



your **Healthy & Happy Home News™**

From the Desk of Roy & Pam Wood

October 2017

How to Bring Pleasure and Awareness to Your Life

Are you like so many of us who look at our watches with surprise: Just what is it we've been doing for the last hour? Or you forget what you had for breakfast this morning, how it tasted, and what it felt like on your tongue. Or do you drive to work without thinking and maybe wonder what you missed. Take heart: You're not alone.

Most of us are so busy being busy, we've forgotten what we're busy with. We may be connected to any number of electronic devices, but the charge is missing from our lives. It's time to stop. Take notice. And plug "pleasure" into our lives.

Susie Moore was one of us. In a recent article on Greatist, Moore shared her discovery: "It was life passing me by while I'm in my head and out of my body somehow. I decided I needed something simple and easy to jolt me into the present; it was a word: pleasure." And it can instantly change your mood.

Call it mindfulness or paying attention. But whatever you call it, "pleasure" is that animated feeling that you are present and actively living your life, not watching it pass by. Research shows that paying attention makes a real difference in your relationships, your state of mind, your productivity, and your general health and well-being. Here are some of Moore's suggestions to trigger pleasure:

- Create a ritual that reminds you to pay attention.
- Use a memory jogger to remember to be mindful.
- Tune into your senses.

It's a Strange Old World: Bizarre News You Might Have Missed

Drivers on a Tacoma highway were puzzled last summer when they witnessed a truck oozing globs of beige matter. Turns out it was waste bread dough; exposure to the summer heat made it rise.

A Montreal, Canada, a photographer is trying to change rats' bad reps. Diane Ozdamar takes close-up, personality-revealing photos of rescue rats that make the rodents look downright cute. As she told Huffington Post: "To me, they are very

similar to tiny dogs mixed with cats. They are very smart, affectionate, and loyal ... (and) playful, too."

Eating out with kids can be a challenge. To help parents, the kids' menu at Fager's Island, a Maryland restaurant, is tailor-made for picky eaters. When a little one says: "I don't want that," the server will place an order for fries. "I don't know" will get the complainer a PB&J.

Celebrate All Things Feline on Oct. 29 – National Cat Day

Did you know there are days devoted to our feline friends and designed to raise awareness of the number of cats without homes?

National Cat Day, which has a strong focus on adopting out homeless cats into loving homes, will be celebrated this month on October 29. And for those with good memories, this is the second such celebration this year: International Cat Day was observed earlier this summer on August 8.

There's no question we love our pets: The American Pet Products Association estimates that we will spend \$69.4 billion in 2017 on everything from pet food and vet bills to other services, such as grooming and cat toys.

As well, many cat owners are building "catios" – screened-in patios for those catnaps in the sun – or buying cat condos that match their homes' decors.

So, how will you celebrate National Cat Day?

Possibly with cuteness overload, by watching the massive number of cat videos online. Or by adopting a kitty for yourself. Or volunteering at a local animal shelter. Or donating food, toys, and blankets to the many cats still waiting for their forever homes.

If you're already a proud cat parent, you can make it a purr-fect day by baking some homemade treats for your own cat. Or give Fluffy or Garfield a relaxing massage, followed by a comb-out session to get rid of all that excess fur (and hairballs).

But if you're not a cat person? Well, you may want to avoid the Internet altogether on October 29.



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Chris represents Chem-Dry with a professional and friendly demeanor that seems lost in so many industries. He was polite and explained in detail the process and what it would do. Chris engaged in conversation and was a pleasure to invite to my home. I would recommend this service to friends.

Sean B

Worth Quoting

This month, some famous quotes on the subject of procrastination:

Never put off till tomorrow what may be done day after tomorrow just as well.

Mark Twain

Procrastination is the art of keeping up with yesterday.

Don Marquis

Procrastination is like a credit card: it's a lot of fun until you get the bill.

Christopher Parker

Procrastination is the thief of time.

Edward Young

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Your Visiting Ghosts and Goblins Have Quite the History

Have you ever wondered why large numbers of kids show up at your door on October 31, dressed in crazy clothing and demanding candy?

It does seem a bit bizarre. But while it's always been part of our lives, the trick-or-treat tradition traces its roots way back.

