



Cathedral Village Wellness News

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Permission

By Dr Julie Zepp Rutledge ND

It's always a bit of a challenge to choose a topic on which to write when the time comes to put together a newsletter. The topic for this article "permission" came to me as a result of a recurring theme happening in both my life and my office right now.

It is always interesting to me how periods will go by when I am seeing patients with such similar issues, as though there is something in the air that is influencing us all. In the last while what is coming up is the pathology of "resistance" and the therapeutic benefit that lies in having the permission to feel how we are, as we are, in a given moment.

Throughout the course of our lives we are influenced first by our parents, then by our teachers and peers, all ultimately influenced by society in general. In our particular culture and society, a heavy influence is placed on performance, productivity, keeping a "stiff upper lip", perseverance and perfectionism. We are rarely taught the value in slowing down, in taking time off, taking sick days when we are well, saying "no", and "being" rather than "doing". This program of "doing" starts to play in our minds over and over again and it tells us we need to constantly be going, moving, achieving. As a result, we listen to this program and we cease to listen to our own needs, our own selves and our own bodies. We place more value on this old program fed by

what others expect or demand of us (or what we feel they do) than what our wise internal selves are telling us that we need for ourselves.

Day in and day out we override our gut feelings, our internal body messages telling us what our heart, our soul, our spirit truly needs. The more we fall victim to allowing our heads to dominate over our bodies and hearts the more disharmony, disorder and disease can become present in our bodies. I see this as a way the body is attempting to "speak" to us, asking us to slow down, to listen, to engage in more self-nurturing behaviors, stay home rather than going out, re-examine our choices, our motives, our work, our relationships, etc.

A very obvious example of this is someone who is very consumed with external obligations and pushes themselves to the extreme before finally succumbing to a cold or flu and having this turn to frequent or repeated infections. The stress of constantly pushing consumes valuable energy in the body and what likely consumes even more energy is the constant chatter of the mind "whipping" a person to keep going with its judgments and criticisms ("If

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you stop you are weak/ bad/ lazy/ etc.”). Often this pattern becomes so habitual that we fail to even recognize this voice or the intentions behind our constant activity and motion.

For some of us, our coping looks different—when under stress rather than keep pushing harder, we enter into a “freeze” state and are trapped by habits such as emotional eating, mindless TV/ movie watching, over-eating/ drinking, etc. These patterns lead to often worse judgments in our heads as these coping patterns are not supported by society in the way those of the “doer’s” are.

Most often it is fatigue, burn-out or illness or even disintegration of a job or relationship that finally forces us to stop and question our motives and actions, though the more we move into a place of mindfulness and awareness we can begin to challenge some of these habits before they become a more tangible problem (This represents moving towards introspection and personal growth).

When we find ourselves in this place of re-evaluation this is often when we seek help, and often it is at this point that I have the honor of seeing you in my office. In this place we are very vulnerable (in what I see as a very beautiful way). Feelings and emotions are often reeling around inside of our bodies

and heads as we are finally taking the time to slow down enough to realize they are there!

Our first instinct, due to our conditioning, is not to express these feelings and emotions as the body wants us so desperately to do, but instead to shove them down further, apologize for them and berate ourselves for their existence.

We are so used to numbing ourselves to our feelings and emotions through our daily routines and also due to a lack of having learned through the course of our lives how to most effectively “feel”. We are trained and encouraged to stuff our feelings and emotions rather than to feel and express them. When we do start to feel our feelings again our minds will often jump to judging our experience: if tears arise we judge and worry this is a sign of depression, rather than simply understanding we are sad, or overwhelmed, and the release must come in the form of tears. We may choose not to express our emotions as “no one likes a downer” or “I don’t want to be an angry person like my mother/ father/ teacher/ [insert influence here!].

“Owning our story can be hard but not nearly as difficult as spending our lives running from it. Embracing our vulnerabilities is risky but not nearly as dangerous as giving up on love and belonging and joy—the experiences that make us the most vulnerable. Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of our light.”

— Brené Brown

When I am working with someone I try my best to provide a safe, loving and non-judging place that encourages the free flow of feelings—a space that gives *permission* to the existence of these feelings. When tears flow I get excited as I know we are getting closer to a place of release and ultimately, healing. This is because once the painful feelings we have tried so hard to repress (fear, anger, sadness) begin to be released, held and accepted, we start to become less harsh towards ourselves, accepting and honoring those painful, dark feelings and no longer labeling them as “bad”.

