

AMERICAN INDIAN *Living*

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Surroundings

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Restoring a
time-honored
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in the
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TO SAVE A *Life*

—SUICIDE IN
INDIAN COUNTRY

Letter from the Publisher



As a part of my responsibilities I regularly visit people in the hospital, pray with them and their families, and, too often, hold them as they experience the loss of a loved one. In the hours after a tragic loss I hear the stories of their family member's life. No story is ever the same. Each true story is full of unique experiences, challenges overcome, loves gained and lost, and then finally the reason for their passing. The lesson I have learned is that nothing impacts our life more than the environment around us.

This issue features the "E" in CREATION, which is focused on environment. A better set of words to describe environment might be "the space around you all day." How is your room where you wake up each day? Is the air clean and your bed comfortable to take you into a vibrant day? Is there a mad rush of excitement for the bathroom, breakfast, and to get out the door? Does traffic ruin the day? Do you wake up out in the fresh air for a calm start to your day? Is this going to be an exciting day or do you feel hopeless in your environment? The children, what will impact their lives?

Environment is not just land, trees, water, and chemicals. Our greater environment is important, but just as important to our lives is every moment in our surroundings, and what we breathe, the stress, the people, and what feeds our attitudes because of where we are and what we do.

As always, we hope this issue brings positive change to your life and those around you. As you read, please remember those who have placed themselves in an environment of harm so that we can have freedom.

ne' sgeñ·noñ' naesaihwiyosdik goñdahgwił

Robert Burnette

Robert Burnette
Onondaga

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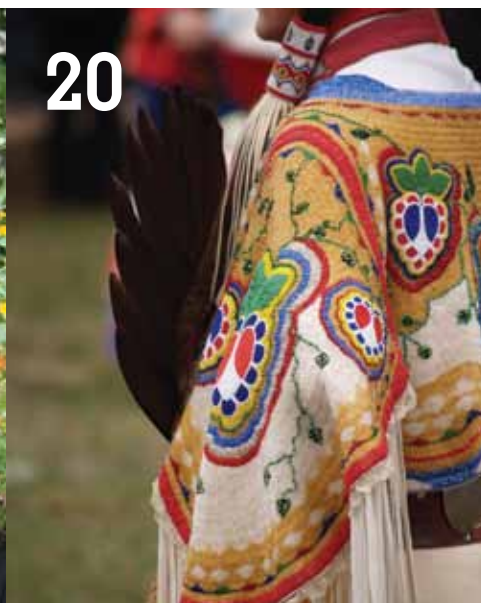
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YOU WERE MADE FOR A GARDEN BUT YOU LIVE IN A JUNGLE

BY DES CUMMINGS, JR., PH.D. WITH MONICA REED, M.D. AND TODD CHOBOTAR

The term "nature deficit disorder" was coined by Richard Louv in his best seller book *Last Child in the Woods*. The first book to bring together a new and growing body of research indicating that direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy childhood development and for the physical and emotional health of both children and adults. Louv directly links "nature deficit disorder" to some of the most disturbing childhood trends, such as the rise in obesity, attention disorders, and depression. Louv believes that the more we are surrounded by technology, the more we need to be surrounded by nature to keep us mentally, physically, and spiritually healthy.

The Gift of the Garden

How can we create a garden-like sanctuary with the daily demands of our lives? First of all, we must understand that the greatest effort needs to go into areas of our life that are most jungle-like. Sometimes stress from your day can overload you to the extent that you walk into your home with a predatory mindset as opposed to a peaceful disposition. No matter where you live, try to put aside the jungle atmosphere and create a more garden-like experience. Your home, apartment, or room should be a safe space for you and your family, no predators allowed. If the TV, computer games, DVD movies, office politics, or anything else threaten that peaceful experience, why not remove them from the garden environment you are trying to create?

Garden in Your Mind

Our mind is like a garden. We become what we plant and cultivate. I always wondered how my wife, Mary Lou, was able to hear our children wake up from a nap or cry in the night before I ever did. The reason is how she tuned her mind. This is accomplished through the RAS: reticular activating system.

The reticular activating system (RAS) is a complex collection of neurons, about the size of the tip of your little finger, “that serves as a point of convergence for signals from the external world and from the interior environment.” Your brain’s unique screening device is like a filter between your conscious and subconscious mind. The RAS “is part of your brain where the world outside of you, and your thoughts and feelings from inside of you, meet.” Here is the beauty – the RAS enables you to plant a sensory garden.

When you focus on the beauty around you, your RAS will absorb the image of that environment and plant it in the garden of your mind. In essence, we are the keeper of our garden. What we allow to grow in the garden of our mind is our personal choice.

Made for a Garden

Have you ever wondered why people are drawn to nature’s beauty? We don’t do anything at the Grand Canyon or at the base of a redwood tree. We just take in the magnificent natural beauty. The environment of choice for vacations is most often the lake, the beach, the mountains, or some other wonder of nature.

I believe that we instinctively know that we are made for a garden, and despite living in a city, there is an innate pull of the spirit to get back to the garden where we are free to thrive.

Recreating a healing environment is key to our health, yet it is becoming harder and harder to experience. Part of the reason for this is because, for the past few centuries, humanity has progressively moved away from more rural (nature-filled)

environments to cities. This practice has become so prevalent that in 2008, for the first time in human history, more people were living in cities than rural areas.

While living in cities can certainly have its advantages, there can also be drawbacks. For example, we consider it cruel and unnatural to cage animals, yet we have become accustomed to subjecting humans to the caged world of city life where they often travel underground, surrounded by pollution, consigned to and participating in the “rat race.” One of the first impacts of sin was an attack on nature.

The Jungle Effect

In the open world of my childhood, we spent our free time primarily outside, stimulated by the sights and sounds of nature. Sometimes we were disciplined by those awful words, “You have to stay inside.” What a change

from the way we live now. Today’s children are often confined to an inside life stimulated by an electronic environment, living in a second life that seems more exciting than their real life. This is unfortunate, because I believe it is critical to the health and well-being of our children that we bring them back to nature. This is why Richard Louv and his colleagues have embarked on a crusade with the battle cry, “No child left inside!”

This principle is not only key to the health of our children but to the health of adults as well. We were made for a garden, but increasingly, people are confined to unnatural workspaces. One-third of workers never go outside during the day. Is it any wonder that offices are places of stress, where people get complacent, burned out, and exhausted? Although this is the sad reality, we can counteract it by creating our own natural environments in the spaces we normally occupy.

Health Benefits of a Natural Environment

Today many studies demonstrate how natural surroundings promote wellness, and hospitals and health centers have incorporated nature into interior design and outside areas such as healing gardens. Many other facilities, such as offices and public buildings, also recognize that people are calmer, more focused, and happier in a pleasing natural environment.

Designing your environment is called environmental engineering. The idea is that most of us have built into our environment things that lead us, tempt us, or drag us away from the pursuit of change or the achievement of new goals we want to.



Tips on Creating Your Natural Environment

Solar Power

Sunlight is a promoter of health and well-being. Sunlight promotes positive thinking by increasing serotonin, an important “happiness” brain chemical. Reduced serotonin levels have been associated with many disorders including attention deficit disorder (ADD), irritability, depression, chronic fatigue syndrome, and nausea. Sunlight can kill germs, so opening blinds may help you be healthier. While too much sunshine can increase the risk of certain cancers, sunlight in moderate amounts can enhance health.



Fresh Air

Fresh air is electrified with life-giving oxygen molecules, which enhances a sense of well-being, increases the rate and quality of growth in plants and animals, decreases anxiety through its tranquilizing and relaxing effect, lowers resting heart rate, and decreases survival of bacteria and viruses in the air. If you live in a place with air pollution, consider an air purifier or add nature’s purifier, plants, to your environment.

Personal Space

Take a moment to think about your personal space, both at home and in the workplace. Are there windows you can open to let the sun shine in? If not, can you spend at least a little time outside each day? A short walk away from your workspace for some fresh air can be rejuvenating. Also, getting rid of clutter not only makes you more efficient, but also creates a freeing sense of energy and mental clarity.



Aroma

Our sense of smell can powerfully trigger both positive and negative physical responses. You can use that to your advantage. Aroma preferences are highly personal, so explore what works for you.