In fact, trick-or-treating is the modern version of several practices that began in ancient times, with indications of both pre-Christian Celtic and Christian traditions:

Celtic: More than two millennia in the past, Celts celebrated the festival of Samhain on October 31. They believed the dead returned to earth on this day, and gathered to pay homage to the deceased with food offerings. Some villagers dressed in costumes to drive away unwelcome spirits, and from this grew the tradition of dressing as scary creatures and performing antics for food or drink.

Christian: Once Christianity spread to Celtic regions, traditions blended and new practices emerged. The church declared November 2, All Souls' Day, as a time to honor the dead. However, the October 31 traditions of Samhain, such as bonfires and costumes, continued with the added practice of "souling."

In souling, the poor visited the wealthy and received soul cakes for praying for the homeowners' dead relatives. However, when children took up this practice, they asked homeowners for gifts in exchange for their prayers. In some regions, souling became "guising," when guising children dressed in costume and performed tricks to collect treats.

Today, we don't make children perform tricks for their candy. Apparently, looking adorable is more than sufficient.

This Month's Sudoku

				8	9			4
				3	1		2	9
	3	5				8		
			7				9	
2	6		8	5	3		1	7
	8				4			
		6				7	4	
3	2		1	4				
8			9	6				

Paralyzed by Perfectionism? Start Doing It Badly

Perfection – aiming for the unreachable – may sound admirable. But beware: Its flip side is to be paralyzed into inaction.

If you're in this position, why not just start? Even if it's not perfect. In fact, doing it badly may be the best way to go.

Research shows that perfectionism can have serious health consequences, such as panic attacks or a host of anxiety disorder symptoms, plus the inability to focus. Perfectionists are also far more self-critical than those who don't expect perfection from themselves.

They're also masters of negative self-talk, and they worry a lot about not getting it right. They may lose sleep over their concerns, or sleep too much in an effort to avoid tackling something that needs

doing.

In real life, there may never be a perfect time. There may never be a perfect solution. And if you expect perfection, you probably have the perfect reason for putting off doing whatever it is you're trying not to do.

So, why not remove the anxiety of missing the mark? How about letting yourself off the hook before you start? Give yourself a break. Take a different approach and decide to do "it" – the "it" that's causing your stress – badly?

Science tells us that once you remove perfectionism from the equation, good things happen.

Decisions are easier and made more quickly. Stress subsides. Things get done.

Anxiety is diminished, and you feel a sense of accomplishment. What's more, the final result may be better than anticipated.

Mental health researcher Olivia Remes of Cambridge University suggests, in a recent article in *The Conversation*, that you should "wait to worry" by planning to spend 10 minutes a day worrying about anything and everything, and leaving your latest concerns for then.

Better yet, be prepared to do it imperfectly from the start. As Remes quotes writer G.K. Chesterton: "Anything worth doing is worth doing badly."

Eat Dirt: It May Make Our Kids Healthier

Parents are often paranoid about exposing their kids to germs. But much to the dismay of germaphobes, there is plenty of reliable research that suggests some bacteria is helpful, not harmful, to a child's health.

A recently published book by Jack Gilbert, faculty director of the Microbiome Center at the University of Chicago, tackles many of the questions he's been asked by parents about kids, bacteria, and what to do. Or not do.

In a June interview with NPR, Gilbert set the record straight on many commonly held beliefs about germs. Some takeaways:

- The five-second rule doesn't really exist. It takes mere microseconds for bacteria to affix itself to a piece of dropped food. But not to worry; most North American homes are free of dangerous pathogens that pose risks.
- Don't try to sanitize your child's entire world. Bacteria can help stimulate children's immune systems and make them stronger.
- Dousing your kids with antiseptic after they play in the dirt is silly. Warm, soapy water works; sanitizers are probably overkill.

How to De-stress the Cooking Experience

Cooking can be stressful. Top chefs know, and have advice on improving your cooking – and your meals. Here are some of their thoughts:

Sample, sample, sample. Tasting during prep ensures that you (and everyone else) will want to eat it.