We use up a lot of energy in trying to deny or repress what we have learned to consider “bad” or negative feelings, and there is an actual physiological set of reactions going on in our bodies when this is happening. Adrenaline, our main stress hormone, is being released, and other more welcome chemicals such as serotonin and oxytocin that help give us the feelings of peace and calm are inhibited.

Of course there is a huge difference between experiencing and honoring our feelings and acting on them. It is very important to be aware of this distinction. The other night, after a particularly rough sting of sleep-disrupted nights (my son, now 8 months old, is still working on making it through the night!) and conflict with my husband, I was in the midst of a full-on “love-hate” relationship with my life. Of course I could see the absolute beauty of it: a wonderful job, husband, home and 2 amazing children

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however had I tried to use this very convincing argument to deny the fact that I was also tired, irritated and wishing I was single and care-free again (thus suppressing my feelings of frustration and vulnerability) I would have likely snapped at my kids, fought with my husband and been generally miserable to be around. Suppressed feelings have to get out in some way and if they don't eat up our insides, create tension in our bodies or anxiety in our heads—then we start to snap at those around us, generally our loved ones first.

Instead I chose to honor those “shadow” feelings, and acknowledge those things that made me feel I had a “hate” relationship with my life. I lay in bed, with my journal, and (though this is tough to admit) wrote imprecations (a sugar-coated word for swearing!) for about 3 pages until I finally started to sob. Honoring those tears felt so good and once they subsided (only a few minutes, despite my originally thinking it might be hours of release locked up in there!) and my adrenaline levels dropped, I felt such love light and clarity as serotonin and oxytocin rose in my body and flooded their receptors on my cells. Now I no longer had to convince myself of how much I loved my kids and my husband—I truly felt that love again. Had I failed to honor the dark feelings that were co-existing with this love I could not have experienced the purity and

depth of the love once I did.

What is important to note is the difference I alluded to earlier between releasing the feelings and acting upon them. I did not yell at my husband or my son. This is not an appropriate way of dealing with feelings and emotions and it is very ineffective at creating any sort of positive change.

Instead I accepted the fact that I am not “perfect” and as loving as I am, I, too, experience these “negative” feelings. I held this lovingly and wrote and cried until I came to a lovely “still point” of peace and then was able to much more clearly pick myself up and lovingly engage in my life again. Without the heavy burden of repressed negative energies weighing me down.

Such release can be done in the company of a good counselor, healer, friend, family member or journal. The key is not to attempt to change the experience before the still point is reached. If we are told or try to tell ourselves “it's okay” before we actually feel okay then this stops the healing moment. I liken it to a toddler having a tantrum. A tantrum can be a very valuable way for a young child to deal with intense feelings. Any parent will tell you that trying to stop a tantrum just makes it worse! What seems to help is providing a safe, loving space for the child to vent their feelings and frustrations and at the end of it, hold them, help them return to their still point and only then begin to dialogue about more appropriate strategies to deal with the anger, sadness, tension or fear

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

—[Marianne Williamson, Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of "A Course in Miracles"](#)

they were dealing with.

By recognizing, acknowledging and honoring feelings it is less likely they become stuck and repressed, thereby turning us into what we fear we will become by repressing them: an angry or depressed person. Instead, when honored and not judged as “bad”, we can see that feelings are transient and once released we are left once again to see the beauty of our lives, and the wonderful blessings and people in them. Learning to honor our feelings brings us one large step closer towards honoring our own inner intuition and our own needs. We move to a greater state of self-love. And from here the decisions we make for ourselves, right down to the foods we eat, activities we engage in and people we surround ourselves with, are more self-loving and self-nurturing. We begin to honor ourselves, our souls and spirits, above those programs our minds have learned. And it is a beautiful and peaceful and healthy way to live.♥

Ayurveda Explains: Anxiety and Depression can come with the Season

By Dr Laura Stark ND

The ancient medical system of India, Ayurveda, literally translates as 'the science of life'. Ayurveda describes people in terms of three constitutional, or body, types: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Each of us has aspects of each type within our constitution, but in a proportion that is unique to us. Most of us will have one type that is dominant relative to the other two, and some will have two types almost equally dominant while the other has only minor contribution. We are born with a given proportion of the three types to form our constitution. Ayurveda teaches us to maintain health through a lifestyle that helps to keep our constitution in balance. Determining your constitutional type can be a little tricky. There are questionnaires to help and of course an Ayurvedic practitioner can guide your way, but for the purposes of this article, you can probably identify yourself with one of the following descriptions more than the others:

Vata – is cold, dry, light and governs movement. Body may be thin. Out of balance, Vata tends to be busy and frazzled. May tend to anxiety, constipation, irregular digestion, tremors, insomnia and joint problems.

