

My shower was an experience like I have never had before -- I giggled as the water pelted against my body, the sensation invigorating. I wept as my fingers gently massaged the shampoo and conditioner through my hair, recalling the gentleness with which my mother used to perform this task. And then as I stepped out of the shower and wrapped myself in my big soft towel, without another thought I dropped the towel and like a little child ran naked through the house laughing while the stereo belted out the song "The Greatest Love of All." For those of you who may be worried the window shades were all down and the doors locked. I assure you that I am sensitive to the fact that my neighbors have 2 small children, and I am sure that seeing a 40 year old man running through the house naked jumping, twirling, and singing would have meant a 911 call. I gingerly held the razor in my hand as I prepared to shave and laughed recalling my first experience shaving as an adolescent - it appeared that I had taken a Ginsu knife to my face as I emerged from the bathroom with blots of Kleenex marking all the nicks and cuts - at least my mom had a good laugh.

I had not even been out of bed for 3 hours and the way that day had started has created in me awe, wonder, joy, and a host of other emotions that I cannot describe. Experience enthusiasm! Let the children's laughter remind us how it used to be!

So often our mind is plagued by the past and worried about the future - so much so that we forget to enjoy the MOMENT. Remember that you are a co-creator of your Universe! You can choose how you will react to circumstances simply by being conscious of what you are feeling. Live

Continued on page 4

Change and growth take place when a person has risked himself, and dares to become involved in experimenting with his own life. (Herbet Otto)

each day as though it was the first day you have spent on this earth. I promise you that your experiences will take on new meaning and you may even find yourself giggling and laughing more.

May this be your desire:

+Nurse Mind -- Experience all things with the enthusiasm of a child, as if you were seeing it for the FIRST time. This is the +Nurse Mind always new, always aware, always that of a beginner.

Transforming Your Relationships

David J. Sterken MN, CNS, CPNP

Daphne Rose Kingma has written an incredible book entitled *The Future of Love* in which she describes how the concept of relationships has evolved within our culture. Kingma states,

In the past not only did we bow before the sacred cow of marriage, we also operated from the perspective that the marriage relationship itself had validity above the lives of the individuals in it, and that it, as an entity, must be saved. The soul doesn't necessarily subscribe to this agenda. It is interested in the individual souls who inhabit this marriage. It asks that a particular relationship serve them, their growth, their development, their illumination. The soul asks for whatever forms of relationship will serve the evolving individual souls within them, not for the preservation of any particular form.

Kingma believes that there are ten qualities of a soulful relationship. To the degree that we cultivate their attributes, and only to this degree, will we be delivered to the genuine love that is our future.

☐ **Self-Awareness.** Self-awareness

is knowing yourself wisely, truly, and deeply, and acting on that knowledge. This encourages us to take responsibility for our own lives by being more conscious in choosing our relationships, instead of just causally presenting ourselves to whoever comes along. We must be aware that each moment of our lives is precious and each transformation we share with another person is an unrepeatable breath of our lifetime. The soul is asking us to be active: to think, to decide, to act consciously in creating each of our relationships, not just to "fall in love," but to choose to love. Our frittering days are over; we need to be ruthlessly honest and stunningly clear - with ourselves and with one another.

☐ **Aliveness.** In order to be worthy of your soul, a relationship should give you the sense that both you and it are alive-and being continually born anew. Aliveness in a relationship is the sense that something's happening here, that growth is occurring, that, together, the two of you are headed somewhere. You feel vitality, change, and excitement in all your outer circumstances and change in your inner being as well. There is never a dull moment - you have a sense of the endless and beautiful unfolding of your lives.

☐ **Realism.** Instead of creating myths, illusions, fantasies, and impossible expectations, we could create exactly the relationships that work for us. Realism looks at what you actually want, combined with what is actually possible, and then makes decisions based on the working out of those truths.