Yes, follow instructions, but don't be afraid to switch up ingredients – within reason. Unless you're a pro, don't change the recipe when baking or making pastry, but

it's not a disaster if you're out of called-for red peppers; use orange ones. (But not green ones as their taste differs, and results may not be as expected.)

Be organized. Have everything ready before you start.

Follow a timeline. And don't waste your hard work: Freeze or share leftovers.

Most importantly, enjoy cooking – your family will reap the rewards.

Black Bean and Orange Chili

Serves 4 as a tasty Halloween night dinner

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 large onion, chopped
3 garlic cloves, minced
5 teaspoons chili powder
3 teaspoons ground cumin
1-1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 tablespoon dried oregano
3-15.5 oz. cans black beans, drained
2-14.5 oz. cans crushed tomatoes
2 oranges, zested then juiced
Salt and pepper
Cayenne to taste (optional)

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and sauté until softened and translucent. Add garlic and spices and continue cooking for an additional 2 minutes or until fragrant.

Stir in black beans, tomatoes, and half the orange juice. Lower heat and simmer for about 30 minutes, stirring frequently. Add the zest. If chili is too thick, add some or all of the remaining orange juice.

Season with salt, pepper, and cayenne if desired.

Serving suggestions: Spoon over rice or tortillas with sour cream, cilantro, and orange segments.

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Worth Reading

A Leading Happiness Researcher Says We're Giving Our Kids Bad Advice about How to Succeed in Life

By Emma Seppala
Quartz

Some of our advice could lead to failure. And our kids may be the losers. Seems our continual focus on the future can heighten children's stress and anxiety. Instead, we need to teach our kids – and ourselves – to focus on living in the moment. Most importantly, by emphasizing their strengths, we're actually putting kids in boxes. Learn why.

More: <https://tinyurl.com/Don-t-box-kids>

Why We Love Ourselves, but Care More about Other People's Opinions

By Patrick Allan
Lifehacker.com

It's not just a function of social media. Humankind has been obsessed with others' opinions as far back as ancient Rome, or even farther. Take Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius's observation that people love themselves more than anyone else, but are swayed by the contrary opinions of others. Allan reminds us that our own opinions matter, too.

More: <https://tinyurl.com/Our-opinions-count>

The Golden Age of Bailing

By David Brooks
The New York Times

Another example of how technology makes it easy to be rude: It's so simple now to bail on contacts via text or email that we no longer think that regularly canceling plans is a problem. In fact, it can harm relationships. "Technology wants to make everything smooth," writes David Brooks, "but friendship is about being adhesive." Most noteworthy: Don't be a "networker flake."

More: <https://tinyurl.com/Just-don-t-bail>

Family Living in the Sky: North America's Newest Reality

As land available for new construction shrinks in urban centers across North America, governments, builders, and families are looking upward.

Living high in the sky isn't how many young families would have envisioned the family home, but for many, it's a reality.

This new reality is playing out in Toronto, Canada, where family-sized condo units are rare. Some 80% of new housing built in the past decade are buildings of five or more stories. Yet fewer than 10% of high-rise homes in the city have three or more bedrooms. And this is presenting a problem for young families who want to live and work there.

According to a recent story in Citylab.com, Toronto is on its way. Guidelines generated in a 2015 study by the city's Planning Division were adopted this

summer by its City Council and will be used in evaluating current and future projects. The guidelines, points out CityLab contributing writer Mimi Kirk, "are not only applicable to Toronto, but to cities across North America and beyond ..."

Among the recommendations: 15% of units should include two bedrooms and 10% should include three, with these larger units located on lower levels, close to each other, and adjoining outdoor spaces.

Meanwhile, in New York City, where raising kids in high-rises is nothing new (but not particularly family-friendly), some existing buildings are currently updating and repurposing their amenities, thanks to the growing number of New Yorkers choosing to raise their families in the city.

Maybe life in the sky isn't such a hardship after all.

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This month's *eTrivia* question is...

What colors other than black and white do dogs see?

a) Blue and yellow b) Red and Yellow c) Blue and Green

General Knowledge Quiz. Answers below.

What is a group of cats called?

Cat owners reduce their risk of stroke and heart attack by how much?

According to Egyptian archeological findings, how long have we had domesticated cats?

(Answers: A clowder; a third; since 3600 B.C)