Pitta – is hot, moist, sharp and governs metabolism. Body may be muscular. Out of balance, Pitta tends to be over-driven and irritable. May tend to anger, skin inflammations, profuse sweating, ulcers and digestive upsets.

Kapha – is cold, moist, heavy and governs structure. Body may be thick or round. Out of balance, Kapha tends to be lethargic and depressed. May tend to obesity, diabetes, congestion and mucous in lungs, sinuses, etc. External factors from our environment can have a major impact on tip-

ping our constitution out of balance. For example, the heat of summer will tend to aggravate an already hot Pitta-type, while an over-weight Kapha-type will feel more motivated and see greater results from her weight-loss routine during the summer heat. With the changing of the seasons, making proper lifestyle choices for our unique body type is imperative to keep our constitution balanced and stay healthy.



In any doctor's office, there is a trend to see greater numbers of mood complaints like anxiety and depression during the winter months. Ayurveda helps to explain the seasonal influence and provide ways to counteract winter's impact for each body type.

Anxiety:

Autumn and early winter, with the cold, dry winds are Vata's season. The stresses of back-to-school trailing right into Christmas holidays contribute even more hectic Vata influence to the season. Although it is people who already have Vata as their dominant type who are most susceptible to a Vata-aggravation in this season, Vata tends to always be the first type to go out of balance and can pull the other types out of balance behind it. A predominant manifestation of a Vata-aggravation is anxiety. Even if you are normally a Pitta or Kapha dominant person, the season (and other life influences) can get the best

of you sometimes and the Vata symptom of anxiety may appear. We can help bring our Vata back into balance (and prevent it from becoming imbalanced in the first place) by incorporating simple Vata-pacifying practices into our day.

- ~ Keep a stable routine of sleeping and eating at the same time each day. Structure helps calm erratic Vata.
- ~ Eat warm, nourishing foods with sweet, sour and salty flavours such as unrefined wholegrains and legumes with generous amounts of healthy fats and oils.
- ~ Vegetable stews with some extra oil stirred in are the perfect Vata-nourishing food.
- ~ Avoid stimulants like caffeine and alcohol. These are too hard on Vata's already frayed nerves.
- ~ Keep warm and avoid cold and dry conditions. Remember to protect your neck with a scarf and keep your head and ears covered to avoid cold winds.
- ~ Go for regular massages or self-massage best with warm sesame oil. Incorporate sweet smelling essential oils like orange, rose geranium, clove, cinnamon, frankincense and lotus flower.
- ~ Take hot baths, showers or steam saunas to warm and relax the body.
- ~ Try to aim for 8 hours of sleep a night.
- ~ Yoga, breathing exercising, meditation and listening to calming music all help to calm aggravated Vata.

Depression:

As we move into late winter and then spring, Kapha's damp cold properties

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Ayurveda Explains Continued

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rule the season. In Saskatchewan, we have all had a taste of the slow, heavy, lazy feeling induced by a dark, cold, snowy winter day. We are experiencing an increase in Kapha in those times. When too much Kapha accumulates in our system, the emotional consequence can be the classic flat, low-energy, picture of depression. Of course, people who already have a high proportion of Kapha in their constitution will be most susceptible to this type of depression. Depression is not only a Kapha problem, as there is a more worried Vata depression and a more irritable Pitta depression. Stressed Vata and Pitta type people can take advantage of the slow heaviness of winter by letting it slow their activities and calm them down enough to get rested and restored. A Kapha person on the other hand will need to take heed to not let too much Kapha hold them down by incorporating Kapha-pacifying practices into their day.

In total contrast to Vata's need for rest and relaxation, Kapha needs stimulation.

- ~ Seek variety in new activities, sights, sounds and new faces and experiences.
- ~ Eat a light diet with plenty of fresh, cooked and easily digestible foods with bitter, astringent and

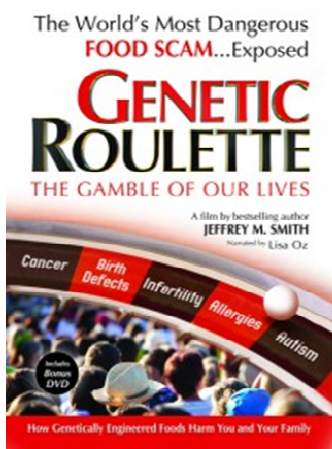
pungent tastes. Plenty of vegetables like leafy greens, winter squash and asparagus cooked with spices like ginger, cinnamon, fennel, and cardamom are perfect for Kapha.