☐ **Honesty.** Honesty is choosing to living in the truth, and in a relationship that means living moment to moment in genuine straightforwardness. In a soul-driven relationship, the commitment to truth will be paramount. This means that each truth will be taken as an opportunity to move through something. Truth always opens us to our vulnerabili-

***If you are never scared or embarrassed or hurt, it means you never take chances.
(Julia Soul)***

Even a happy life cannot be without a measure of darkness, and the word "happiness" would lose its meaning if it were not balanced by sadness.
(Carl Jung)

We achieve a sense of self from what we do for ourselves and how we develop our capacities. If all our efforts have gone into developing others, you're bound to feel empty.
TAKE YOUR TURN NOW.
(Robin Norwood)

ties. Each time we tell a truth we become more transparent, more visible, more at the mercy of one another's love.

❑ **Generosity.** Generosity is abundance of spirit. It is giving with no ulterior motive, expecting nothing in return. In our new relationships, where the soul is in charge, we can be generous because we know that there are no insatiable needs and there is nothing to protect. Generosity is a circle that returns unto itself. The more we give, the more we have. And in this state of generosity, willing spiritual sharing, we ourselves are healed.

❑ **Empathy.** Empathy is feeling with, embracing another's hardship as your own. When we have empathy we can abandon the endless frustrating project of getting our own needs met and gradually develop our capacity to see another's suffering.

❑ **Forgiveness.** Forgiveness is an expansion of the heart. In relationship, it is the giving of grace, of understanding, of a second chance - or fifty more chances - to anyone who has hurt you. Instead of judging, it invites us to look at the situation from the awareness that we are all imperfect; that sooner or later we will all make most of the human mistakes. *Forgiveness is that awareness, nurtured in your own consciousness, reached for at the right moment, delivered as a gift to your beloved.*

❑ **Thanksgiving.** Thanksgiving isn't a day; it's a lifetime. It is a state of waking every morning and knowing that there is only one response to life and that is -- to give thanks. It affirms that we live in a world awash with treasures, with miracles, and blessings, that we are blessed with an endless array of people, moments, experiences, surprises, magic, curiosities, and beautiful coincidences to which our only, delighted, ecstatic, and unchanging response should be thanksgiving. The soul knows that everything in life-includ-

ing life itself-is a stunning privilege, something for which we must always give thanks.

❑ **Consecration.** Offering your relationship to a higher level of service is its consecration. We are moved not just by the narrow needs of our own personalities but by the expansive awareness that in some sense everyone's anguish is our own. Our own sufferings are only a part of that vast kettle of suffering that is the human condition. There is always someone whose situation is more excruciating than your own, always a soul who needs your caring, always an offering of service that can transform your own life.

❑ **Joy.** Joy is the true pure state of our soul. We can strip our lives of whatever stands in the way of our receiving joy-too many things, too much noise, too many cardboard obligations, worry, no sense of humor, not enough quiet time with our own precious bodies and souls.

My friends - may you cultivate relationships that illuminate your soul and transform you on your journey!

Reference

The Future of Love - Daphne Rose Kingma

Contact us

One of the main goals of the HIV-Positive Nursing Committee and + Nurse is to reach out to all HIV-Positive nurses, regardless of practice setting or organizational affiliation. You do not have to be a member of ANAC or an AIDS nurse to benefit from +Nurse.

You can contact us at +Nurse, c/o Association of Nurses in AIDS Care, 3538 Ridgewood Road, Akron, Ohio 44333, Phone: 330-670-0101 or 1-800-260-6780; Fax: 330-670-0109
E-Mail: anac@anacnet.org;
Web Site: <http://www.anacnet.org>

Co-Editors
David J. Sterken, MN, CNS, CPNP
Richard S. Ferri, PhD, ANP, ACRN, FAAN
Editorial Reviewers
Alton Burch, RN, ACRN
Cheryl Erichsen, LPN
Richard MacIntyre, PhD, RN
Robert Thompson, RN, CRNI

3538 Ridgewood Road
Akron, Ohio 44333-3122

We as a committee would love to hear from you. Do you have ideas for articles? We would welcome anyone who would like to submit an article. Deadline for our next publication date is April 5, 2004. Let us know if you are interested in writing an article.