Sound

Sound is an important component of our environment. Research shows that noise elevates psycho-physiological stress (resting blood pressure and overnight epinephrine and norepinephrine). Even low levels of noise can reduce productivity. On the other hand, calming music can diffuse tension caused by noise. Consider including peaceful music in your environment or maybe sounds of nature such as ocean waves or waterfalls on audio.

Getaway

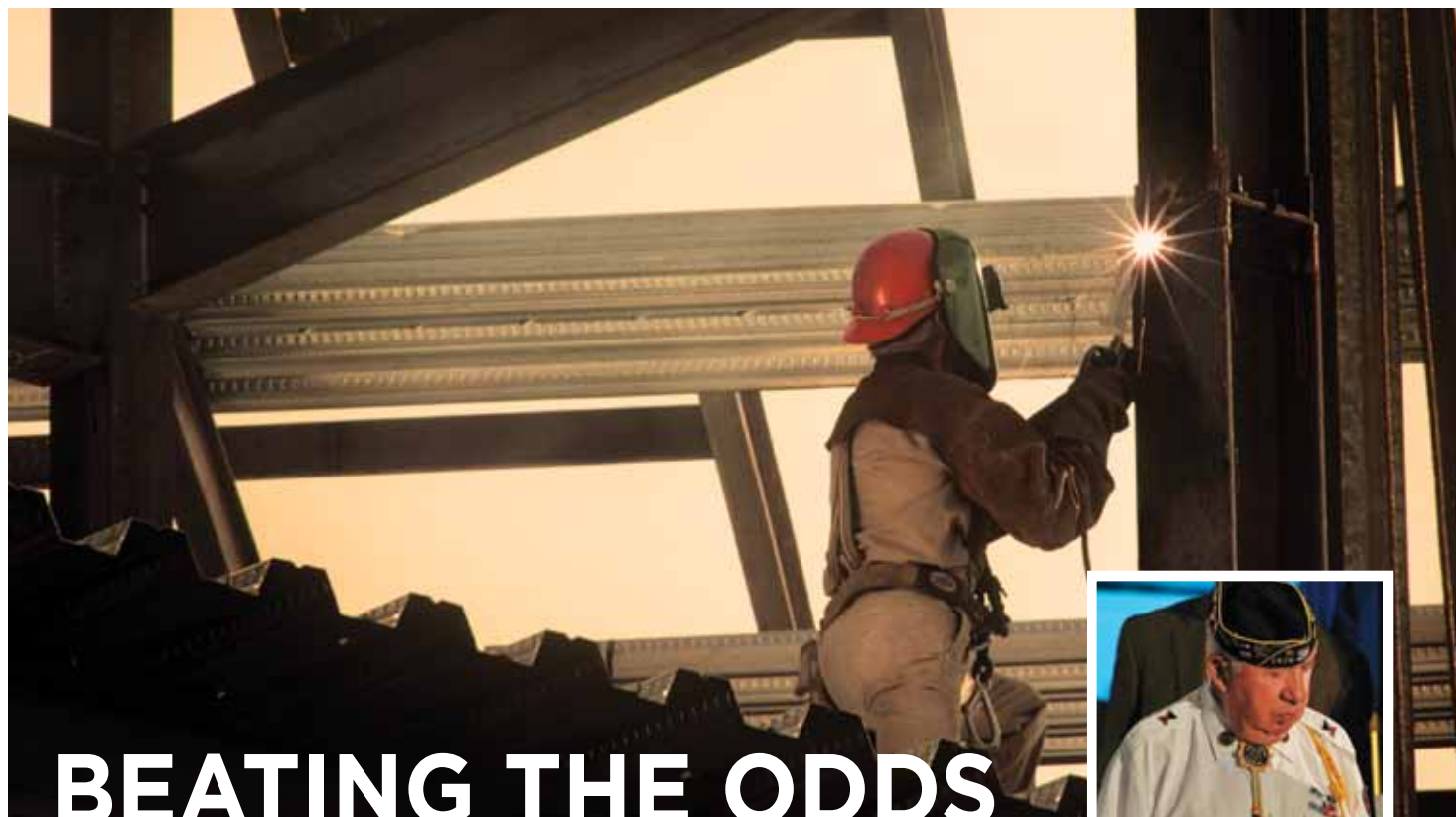
While sound can certainly have a positive influence on our health, the absence of sound can also have a healing effect. Perhaps one of the best escapes we have is solitary quiet. Give yourself time for silence, whether in meditation, or focusing on a sunrise or sunset.

Start Small

Now with all these ideas, just begin with small choices and changes in your effort to move from sensory overload to garden tranquility. Look around at the spaces you occupy most. Do you find things that inspire you and lift your spirit? Whatever it is, your surroundings should be about more than just function. Think about sensory experiences that trigger calm and peace for you, and find ways to incorporate them into your environment. ■



This article was reprinted from 8 Secrets of a Healthy 100 by Des Cummings, Jr., Ph.D. with Monica Reed, M.D. and Todd Chobotar. Used with permission.



BEATING THE ODDS

Against Disease Through Lifestyle and Faith

Orlo Ransom, a Mohawk from New York who has lived all of his 79 years on the Akwesasne Reservation, is one of thousands of Native Americans who built Manhattan. Native Americans have been the skywalking stars on the high girders since the late 1800s.

In January 1985, Orlo fell on an iron-working job in New York City. In and out of a coma, it wasn't certain that he would live, let alone ever walk again. Ironworkers still die on the job at a rate of 35 to 50 fatalities each year—75 percent of them from falls. Through faith and determination, Orlo beat the fallen ironworker fatality statistic.

As dangerous as death-defying steel skywalking is, Orlo is fighting—and winning—the fight against even grimmer statistics. Death from heart disease is 20 percent greater, and stroke death 14 percent greater among Native Americans than among all U.S. races, according to the Centers for

Disease Control. Native Americans die younger than other racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Thirty-six percent of those who die of heart disease die before age 65. But not Orlo, grandfather and great-grandfather of 17, the youngest of which is four-month-old “Baby Orlo.”

Big Orlo has chosen a healthy lifestyle as promoted by CREATION Health, a lifestyle program from Florida Hospital that incorporates the following principles: Choice, Rest, Environment, Activity, Trust, Interpersonal Relationships, Outlook, Nutrition.

Alma, his bride since 1958, says the CREATION diet wasn't that different from their traditional diet of the Three Sisters: beans, corn, and squash. “Beans, beans, beans,” she says, “in any form that you can get them, are very good for you.” Alma says CREATION Health made a difference in their lives. “We are very happy,” she reports.

Having outlived many of his age group, Orlo was chosen to carry the Eagle Staff during the grand entry at the 2015 convention of the National Congress of American Indians. Alma says he has carried the American flag before, but this was a special honor. The Eagle Staff is always presented ahead of any other flag as more important and meaningful; an indicator of a tribe's accomplishments, and the integrity and honor of its people. The Eagle Staff is carried by a member of an honor society, or a service veteran. Ransom, a Korean War veteran, is a proud member of a society who is beating deadly odds with a strong focus on faith and health. May health and faith be a tradition that “Baby Orlo” learns as he grows into a man. ■

For more information about CREATION Health go to creationhealth.com.

DELIGHT

in the

Elements

BY DAVID BIEBEL, JAMES DILL, M.D., AND BOBBIE DILL, R.N.

In days gone by, many homes, schools, and workplaces had a coveted patch of green where we could routinely escape and recharge. We could breathe fresh air, stretch, walk around, and gaze at flowers and trees or maybe even a distant mountains or lake.

At lunchtime, we would take our sandwich and head outside for a stroll and some laughter with our kids or co-workers. We felt refreshed and could return to the day's tasks with renewed energy and perspective. Unfortunately, this practice has given way to the "working lunch," keeping workers inside at their desks.

Experts warn that separating ourselves from nature increases stress, and research has shown that immersing ourselves in nature not only is soothing but also protects our psychological well-being. Dr. Mardie Townsend is conducting the "Living High but Healthy" project in Australia to show how important it is for those living and working in the city to have exposure to nature. A host of studies report that immersing ourselves in nature can boost our immunity and productivity as well as increase our ability to deal with day-to-day challenges of our lives.

Sue, a surgical nurse, had given birth to a longed-for son and quit the job she loved to stay at home with her baby. Simultaneously her husband quit, Jack, was drafted into the military as an Army doctor in the Vietnam War. Within a short time, Sue and her husband were relocated to an isolated Army base far from their friends and family.

