



"I do not agree with what you have to say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it." - Voltaire

From the Well of a Wise Woman New Year, New You?

Carmen S. Lentz, LPC, NCC

The reality of the New Year is here, and if you're like most of us, you've probably made a list of things you want to change. Whether its dropping those extra pounds you picked up from holiday indulgences, quitting smoking, giving up alcohol, gambling, saving money, getting organized, starting an exercise routine, or whatever, if you're like most people, you find swapping old habits for new ones really hard to do (as in almost impossible). Either you resolve to do something, start, have a setback, try again, have another set back, and then give up completely, or you don't get started at all. You think about changing, you visualize the new you, you make a list of all the reasons you need to do this, all the while finding yet one more reason why today isn't a good day to start. It's too cold, it's too hot, I don't have time, I don't feel good, the list goes on. Why is this? What can be done about it?

Neuroscience helps us understand why we struggle with change. The very condensed version goes something like this: pleasurable activities (chocolate, alcohol, cocaine, etc...) cause our brains to release a powerful chemical, dopamine. The brain records the good feeling we got, and creates a memory around that good feeling that it then encourages

us to replicate. Before long, our brain begins to desire the dopamine producing agent, and we are driven to find it and reexperience it. The cycle is formed: you do something pleasurable and dopamine producing, and your body then drives you to repeat it. That's why change is so hard: change means fighting the fundamental neurobiology of the brain. Dopamine producing agents will vary for each of us. As Paul Nagy, a substance abuse counselor, once explained: "Let's pretend I'm trafficking contraband (and what is considered contraband will vary by person, for some of us its food, for others its drink, for others its street drugs, etc...). If I have some stuff and thirty people in a room with me, and I offer it to each of them, some will not like it and won't have any interest in it at all, some will have a mildly pleasurable sensation, but won't be motivated enough to care about repeating it, and some will follow me out to my car to find our how they can get some more."

So, how do you defeat the cycle? Research has found a few ways. One is rewards. Treating yourself after maintaining good behavior helps you rewrite the script and get payoff for exercising, eating better, studying, or whatever positive activity you are attempting to maintain. The reward



Carmen Lentz. Picture courtesy of Rooney Coffman

needs to be something that really motivates you or it won't work. Give some real thought to what will help you stay on track. Things that trigger old behaviors need to be avoided as well: sights, smells, and sounds, all the subtle cues that are associated with the old behaviors need to be avoided while new ones are developed. That's why the alcoholic needs to stay out of the bar and the chocolate fanatic shouldn't ask to see the dessert menu. Another tip to remember is that stress makes us revert back to old behaviors. If you want to have a better chance of making change permanent, try to keep stressors to a minimum and practice good stress reduction techniques if you do experience stress. Take good care of yourself as you work towards your goal: schedule physical activity into your day, get adequate sleep,

balance work and social activities. Change is hard, but it isn't impossible. Each of us knows people who have made the hard changes: lost the weight, stopped drinking, or thrown away the cigarettes. If they can be successful, you can do it too. Good luck!!

*****For more information or to make an appointment contact Carmen Lentz at Lentzcs@sapc.edu or call 5036. *****

Starting the Day Right

Melody Kirkpatrick

How are you feeling towards the middle of the day? Have you wanted to stretch out on the grass? Or maybe you would like to take a nap on the bench? If this describes your mood before your morning is over, then continue reading.

Drinking or eating foods that contain sugar may be a quick option but it's not the healthiest way for eating breakfast. Sugar can cause you to feel tired and stressed. Low-fat yogurt would be a tasty treat because it is low in sugar. Yogurt low in fat and sugar won't leave you sluggish. The best part is yogurt comes in a variety of different flavors and that includes chocolate. If that does not put you in the mood for breakfast, then I don't know what will.

Breakfast is the key to making your day more enjoyable but it depends

on what you eat. Cereal is an excellent choice because it provides vitamins and minerals to energize your morning routine. Special K, total, or other whole grain, or wheat cereals will give you the nutrients and energy needed throughout the day. Use low-fat milk with your cereal and add your favorite fruit to customize it. Oatmeal is another option even though it might sound tasteless or yucky, but you should try the new and improved flavors. Within the variety of oatmeal categories, you will find banana and apple flavors. Just like with cereal, you can always add your favorite fruit toppings. Make breakfast a part of your morning and your mornings will run smoother.

Breakfast is the best way to start your day.

DIY: Extracurricular

Sara Messina

Balancing work and fun just seems to create less fun. Here's just some quick rules for signing up for clubs and other out-of-class fun.

Don't sign up for things that might have long-lasting conflicts. When the semester gets into full swing, the officers and other club members count on everyone to participate, so don't let the club become a down fall for those who like what they are doing. Overall, don't commit absolutely without knowing your schedule.

When club rush week goes around, put in your information and go to the first meetings, but don't commit to anything absolutely until your sure you want to.

It's okay to say no. Go for the activities you have a high interest in and if they don't work out there's always next semester.

Never, ever, just commit because your friends are since the people involved will be counting on you and your enthusiasm to add to the club.

Lastly, if you do join and don't like the club right off, give it some time. New members can practically recreate a club with

their own style of doing things. Just because traditions go one way doesn't mean they'll stay that way.

Student Evaluation in Educational Programs

Counseling Related Topics

- healthy relationships
- self empowerment
- body image
- women's issues
- relaxation/visualization techniques
- stress management
- smoking cessation
- anger management
- depression
- anxiety
- eating disorders

Programs would meet for one hour and would provide a broad overview of the topic. Meeting dates and times will be determined.

If interested in these (or other) topics please contact Carmen Lentz at LentzCS@sapc.edu

Being In With Safety

While St. Andrews is a safe place, it is important to keep in mind the important phone numbers of Campus Safety and Security, RD on Duty and the Laurinburg Police Department/Medical Emergency. If an event were to arise please contact the appropriate party.

Campus Safety and Security:

5112

Campus Security Cell Phone:

9-280-2895

RD on Duty: 9-280-1753

Laurinburg Police/Medical

Emergency: 9-911