

Warm Wishes for Healthy Holidays

We are grateful as we look back at the people in our lives who are present and past. Looking back creates a window of opportunity for self reflection.

Methods of altering our perspectives range from religious customs, rituals and routines that are new or old traditions.

Acknowledging that change is constant allows us to build a wealth of experience to include new people, places and things to expand harmony in our world.

Employees' assistance services have continued to expand our field of knowledge and experience. Our eagerness to reach out to our families, clients and colleagues have brought great joy and new strategies to affirm body, mind and spirit.

We have suffered the loss of loves ones, relatives, friends and colleagues. Faced with the challenge to create new strategies to elevate our mood and honor the memory of those dear to us, we engage in a search for healthy new and old strategies.

This journey does not have to be travelled alone. Isolation only intensifies sad feelings and sensations. Allow others into your life - experience the transformation of expanding the single consciousness to the compassion of sharing with others.

Afterglow - In Loving Memory

*I'd like the memory of me
to be a happy one
I'd like to leave an afterglow...
...of smiles when day is done.
I'd like to leave an echo
...whispering softly down the ways
of happy times, and laughing times
and bright sunny days.
I'd like the tears of those who grieve
To dry before the sun of happy memories
I leave when life is done.*

Honoring Those Who Have Passed

The poem *Afterglow* honors those who have died this past year. A comfort to those who have returned from war, those on the frontlines in their community, the people in our lives who were barely visible and the humble contributions made so we may live our lives in peace. *Afterglow* passes the torch of life to honor the memories of those who have passed by asking us to choose to live and embrace the joys of life.

In Times of Stress - Support Each Other

Families at home and at work may take each other for granted. During stressful episodes in our lives, we can learn to focus on helping each other through increased communication skills. The differences in our mood and perception may cause or increase conflict. Increased awareness provides some ways to eliminate communication problems. Respect and understanding of each temperament can help increase communication. With this in mind, we may focus on common goals, challenges and enhance a positive environment. Have fun discovering your personality type at <http://www.personalitytype.com/quiz.asp>.



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Balancing Work and Family

The four-Square grid explained in *First Things First* by Steven Covey, author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* and other self-help books is a time management approach to strategize making the best out of our time. Covey suggests drawing your own four-quadrant matrix for importance and urgency. Here's a sample:

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	1 Crying baby Kitchen fire Some calls	2 Exercise Vocation Planning
Not Important	3 Interruptions Distractions Other calls	4 Trivia Busy work Time wasters

Create Quadrant 1 for yourself and write down things that are urgent and important such as the crisis described above or a broken washing machine, project deadline or preparations for meeting with clients.

In Quadrant 2, note the things that are important and not urgent such as: Preparing for future events, increasing skills - classes, relationship building, healthy recreation.

Quadrant 3 will contain things that are not important and at the same time seem urgent. Covey calls this the "Quadrant of Deception" because at first glance they seem important and then after further evaluation it is clear they are important only to someone else. For example: Many popular activities (checking cell phone updates), interruptions during work hours, some meetings that perhaps a phone call could resolve.

Quadrant 4 is a list of activities that are not important or urgent. Trivia busywork, junk mail, limiting a friend who calls 3 times a day just to talk and escape activities.

Many people spend most of their time in Quadrants I and II, driven by a sense of urgency. Some things are truly urgent. When not enough important things are getting done we feel stressed. Be flexible and allow for change. Have a back-up plan. Ask for help if experiencing difficulty with time management.

SAD - Lighten Up With Help

According to Chamin Ajjan, Psychotherapist at Harmony-Balance Solutions, along with many healthcare practitioners, low energy and a lack of motivation is a natural experience during the fall through winter months. The days are shorter, there is a chill in the air and catching some rays can be harder than trying to catch a cab past 11 p.m. in N.Y.C. on a Saturday night! It may be more than a case of the holiday blues if you are experiencing more severe symptoms such as depression, anxiety, lack of energy, social withdrawal, appetite changes, difficulty concentrating. It could be Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). SAD is a type of mood disorder, like depression, that occurs at the same time every year. It commonly occurs in the fall or winter but it can also affect some in the spring or summer months. SAD can be treated with psychotherapy, medication and light therapy (phototherapy). If you are experiencing symptoms that are effecting your activities of daily life, professional treatment can help. For those of us who may be feeling milder seasonal symptoms, don't fret! There are some simple steps you can take to lift your spirits. Energetic methods can brighten your season. Contact the EAP for more information.



Rage; The Flip Side of Depression

Designate a driver when you plan on going out with friends or family to celebrate and alcohol is involved. According to family members who survive the trauma of the death of a loved one lost at the hands of a drunk driver it is "the worst" and "life no longer feels worthwhile." (Anonymous)

Family members attend bereavement groups, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers meetings and become active in creating legislation to keep drunk drivers off the road. "There is little joy in such accomplishments and other life events that would elate the ordinary person."

As one mother began making progress and improved her physical and mental condition, a new awareness brought concern for her safety. Her husband's grief is expressed with road rage and other acts of power and control. Many times she commented that her husband didn't show any signs of depression around the anniversary of her son's death. Now it is clear that his depression is visible in his acts of rage. Treating her husband's condition has been key to helping the couple regain stability.