At first, Sue was excited about their new life and set about making their tiny house a home, relishing every moment with their newborn son. Then the rainy season came. Sue woke up to gray skies and teeming rain day after day after day. At first, she busied herself with craft projects and taking endless pictures of her son's milestones, but as time went on she felt more and more trapped and isolated. Always an outdoors person, she longed for even one sunny day back in her home state, hiking with her old friends. Her husband was very supportive but exhausted after his busy days at the hospital, and he looked forward to quiet evenings and weekends at home. Crushing guilt was beginning to overwhelm Sue. She knew how fortunate she was to have a beautiful, healthy, baby boy and a loving husband who had not been overseas like so many others. Each day she would lovingly look out the window for signs of life and a break in the constant downpour.

One morning she was overjoyed to see a neighbor with a young child bravely facing the elements. She had on a bright red slicker and had bundled up her six-month-old and perched her in a child backpack carrier. A large golf umbrella covered mom and daughter as she jogged across the lawn, tossing a ball for their black lab, who was happily prancing by their side. Sue was transformed that day and set free to get back into the outdoor life she loved. Her fears of taking her new baby out in the downpour banished by the other mother's example of going outside to play! It didn't take Sue long to don her rain gear and make a new friend as they took the first of many walks through the beautiful park with their laughing babies.

In the past few years, employers have become more and more aware of the benefit to their employees when they are given a few minutes of down time in a place with a tranquil view. Blue Cross and Blue Shield sponsors periodic lunchtime walks for working people around the country, hoping to

promote more active, nature filled lunch breaks. Groups of friends are encouraged to give it a try, and with a bottle of water and a protein bar, they are escorted around the block several times by enthusiastic trainers hoping to convince them to begin this healthy habit. Participants are often surprised to see how much more invigorated and relaxed they feel upon returning to their desks.

Hospitals, too, are finally placing importance on the healing properties of exposure to nature. Old, depressing, dimly-lit hospital quarters are giving way to earth-colored walls, nature-inspired art, huge sunlit windows, and healing gardens. The most wondrous example of this that we have ever seen in our travels is at one small community hospital in Lebanon,

Oregon. A generous gift from an enlightened former patient enabled the hospital to create an elaborate healing garden in the center courtyard of the hospital. The exquisite ornamental trees and flowers and the pond laden with water lilies could be seen from every vantage point. Walking the hospital halls was a journey into nature as the garden was viewed through expansive windows embedded with an occasional stained glass creature depicting scripture verses. Patients and staff alike spent as much time as possible enjoying the benefits of this place of serenity. At the end of the garden a gentle waterfall cascades over the colorful rocks and plants alongside this little porch where cancer patients receive their chemotherapy. As the benefactor knew it would, healing flourishes in this little garden of Eden, for without a doubt, if there is any place on earth that our healing Creator loves, it is a garden.

Be proactive about immersing yourself in the beauty of nature. Celebrate the seasons and the weather. Make the most of your outdoor surroundings. Visit a stream, a forest glen, a mountain trail, a beach path, a bird sanctuary, a hill, or a garden. Study the flowers and the trees, listen to the birds singing, notice the shades of color in the autumn meadow or sparkling lake or the hues painting the autumn leaves. Drink in the fragrant aroma of the woods or the garden or the pungent, salty scent of the ocean breeze. Immerse yourself in nature. It soothes your soul, clears the mind, and guarantees you a great day. ■



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GARDENING:

RESTORING A TIME-HONORED TRADITION

For thousands of years, our people grew their own food. The Creator blessed with sun and rain. He provided minerals in the soil and a perfectly-balanced atmosphere that protected and nourished vegetation in many different types of climates. The old seeds were a gift from the Creator. There was a strong connection between the people and the land. We were healthy and self-sufficient. In this present time, however, this relationship with the land is often no longer intact and only a small portion of our people continue to grow their own food. With the increased awareness of environmental and health issues of our people and land, now is the time to consider reviving this sustainable time-honored tradition.

Health - There are many reasons why growing our own food is good for us, the earth, and our families. Eating healthy food is undeniably one of the best reasons! Fresh vegetables straight from the garden to the table are unsurpassed in taste and healthy vitamins. Young gardeners will experience pride and satisfaction in bringing food to the table that they have helped grow. It also may have the added benefit of enticing them to enjoy healthier foods! Other health perks include the exposure to sunshine for Vitamin D absorption and exercise in the fresh air.

Economical -After the initial one-time expense of creating a planting space, growing your own food is very cost

effective. A packet of seeds costing a few dollars will grow into a bountiful harvest. In addition, the knowledge of how to save seeds for the next year will make buying some types of seeds unnecessary. Garden produce supplements food budgets and the preserved surplus will continue to grace the table during the winter months.

Environmental - When growing our own food, we can control how the earth is being treated and choose to not use harmful pesticides and fertilizers. We can work in harmony with the native pollinators and respect the earth by putting back materials such as compost for nourishing and replenishing the soil. Home-grown produce also avoids the environmental cost of shipping and packaging.

Family time - Engaging in a garden project is a rewarding and productive activity that allows parents to spend quality time with their children. The pure excitement of a child watching the miracle of a growing plant is priceless. Parents, grandparents, relatives, and respected community members can all be garden mentors to our children and youth. Many elders have vivid memories of gardens from earlier times and can share their stories. In the garden, life lessons can be easily grasped. Patience, overcoming challenges (pests), watchfulness (weather), observational skills, and faithfulness (watering and weeding) are all obvious virtues in the growing process. With humbleness we acknowledge that we are only tools in the Creator's hands.

Cultural – Our Indian heritage is closely intertwined with plants and foods. Each nation has traditional foods that have given our ancestors strength for thousands of years. The Native people learned the secrets of growing food in a sustainable manner. The often recited Haudenosaunee's practice of planting the Three Sisters is an example of growing wisdom. Planting the "sisters" (beans, corn, and squash) as companions provides mutual benefits to each. The corn provides a sturdy support for the bean vines to climb, and the beans in turn feed nitrogen into the soil to help keep it fertile. The large squash leaves provide shade that deters weeds, and the leaves' prickles help deter animals from feeding on the corn and beans.

Preserving our seed heritage is also an important consideration. The Seneca Nation and the Seneca Diabetes Foundation have developed an initiative called "Food Is Our Medicine" to encourage the growing of traditional white corn along with other healthy traditional practices. Native organizations across the country are working hard to preserve and rediscover traditional seeds grown by their ancestors. Seed libraries are being

developed as a resource to meet this need. These groups recognize that restoring traditional healthy foods will have an impact on the health of our families and community.

The vision to grow one's own food is gaining momentum across all cultures. Having a large parcel of land is not necessary, for even a small piece of land will produce plenty of vegetables. Container gardens can also be used to grow food very successfully. Next to sunshine and water, fertile soil is critical to garden success. Poor soil issues are bypassed with building a raised garden bed that is made rich with compost and an organic-rich soil. It also eliminates drainage issues. An added bonus to creating a raised bed or container garden is the significant reduction of weeds. Patios and rooftops that receive sunshine can be garden location possibilities, too. Sometimes the best place to plant a garden is with fellow gardeners in a community garden.

Hopefully you are inspired to start a garden this year, learn more about native seed collection, or lead in a community garden project in your neighborhood. Or perhaps your skills would fit well with volunteering at a local seed bank or teaching food preservation classes. Maybe you are inspired to grow extra produce for food banks and sharing. Your role as a tribal leader may put you in the position to be an encourager and promoter of healthy growing policies and initiatives for your nation. There is something we all can do. We know that growing food is a way to respect the earth, strengthen our families, and connect with the Creator. ■

For more information about traditional plants and seeds:

- www.dreamofwildhealth.org (upper Midwest)
- www.nativeseeds.org (greater southwest region)
- www.foodisourmedicine (eastern)

TIPS

for Starting a Garden

1. Choose a garden site that has plenty of sunshine for most of the day and a source of water nearby.
2. Build a frame 4 feet by 8 feet (or longer) out of environmentally-friendly materials. Since you will never be walking in this raised bed, you will want to make it no wider than 4 feet so that you can reach from the sides to plant and weed. It should be at least 12 inches tall. You can use untreated wood, logs, cement blocks, bricks, stones, or other available material. Avoid anything that could possibly leach chemicals such as treated lumber, old railroad ties, and tires.
3. Line the bottom of the garden bed with a layer of cardboard. No tilling of the soil under the cardboard is necessary.
4. Fill the garden bed with ½ well-aged compost and ½ quality garden/topsoil. Buying organic soil with no fertilizer is healthiest. If the soil is heavy, use perlite or similar organic material to lighten the texture.
5. Time to plant! Check with experienced gardeners to learn the best time to plant seeds and young plants in your area. Internet resources will also give guidelines. Consider growing some traditional native seed varieties.
6. Anticipate wildlife that will want to "share" your garden. Netting or a fence around your raised bed may be helpful. Dogs are wonderful deterrents to animal visitors.
7. Thank the Creator for the harvest and share your bounty!

Sheri Gregory, Ph.D. is an enrolled member of the Seneca Nation (Turtle Clan). She currently grows her own vegetables in a community garden with four other families. At home she has an herb garden and is developing a pollinator garden. Her greatest growing joy, however, is seeing the first native woodland flowers arrive in the spring.



TO SAVE A *Life*

—SUICIDE IN INDIAN COUNTRY

BY GARY BURNS

When the publisher of American Indian Living asked me to write an article about teen suicide, I had mixed emotions. I have been engaged in the lives of young people as a youth pastor for many years, and during that time, the potential of suicide has always been lurking in the shadows of the communities I served.

As I thought about taking this assignment, my mind went back a number of years to the face of a 17-year-old boy who had struggled with depression. Fortunately, he would often call when things got bad and we'd talk about his feelings, consider the people who loved him, and the positive things he had going in his life, and we looked at the spiritual dimension and the purpose his Creator had in giving him life. Being able to talk and pray about his

feelings helped. I'd stay until he felt safe and had renewed hope.

Not long after he and his family moved to another part of the country, I received the disturbing phone call from his mother that he had hung himself in the woods where he used to go to get away. His was one of the most difficult memorial services I had ever done. I wondered whether he'd still be alive if he hadn't moved away. I wondered, too, if he'd still be alive if I had stayed in closer touch with him.

Last year I was shocked and saddened when I began reading posts on social media from members of our Native American Family Camp community who were reacting to the multiple suicides among their Lakota peers on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. It started with a 12-year-old girl a few days before Christmas. From December, 2014 to May, 2015, nine young people, ages 12-24, had committed suicide on Pine Ridge as



reported by the *New York Times*.

Five months later, Anna Almendrala, Senior Healthy Living Editor for the *Huffington Post* reported “Native American Youth Suicide Rates Are at Crisis Levels.”

Sari Horwitz of the *Washington Post* reported March 9, 2014, “The silence that has shrouded suicide in Indian country is being pierced by the growing alarm at the sheer numbers of young Native Americans taking their own lives — more than three times the national average, and up to 10 times the average on some reservations.”

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), suicide is the eighth leading cause of death among American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) across all ages. Among AI/AN aged 10 to 34 years, suicide is the second leading cause of death. The suicide rate among AI/AN adolescents and young adults ages 15 to 34 (19.5 per 100,000) is 1.5 times higher than the national average for that age group (12.9 per 100,000).

The Indian Health Service states in its suicide prevention program: “Despite the strengths of AI/AN families

"Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death among American Indians/Alaska Natives"

and communities, suicide remains a devastating and all too frequent event. Complex, interrelated factors contribute to an increased suicide risk among AI/AN people. Risk factors include mental health disorders, substance abuse, intergenerational trauma, and community-wide issues. Factors that protect AI/AN youth and young adults against suicidal behavior are a sense of belonging to one's culture, a strong tribal/spiritual bond, the opportunity to discuss problems with family or friends, feeling connected to family, and positive emotional health.”

That's one of the reasons why Native American Family Camp is held each summer near Pe' Sla in Paha Sapa, sponsored by the Dakota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. It is a weekend that brings multi-generations together for a spiritual retreat that honors our Creator and focuses on the Creator's purpose for each of our lives. Of course, we could agree that one purpose is that we enjoy good health and that we care about the health and well-being of others.

Debra Claymore-Cuny is the director of Native Ministry for the Dakota Conference and the Native American Family Camp, and a consultant on substance abuse in Indian country. She believes that generational trauma and abuse contribute to a sense of hopelessness, which can lead to suicide. She states: “There are counselors who believe that many Natives exhibit Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms as a result of the abuse. There have been numerous national conferences and local trainings that have taken place about PTSD in the Native communities.”

As a consultant she has challenged the

report that approximately 80 percent of alcoholics have experienced sexual abuse; however, time and time again, nearly all participants in her workshops affirm the statistic is true. Celebrating 30 years of sobriety herself, she credits her success to her relationship with her Creator and a daily reminder to herself to “let go and let God.” She believes the answer is a spiritual one.

To help the younger generation she has organized basketball camps for youth on different reservations. She recruits Adventist college basketball players to be coaches and spiritual mentors for the camps with approximately 100 children, grades two through 12, in attendance at each camp.

One of the young Lakota boys, Elwood “Woody” Cuny, has been coming to Native Family Camp for more than 10 years and he is now one of the leaders helping out with the younger ones. Giving young people responsibility and authority goes a long way to build a sense of purpose and confidence. And helping, protecting and serving others is a great benefit to one’s self. He’s also a great basketball player.

I asked Woody what his response was to the suicide epidemic in his community. He offered, “Well in my honest opinion I think teens who have suicidal thoughts shouldn’t be afraid to ask for help. They can add me on Facebook and I’ll talk to them. But teen suicide is nothing to mess around with because you never know when someone will snap and actually listen to the bully.” Woody brings out another factor—bullying. That’s another area that needs our attention.

Another focus at Native American Family Camp is to teach the young how to use their gifts of creativity in art, music, and photography, which gives them a great sense of accomplishment. It is exciting to watch them as they discover new potential and ways of expressing themselves. They discover that they are gifted. And giftedness implies purpose. That purpose is to serve, protect, and encourage others through our creative gifts and abilities.

If you are a regular reader of *American Indian Living*, you are probably aware of the Eight Principles of CREATION Health: Choice, Rest, Environment, Activity, Trust in God, Interpersonal Relationships, Outlook, Nutrition. If we can incorporate these eight principles of living into our personal lives and the life of our families,



that would go a long way to reduce the suicide rate among our Native American communities.

There is a lot that each of us can do to help those who feel that suicide is their best solution. We can begin by talking. Sandy Fly, also from Pine Ridge, shared her experience. “Years ago, a young man committed suicide and his brother was sitting here at my house saying he wanted to be with his brother and that he was going to kill himself. I told him that his brother was no longer here and that he would not even know that he was laying next to him or he wouldn’t even know he was there. I told him that he would be six feet under, lying in a casket covered in dirt. He sat there and thought about it and said, ‘I never thought of it like that.’ Today he’s alive and has a family.”

Sandy regrets that often, “there’s bullying, whether it’s on social media or in person, that can push a youth to commit suicide. Sometimes the young person is too scared to tell anyone, so they keep it hidden

until they can’t take it anymore and then they complete the suicide. There is also abuse that a young child has to endure, too, at the hands of their loved ones, that can break their spirit and they commit suicide because they don’t see any other way to deal with it,” she says. “Without the love and support from family and friends and our communities, our youth will continue to commit suicide. We can help them by teaching them how to deal with life’s difficulties, and then they will learn that it’s ok to talk about what is hurting them so they can deal with it and move on with their life.”

Her advice is that we “honor our children while they are here with us. Let’s pray with them to help lift their spirit up, give them a hug and let them know how much they are appreciated and cherished. Give them flowers to brighten their day or even a pat on the back. Any kind gesture will make him/her feel that he/she is loved and that will make their world a better place to live in.”

WARNING SIGNS

- Unusual preoccupation with (talking, writing, or otherwise communicating about) death
- Gathering tools and/or information that could be used to harm oneself
- Making efforts to put affairs in order
- Contacting friends to say goodbye
- Giving away favorite possessions
- Loss of interest in favorite things
- Sleep disturbances: too much or too little, or new sleep patterns
- Expression of self-loathing, hopelessness, worthlessness, or being a burden to others
- Withdrawing from others
- Acting out with dangerous behavior
- Seeming suddenly happy or calm after a period of sadness or depression

RISK FACTORS

- Previous attempts at suicide
- Family history of suicide
- History of mental disorders, particularly clinical depression
- History of alcohol and substance abuse

- Feelings of hopelessness
- Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- Cultural and religious beliefs
- Loss (relational, social, work, or financial)
- Physical illness
- Easy access to lethal methods
- Barriers to accessing mental health treatment

ADDITIONAL RISK FACTORS FOUND AMONG AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE POPULATIONS

- A history of interpersonal violence/abuse
- Unwillingness to seek help because of stigma related to mental health, substance abuse disorders, or suicidal thoughts
- Unemployment
- Alcohol misuse/abuse
- Economic instability and social disintegration
- Perceived discrimination
- Isolation on reservations, feeling cut off from other people
- Local epidemics of suicide (called "Suicide Clustering")
- Historical trauma and unresolved grief

The Indian Health Service offers some examples on how to begin a conversation:

"It may not be easy to talk about suicide or respond to someone who brings up the topic in conversation. Across almost all cultures, and especially in Indian country where rates are higher than the general population, the subject of suicide carries with it the stigmas of depression and death, and the fear that just talking about it will make it happen. However, talking about suicide and listening to those who share suicidal thoughts or behaviors is an important tool that may be used not only to prevent suicide, but also to help those who have lost hope.

"Before talking with someone you are concerned about, be sure to have suicide crisis resources available, including the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), and numbers and addresses of local crisis lines or treatment centers. Mention what signs prompted you to ask about how they are feeling. Mention the words used or

behavior displayed that you or others have noticed in the person. This makes it more difficult for them to deny that something may be wrong.

"Say: 'I've noticed that you've mentioned feeling (hopeless, depressed, useless, like a burden, etc.) lately' or 'You haven't been spending time with your friends and have been sleeping a lot lately.'"

"Next, ask directly about suicide. Talking about suicide does NOT put the idea in someone's head and often provides some relief for that person since it gives them a chance to open up. Asking directly and using the word "suicide" establishes that you and the at-risk person are talking about the same thing and lets them know you are not afraid to talk about it. Here are some questions you could ask:

" 'Sometimes when people feel that way, they think about suicide. Are you thinking about suicide?' " or " 'Are you thinking about ending your life?' "

"If the answer is " 'yes' " to your direct question, remain calm, and don't leave the

person alone until you get help. Listen to the reasons the person gives for considering suicide as an option. Affirm that you realize what they are considering, but bring up that they may have felt differently before (which suggests that they may feel different again), and emphasize that living is an option for them:

"I can imagine how tough this must be for you. I know you say you're unsure if you want to live right now. But have you always felt like you wanted to die? It's possible you won't feel this way forever.

"Let the person know you care, that you take their situation seriously, that you are genuinely concerned, and will do all you can in your effort to support them.

"I'm deeply concerned about you and I want you to know that help is available to get you through this. I can help you.' "

"Don't be afraid to get involved. Take the initiative to help someone who may be exhibiting some of the signs mentioned. You just might save a life." ■

THE WHEELS ON THE BUS

Creating a Safe Environment for Children



BY SUZANNE BRAZIL-GEYSHICK

“The wheels on the bus go round and round....” I hum as I head

toward my first stop. Nearing my destination, I stop humming and carefully observe the children who by now see the flashing lights of the bus. They scramble to form a line and prepare to load. I stop, check my mirrors one more time, then open the doors and signal for them to start loading. It is at this point when I begin to check each wheel of the students loading onto the bus, because it is the condition of each students’ wheel that will determines the outcome of the ride.

In the Native American communities, there is a symbol used to represent the health and healing of a whole person. It is called

the medicine wheel. The wheel is divided into four even sections by different colors. Each section of the wheel represents an aspect that makes up a healthy person. Depending on where you are from, the medicine wheel can have other meanings too. But for my illustration, I am only going to focus on the medicine wheel as it pertains to the aspect of a person’s emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual balance. I have found being aware and helping students be balanced in these areas of their personality is crucial for safe transport of multi-aged, multi-cultured young people.

My name is Suzie and I drive school bus on the Coeur d’Alene Reservation. My job is to safely transport students to and from school. This can be a challenge at times because each of the students is coming to the bus effected by their very own personal experience of daily life. As a bus driver, I need



current emotional state, which can change frequently depending on who gets on the bus, what is said or even someone or something seen by the student that is outside the bus. It is the emotional and physical aspects of the wheel that are the most challenge to keep balanced and that pose the greatest threat to a safe environment.

I give positive praise and constructive suggestions in conversational context as I am driving. I encourage positive interactions and I also look for teaching moments where I can suggest to a rider a more accepting way to communicate to his friend or to me for that matter. There are times when a fight occurs and the bus needs to be pulled over and secured and a more direct interaction needs to happen. It is in these times when emotions need to be diffused by talking out the feelings. Taking the time to work with the students gives them a new solution besides trying to see who can be the most intimidating.

Spending regular time with a person and observing how they deal with issues from day to day reveals the intellectual and spiritual part of a student, and it is only through daily interactions that these aspects can fully be comprehended. A person's reasoning abilities and what they understand to be right and wrong within certain contexts is what I see as the intellectual and spiritual parts of the personality. These aspects are more consistent but it takes a closer look to really see them. For example, last year I had a student on my bus that always insisted on sitting in the far back. One afternoon something occurred where I moved her to the middle of the bus away from a situation that was causing a safety issue. Her whole countenance changed and the playful friendly student became rigid and distant toward me and the students around her. Some days later at her stop, I asked her why the move had made her so upset. She said that she was very embarrassed to have to sit with the little kids.



to understand very quickly some of what that experience is, so I can determine if a student needs help finding a seat where they are going to be able to make the best choices for themselves and others during our ride together. I need to also determine if there is anything I can do to help the student whose wheel is out of balance get back into balance. Often times, a simple kindness or a reminder can make all the difference.

I start with a cheerful greeting carefully observing their emotional and physical state as they pass by me. I note the response of each student and where they choose to sit, who they are sitting with, what are they wearing and what are they carrying. Are they bringing something onto the bus that doesn't belong? Once they settle in, I watch and listen. This first interaction usually gives me a pretty good idea of their

Because she is a regular rider, I was able to ask her what was going on and because we have a working relationship, she trusted me enough to share her belief with me. Taking the time to get to know the whole person really helps me respond to my students in a compassionate way and it allows them to respond back in a similar way. This mutual cooperation and trust makes the bus a safe environment. But checking wheels isn't just useful for making a safe place on the bus. It can be a useful tool to make a safe place for people in any environment. When building relationships with anyone, it is getting to know the whole person that makes interactions with others safe.

As I say my last, "Enjoy your day" to the final student exiting the bus, I imagine a picture of a hand-painted medicine wheel on his backpack. I smile and catch myself humming that familiar tune, "The wheels on the bus go round and round." And in my heart, my hope is that the wheels of the students who ride on my bus will go round and round a little easier for them as they continue their day, "all over town." ■



NATIVE WISDOM

for High Blood Pressure

BY DAVID DEROSE, MD, MPH AND GREG STEINKE, MD, MPH

Corn. Beans. Squash. These foods are known as “the Three Sisters” throughout much of Indian Country. Perhaps you grew up respecting—and enjoying—these simple yet powerful plant foods. However, these foods are more than good tasting. Cutting-edge medical science is shedding profound light on the wisdom of Native elders in extolling the Three Sisters.

One of the great epidemics sweeping Indian Country and the world is high blood pressure, known in medical circles as hypertension. Emerging research reveals that we can help ourselves, our families, and our tribes avoid this silent killer by eating—you guessed it—more corn, beans, and squash.

One of the secrets to the power of the Three Sisters and related plant products is this: these foods are loaded with something called “phytochemicals.” This designation literally should refer to any plant chemical, but it is used in medical circles to refer especially to biologically active compounds in plants that are not vitamins or minerals.

These phytochemicals have benefits in preventing cancer, improving the immune system, and decreasing the risk of heart disease. However, for the sake of this article we want to focus on a single characteristic of phytochemicals; namely, their ability to lower blood pressure.

Part of the blood pressure benefits of plants comes from a particular class of phytochemicals, those having what are

called “ACE inhibitory effects.” If you’re a health professional—or otherwise well-read on blood pressure topics—you may already realize that “ACE” stands for angiotensin converting enzyme. If you’re learning this for the first time, let us explain: ACE inhibitors work to lower blood pressure by interfering with the blood-pressure-raising effects of a complicated hormonal system known as the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system.

Don’t get worried about all the medical terms. We’re simply talking about a key system in your body that involves organs like your kidneys and adrenal glands—and raises your blood pressure.

Let’s make it more practical. Perhaps you are taking a medication for your blood

FIGURE 1 ANGIOTENSIN CONVERTING ENZYME (ACE) INHIBITORY COMPOUNDS IN FOODS

ACE INHIBITORS HAVE WELL-DOCUMENTED, BLOOD-PRESSURE-LOWERING EFFECTS. THE FOLLOWING FOODS HAVE BEEN FOUND TO CONTAIN THESE COMPOUNDS:



pressure like enalapril (found in Vasotec® and Vaseretic®), lisinopril (found in Prinivil®, Prinzide®, Zestril® and Zestoretic®), moexipril (found in Uniretic® and Univasc®), trandolapril (found in Tarka®), or some other antihypertensive drug whose generic name ends in “pril.” If so, then you are taking an ACE inhibitor. But there are other ways to get ACE inhibitors besides taking drugs. That’s right, these “drugs” are found in small quantities in fruits and vegetables.

Figure 1 provides a list of foods that have been identified as containing ACE inhibitory compounds.

Don’t let Figure 1 worry you. In the authors’ accumulated medical practice we have never seen anyone admitted to the hospital in shock (i.e., with profound low blood pressure) from eating too many plant products. Granted, if you are highly allergic to any food, you can develop what is called anaphylactic shock which can indeed cause profoundly low blood pressure and death. So, by all means, if you’re allergic to peanuts, don’t start eating them to try to lower your blood pressure!

Such extenuating circumstances aside, we’ve never seen someone who was not taking medications develop hypotension (too low a blood pressure) because of a healthy diet. But remember this: because of the powerful effects of nutrition on blood pressure, you may develop blood pressure that is too low if you change your diet dramatically and don’t work with your doctor to change your medications in the face of improving blood pressure numbers.

The Proof is in the (Squash) Pudding

The population data is clear when it comes to blood pressure: eat more plant foods, lower your pressure. Eat more animal foods, raise your pressure. Such a message was powerfully illustrated in data from the famous Seventh-day Adventist Health Study-2 (see Figure 2).

The researchers in the Adventist Health Study-2 used fairly straightforward

definitions to delineate dietary practices. Dietary categories were defined indicating progressively less animal product consumption:

- Nonvegetarians ate more than once a week from all the following categories: red meat, poultry, fish, milk, and eggs
- Semivegetarians ate fish, milk and eggs, but red meat and poultry less than once per week
- Pescovegetarians ate fish in addition to milk and eggs, but essentially no red meat or poultry (by definition, less than once per month)
- Lacto-ovo vegetarians ate milk and/or eggs, but no red meat, fish, or poultry
- Vegans (also known as total vegetarians) ate no red meat, fish, poultry, dairy or eggs

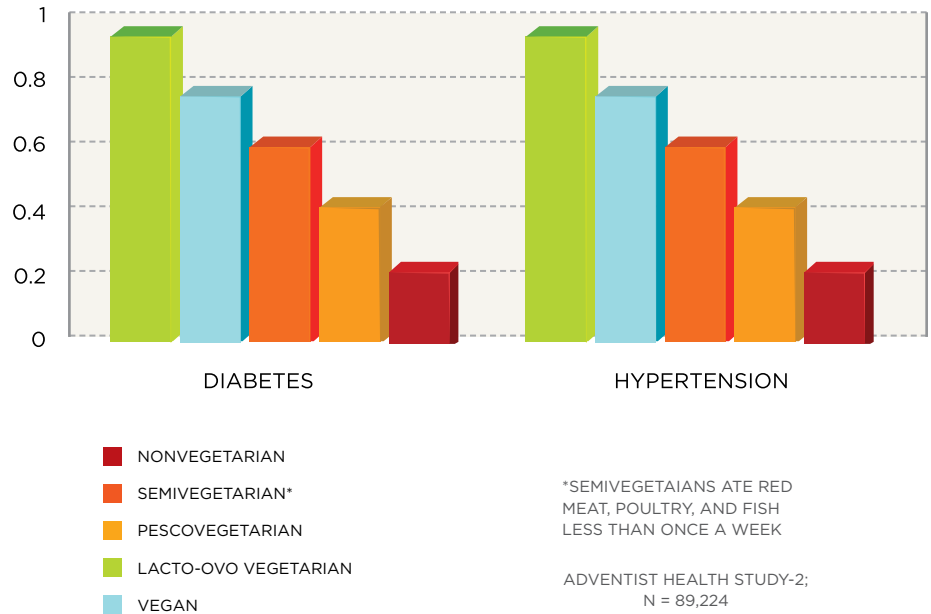
The message of Figure 2 could not be clearer. Eat more corn, beans, and squash. Or expressed in other words, the less animal products consumed—and the

more plant products eaten—the less likely a person is to have high blood pressure. Blood pressure is not the only parameter to benefit. Notice what one of this study’s authors has to say about the benefit of vegetarian diets in general:

“There is convincing evidence that vegetarians have lower rates of coronary heart disease, largely explained by low LDL cholesterol, probable lower rates of hypertension and diabetes mellitus, and lower prevalence of obesity. Overall, their cancer rates appear to be moderately lower than others living in the same communities, and life expectancy appears to be greater.” - Gary Fraser, M.D.

Yes, modern science continues to shed light on traditional Native wisdom. Why not get the blood pressure benefits your ancestors enjoyed? Eat more of the Three Sisters and related plant foods. ■

FIGURE 2
DIET PRACTICES AND THE LIKELIHOOD OF
HYPERTENSION AND DIABETES



YOU ARE YOUR SURROUNDINGS

BY ED DUNN

Have you heard that old saying, “No man is an island”? When I was young I often wondered what that meant. The elders told me that we are all part of the whole of creation. Our Creator made everything to interact and depend on everything else.





We people are part of that great system as well. Our actions affect everything around us and what happens around us, affects us too. That makes me feel important in the whole picture of how things work, because that gives me power to affect change for the better. When I was young our family would make several trips to the bush to pick wild blueberries. It was the highlight of my summer. We would store them for the long winter months. I was told that a great crop of wild blueberries was one positive effect of a forest fire. Even though I enjoyed the tasty wild blueberries, I was dismayed by the destruction that a forest fire can bring. So we are part of our environment and we can be affected either in a good or bad way.

We can see a picture of our interaction with our environment by experiencing the five senses—sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch—that our Creator gave to us, which we all use in an effort to make sense of all the information surrounding us.

Eyes/Sight

With our eyes we view the world and are also in turn affected in many ways. Our mood and mental health is affected by the beauty or ugliness that may surround us. Sunshine has a tremendous healthful effect on us. Seeing a simple smile can

bring us happiness. Spending time in the beauty of nature beside a stream or a calm lake can bring back health to a diseased body.

We should wisely control the information we allow to enter our minds, by what we read or view. Inappropriate material can cause real stress on our mind, which will definitely affect the health of our body. Our eyes are powerful. We should try our best to exercise our choices to only observe good things because of their powerful influence on us.

Ears/Hearing

Our ears translate the sounds around us into useable information. The sound could be words of love and compassion bringing us encouragement and happiness, or it might be scolding and ridicule, which could bring fear and tension. Word sounds powerfully affect us for good or evil.

Sometimes the sounds we hear are only noise. Constant and loud noise can make us feel irritable and stressed. We call that noise pollution. But nature's sounds and quietness have a calming effect on our bodies. I am constantly amazed by the affect the songs of the birds, frogs, and crickets have on my spirit. I feel so refreshed when I spend time in our Creator's handiwork. Try your best to adjust your surroundings to allow only good sounds to influence you.

Tongue/Taste

The function of our taste is very important to our health. But sometimes we allow our taste buds to encourage us to eat foods that do not improve wellness. Take high blood pressure for example - one of the risk factors is ingesting too much salty foods. Choose what you put in your mouth wisely to help improve your body's well-being.



Environmental pollutants can accumulate in our foods and cause us a great deal of grief. Pesticides and other various pollutants become more concentrated at each step of the food chain. That is the reason some of my friends are not eating fish and meats as often as they used to eat them. In fact, near some of our traditional fishing places there are signs warning people not to eat more than one serving of fish per week simply because of the contaminants that the fish and other water creatures have in them. So the foods that we choose to eat should also be those that do not destroy the environment in their production. Simple fresh fruits and vegetables, seeds, nuts, and grains—foods as close as possible to the way they came from the Creator's hand—will produce the best health and wholeness.

"Restore some pride in our Native heritage and identity by participating in ways to support and rebuild it."



be detrimental to our health, over time. The point here is that we should educate ourselves in order to provide the best for our bodies and our family.

There are many benefits to appropriate touch, hugs, and massages. Even as our hands are important for assisting us in understanding the world around us, they are also vital in helping others in the world. Volunteering our time and showing love to our communities can improve our health as well as the health of others. Science tells us that doing acts of kindness is one of the best ways to combat depression.

Restore some pride in our Native heritage and identity by participating in ways to support and rebuild it. This can be a powerful means of achieving wellness for us, and our community. We need to recommit to influencing the world around us with acts of love and compassion.

Engaging each of our five senses can affect our wellness, but it is also true that what we allow to influence us also affects the environment around us. How we choose to live definitely affects our environment and our Creator wants us to be responsible about how we interact with the earth and the creatures that live here.

Some things in our environment we can change, but others we can't, so we need to do the best we can with the circumstances we find ourselves in. Even though we can't change everything, we can still take steps towards change, and as we progress that direction more things will become possible. Everything starts out small. Don't give up. We need to do this for our future generations. Our choices really are powerful. ■

Nose/Smell

Can you imagine inviting your friends to have a picnic with you in a garbage dump, spreading your blanket over the discarded cans and bottles and rotting refuse and sitting down to enjoy your delicious tomato sandwiches, potato salad, and watermelon? What would your guests think? Green grass beside a clear stream accompanied by singing birds is a much more appealing environment for a picnic.

Smelling air that is polluted can severely affect our breathing function and capacity. One example of the negative effects of bad air is smoking cigarettes

and the problems it produces in our bodies. Also, we all know the harmful effects of living downwind from a pulp mill or chemical factory.

Hands/Touch

In my earlier days of being my own mechanic, I happened to get my hands in some anti-freeze and within seconds I could taste it in my mouth. But I only had it on my hands, not in my mouth! I was amazed at how the body absorbs substances through our skin. We should be very careful what we allow to touch our skin. Lotions and body creams, which we slather our bodies with, can actually

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HOW TO *Create a Healthy Home Environment*

Environment is what lies outside of us, either immediately or in our world at large. Yet it all, to some degree, affects what's inside of us because of what is outside coming inside through our skin, mouths, and minds.

“Everyone can identify with a fragrant garden, with the beauty of sunset, with the quiet of nature, with a warm and cozy cottage.” – *Thomas Kinkade*

All our senses – sight, smell, sound, touch and taste – can influence our mood and health. Recent research demonstrates not only the importance of our larger environment (air and water quality) but also our immediate environment (light, sound, aroma and touch) to our overall health.

Home

For starters, make your home an oasis, a “fertile” or “green” spot in contrast to the harshness of the world at large. Create a place that you, your family and guests will be blessed – a place that nurtures and restores everyone who enters.

Your home reflects you. Your home should make you feel good; it should recharge and revive all who enter. It should be a place of comfort, peace, and love.

Our environment encompasses all that is around us. It impacts us through our sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. Work and home environments probably impact our health the most because we spend most of our time in them. Paying attention to and striving to create a healthy environment in both places gives rich rewards.

Organization and Clutter

Other things in our environment can either be a help or a challenge. Organization, cleanliness and order all promote peace and health. Clutter, messes, and a lack of organization in our home can serve as stressors, or may even be a symptom of stress.

Clutter costs! For example, surveys indicate that people with cluttered desks and offices are less likely to get promoted. Clutter also promotes disorder and stress in our minds, resulting in less time and energy for other tasks. Think about it: even five minutes a day dealing with clutter adds up to over 30 hours a year of wasted time.

Sometimes clutter can hurt relationships or cause hard feelings among those who resent dealing with the messes other make. Clutter can impact our social lives, too, which is very important to our well-being. We might feel that the house is not clean enough to have loved ones over and, therefore, we miss out on the enrichment that socializing with those we love brings.

Clutter can contribute to depression and bad behavior. Clutter

and disorganization drain energy. Take a moment to notice how you feel next time you walk into a room that is disorganized and messy, and then notice how you feel when you walk into a room that is neat, clean and inviting.

The Medium Sends a Message

The media in our homes impacts us in a powerful way, whether we realize it or not. The TV is often on many hours a day. Take a moment to consider the images it feeds our brains. Are they positive and health promoting? Research shows that after watching just a few minutes of the news, participants said they felt more anxious and sad, which subsequently led to greater fear and personal worries. Typically the news is about crime, wars, and other negative things. TV viewing can also leave us non-responsive⁴ and inactive, adding to weight gain problems.

Also consider the movies, video games, magazines and books in your environment. Are they filled with images that you want to model and become? This is important because the old adage, “By beholding we become changed” is true. Behavioral and cognitive studies have linked exposure to violent media with aggressive behavior. Violent video games show increased activity in areas of the brain linked to aggression and decreased responses in regions that contribute to self-control.

Indoor Air Pollution

We don’t often think about the quality of the air inside our homes or buildings at work. It seems obvious that air pollution is something that happens outside. Many people are surprised to learn that air pollution can be more of a concern indoors than out. In the last several years, a growing body of scientific evidence has indicated that the air within homes and buildings can be more polluted than the outdoor air in even the largest and most industrialized cities.

Americans spend about 90% of their time indoors. The air inside most homes is an average of two to five times more polluted than the air outside its walls. Thus, for many people, the risks to health from exposure to indoor air pollution may be greater than risks from outdoor pollution. Indoor pollution is identified as one of the top five environmental risks for public health. Given this information, it’s easy to see why indoor air



pollution is a cause of concern and something we should pay attention to.

Where does indoor air pollution come from? It is created when we use toxic chemical products like household cleaners and pesticides; it's in home furnishings like carpets, foams, and composite wood products made from fume-emitting synthetic materials; it's in poorly vented combustion appliances like gas ranges and furnaces; it's in the fumes coming from garbage cans and indoor composting containers, to name a few.

Combine these sources with energy efficient home construction that dramatically limits the amount of fresh air exchanged between the inside and outside; air pollutant levels can quickly build to unhealthy levels.

Pesticides

One study measured pesticide levels of urine in children and found that immediately after substituting organic food items for the children's normal diets, the concentration of pesticides found in their bodies decreased substantially to non-detectable levels until the conventional diets were reintroduced.

Solar Power

Sunshine is a powerful promoter of health and well-being. It is the source of energy for the earth. It provides for the growth of green plants needed for our enjoyment and food, and enables plants to create oxygen out of carbon dioxide. Sunlight promotes positive thinking by increasing serotonin, an important "happiness" brain chemical. Reduced serotonin levels are connected to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), irritability, depression, aggression, anxiety, lack of concentration, chronic pain, fatigue, nausea, obsessive-compulsive disorder, fibromyalgia, arthritis, chronic fatigue syndrome, and heat intolerance. Serotonin has also been connected with eating behavior and body weight.

Water

Many people add filtration systems to their home's water supply. While filtering can be beneficial, be cautious not to "over-filter." Natural additions to our drinking water, such as dissolved minerals, give water a variety of refreshing tastes and make it healthier. Certain harmless microorganisms remove bad tastes and odors and make it more palatable. Another option for some homeowners is to drill a well, but the water should be tested to make sure it is good.

“The ultimate test of man’s conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard.”

– Gaylord Nelson

The importance of water cannot be underestimated. Falling water, whether from a waterfall, a creek, or from a rain shower, gives off negative ions. Hydrotherapy can do amazing things to stimulate our immune system and help us feel good. A hot bath can help us sleep better. In a German study conducted in Bavaria, researchers explored the positive effects of water treatment on immunity. A hydrotherapy regimen was followed for some subjects. They experienced significant increases in the lymphocytes, and a significant decrease in their cortisol (a stress hormone). Water has a powerful potential for healing. Hydrotherapy is an alternative practice that is used to treat almost every condition, chronic or acute. Hydrotherapy applications include hot and cold compresses and wet sheet wraps and baths, among other procedures, that use the body’s own immune function to fight disease.

Many people do not have enough fluid in their systems for the best health. Often people don’t drink enough water, and regularly consume drinks containing caffeine which removes fluids through its effects on the kidneys (a diuretic or “water pill”). Dehydration makes the blood thicker and more likely to clot, increasing the risk of strokes and heart attacks. One epidemiologic study demonstrated that heart attack risk decreased about 50% in people who drank at least five cups of water a day. This does not apply to sodas, fruit juice and milk products. Water is necessary for waste removal through the kidneys. Chronic dehydration may cause damage to the kidneys as well. A glass of water can ease or eliminate a tension headache. Keeping our body hydrated helps to keep our system healthy.

If a person lives in a hot or dry environment or is doing a lot of heavy work or exercise that induces sweating, they will need more than the recommended eight glasses a day. Water is absorbed fastest when taken on an empty stomach. Food and sugar slow down the absorption; thus commercial sports drinks or even fruit juices are not as good as plain water. If a person is exercising at least a couple of hours after a meal, cool water will absorb faster than warm water. A well-hydrated athlete or worker has much better endurance than a dehydrated one.

Environmental Issues

No question, our environment gives us peace, tranquility, food, shelter and health. Doesn’t it make you want to give back? Actually, when we give back we give to ourselves as well. Some people call it “going green.” Other see it as the fight against global warming. Either way, giving back is definitely the right thing to do for future generations.

At Creation, humans were appointed to be stewards of the earth—a big responsibility. The great news is that we can make a tremendous difference in the space around us. Even little things add up and make a big impact on us, our world, and on future generations. Every action that we take that impacts our environment, impacts our health and well-being; it impacts our outlook, it impacts how we feel about ourselves and others around us; and it can even impact us for eternity.

What are some ways to give back? An important first step, is to think about everything we do in light of how it impacts our environment. Ask yourself next time you make a purchase, Does this help support us and our planet for future generations? Is this product healthy for me, for my children, my yard, my home, my community, and my world?

Between 1960 and 2007 the amount of waste each person created almost doubled from 2.7 to 4.6 pounds per day. The most effective way to stop this trend is to prevent waste in the first place. Waste prevention, also known as ‘source reduction,’ is the practice of designing, manufacturing, purchasing, or using materials (such as products and packaging) in ways that reduce the amount of toxicity or trash created. Reusing items is another way to stop waste at the source because it delays or avoids that item’s entry into the waste collection and disposal system.

A powerful perspective to adopt as a life value would be, “I will reduce, reuse, recycle and repurchase, because it is the right thing to do.” ■

Upcoming Events

JUNE 2016 - JUNE 2017

- ▶ **Secretary's Tribal Advisory Quartely Committee Meeting**
Washington, DC
June 7-8, 2016
- ▶ **HIS/DOS Self-Governance Training Portland Area**
June 8, 2016
- ▶ **TALC-Tribal Accreditation Learning Community Webinar**
June 10, 2016
- ▶ **2016 Mid Year Conference & Marketplace**
Spokane, WA
June 27-30, 2016
- ▶ **SGAC/TSGAC Self Governance 3rd Quarter Advisory Committee Meeting**
Washington, DC
July 19-21, 2016
- ▶ **National Indian Health Board MMPC Face-to-Face Meeting**
Washington, DC,
July 26, 2016
- ▶ **Tribal Interior Budget Council**
Rapid City, SD
July 26-28, 2016
- ▶ **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services TTAG Face-to-Face Meeting**
Washinton, DC,
July 27-28, 2016
- ▶ **Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee Meeting Quartely Meeting**
Washington, DC,
September 13-14, 2016
- ▶ **National Indian Council on Aging (NICA) 2016 Biennial Conference**
Niagara Falls, NY
September 13-15, 2016
- ▶ **NIHB Annual Consumer Conference**
Tucson, AZ
September 19-23, 2016
- ▶ **NIEA National Convention**
Reno, NV
October 5-8, 2016
- ▶ **73rd Annual Convention & Marketplace**
Phoenix, AZ
October 9-14, 2016
- ▶ **SGAC/TSGAC Self Governance 4th Quarter Advisory Committee Meeting**
Washington, DC
October 25-27, 2016



- ▶ **Tribal Interior Budget Council**
Washington, DC
November 7-9, 2016
- ▶ **Native Wellness Institute Native Life Skills Training of Trainers**
Clackamas, OR
November 8-10, 2016
- ▶ **RES New Mexico**
Santa Fe, NM
November 14-17, 2016
- ▶ **Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee Meeting**
Quartely Meeting
Washington, DC
December 6-7, 2016
- ▶ **Native Wellness Institute Storytelling**
San Diego, CA
December 7-9, 2016
- ▶ **Native Wellness Institute Adults Working with Native Youth Training of Trainers**
San Diego, CA
December 7-9, 2016
- ▶ **Native Wellness Institute Health Relationships Trainers Refresher**
San Diego, CA
December 7-9, 2016
- ▶ **Native Wellness Institute Native Youth Leadership Academy**
San Diego, CA
December 7-10, 2016
- ▶ **USET Impact Week**
Washington, DC
February 6-9, 2017
- ▶ **2017 Executive Council Winter Session**
Washington, DC
February 13-16, 2017
- ▶ **RES Las Vegas**
Las Vegas, NV
March 13-16, 2017
- ▶ **NICWA Annual Conference**
San Diego, CA
April 2-5, 2017
- ▶ **2017 Mid Year Conference**
Uncasville, CT
June 25-28, 2017

For more event information
go to
<http://www.ncai.org>



NCAI Events

2016 - 2017

▶ **2016 Mid Year Conference & Marketplace**

*Spokane Convention Center,
Spokane, WA*

June 26 - 29, 2016

▶ **2017 Mid Year Conference & Marketplace**

Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, CT

June 25 - 28, 2017

▶ **73rd Annual Convention & Marketplace**

*Phoenix Convention Center,
Phoenix, AZ*

October 9 - 14, 2016

▶ **74th Annual Convention & Marketplace**

Wisconsin Center, Milwaukee, WI

October 15 - 20, 2017

Go to
<http://www.ncai.org>
for more event
information.

THE CREATION HEALTH MODEL:

8 Principles for Healthy Living



Choice »

The first step toward improved health is making consistent healthy choices, which turn into habits and lead to lifestyle improvement.



Rest »

More than getting a good night's sleep, healing rest means making space in your day to relax, and taking a day once a week for restoration.



Environment »

We were made for a garden, but we live in a jungle. Environment is the space outside of us that affects what happens inside of us.



Activity »

There are three kinds of physical activity and three dimensions to physical activity. Combine them, and you're on your way to good health.



Trust »

Our faith, beliefs, and hopes affect our health. A trusting relationship with the Creator empowers and enriches every aspect of life.



Interpersonal Relationships »

Positive relationships contribute to good health, while toxic relationships can destroy it. So, seek to give and receive unconditional love.



Outlook »

Outlook not only colors how you look at life, but research suggests attitude can influence your health and even impact the progression of disease.



Nutrition »

Food is the fuel that drives your whole system. Eat for energy, eat for mental clearness, eat for long life. After all, your health is worth it.

NATIVE *New* HEALTH

- DIABETES
- HEALTHY WEIGHT
- TOBACCO
- ALCOHOLISM
- HEART DISEASE
- CANCER
- SUICIDE
- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
- ORAL HEALTH
- SEXUALITY & YOUR HEALTH
- BEHAVIORAL ADDICTIONS
- BALANCE OF LIFE



PROGRAMS ARE HOSTED BY GINA GUIBOCHE AND EDWARD DUNN

NATIVE *New* HEALTH is an innovative series of health programs designed for Native people by Native people. This series addresses a number of health topics of special concern to Native People: diabetes, heart disease, cancer, depression, suicide, tobacco, alcoholism, and drug abuse and more. Each episode has been designed to generate discussion, and to assist the viewer in making positive lifestyle choices.

WWW.NATIVENEWHEALTH.CA