- ~ Avoid mucous-forming foods like breads and pasta, bananas, dairy products (especially ice cream) and beer.
- ~ Raw honey is recommended as it has warming and drying effects in the body while aiding digestion to boost sluggish Kapha metabolism.
- ~ Keep warm and dry – watch out for cold, wet weather.
- ~ Dry massages or dry-skin brushing help to stimulate and energize.
- ~ Get active. Vigorous exercise is best to get Kapha moving. Kapha types have strong stamina.
- ~ Avoid over-sleeping. 7 hours a night is plenty for Kapha types who should also avoid napping during the day which will only make them groggier.

Whether you are one of those people who know winter always effects your mood or you simply want to prevent your health from tipping out of balance, knowing your body's natural constitutional type and the lifestyle practices to maintain your balance gives you all the tools you need to stay healthy this winter! ♥

Film Review: Jeffery Smith's *Genetic Roulette*

By Dr Marika Geis ND



A couple of months ago I came across a film that can only be described as a public service announcement. The spirit of common sense that keeps us wearing our seatbelts and from getting behind the wheel while under the influence will be the same that makes your resolution for 2013 an easy one, or so I hope. The argument is so compelling that it leaves you with little choice. The Institute for Responsible Technology's founder, Jeffery Smith expertly distills an overwhelming body of research against the use of Genetically Modified foods into a relevant, accessible and impassioned plea to those that would do right by themselves and their children. The documentary, "Genetic Roulette", systematically exposes the astonishing truth behind the consumption of genetically modified foods. From the manipulation

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Film Review Continued

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of the legislative process that deems these products to be deemed 'safe', to the repeated and ostensibly successful attempts to paralyze the research engine that overwhelmingly concludes that genetically modified foods pose a significant health risk, to farmers observing dramatic changes to the health of their livestock after stopping GM feed for just three days, to the dismantling of the GMO myths claiming that genetically modified food are the only way to meet the 'world food shortage' and the more than 40 health risks associated with GM foods, Jeffrey Smith provides a clear and comprehensive body of work that leaves little doubt in the viewer's mind that the only way to reclaim control of your body is to be selective about what you put in it.

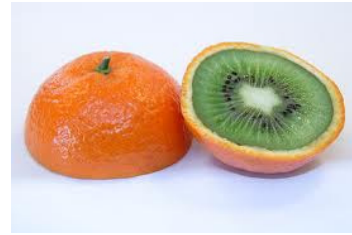
I have to admit that before seeing this film, my decision to avoid GM foods was largely emotional. I remember an interview with David Suzuki many years ago. He was asked whether or not GM foods were safe to eat. His response was something along the lines of "We have no idea how these organisms will behave in nature because they've never existed before now".



Made sense; it was good enough for me. As a physician, I was more concerned with avoiding commercial foods because of the health risks associated with the chemicals used in industrialized agriculture and how they affected overall toxicity. But after seeing this film, not only am I more vigilant about what I bring into my home for my family, I have now begun to refine my prescriptions to my patients, particularly those who are just experiencing naturopathic medicine for the first time ; "Don't worry about the wheat, dairy and sugar just yet, we'll have time for that later. Eliminate processed foods from your diet".

In clinical practice the GM issue is particularly relevant to our pediatric patients in that we see time and time again health concerns stemming from 'Leaky Gut Syndrome': allergies, eczema, allergies, autoimmune and neurological disorders and immune dysfunction all have their roots in a compromised digestive tract. When we see so many systems affected in a single individual, it seems obvious that one must consider the 'source'. In Chinese medicine, one of the sources of our life force or Qi comes from the food we eat. Likewise, when the parents, veterinarians, and farmers that were interviewed in this film, stopped to consider why their children and animals were so ill they too had no choice but to question the food they were eating. When people found out about how Bt toxin contributes to gut permeabil-

ity



or

how RoundUp ready crops contribute to malnutrition and therefore make us more vulnerable to virulent diseases, there was never really any choice for them except not to look back. Of all the allergists, immunologists, pediatricians, registered dietitians, hematologists, oncologists, naturopaths and internal medicine specialists who commented on the rise of the conditions listed above, every one stated that when GM foods were eliminated from their patient's diets their health improved.

When you experience this film, there may be the tendency to despair. Indeed the problem of GM foods is global leaving no one, not even our infants, untouched. However, as Jeffrey Smith describes, it is possible to reverse the damage done. You have a choice about where you spend your money. You have a choice about what you eat. Avoiding GM foods is far from impossible. The 'Genetic Roulette' website has a vast number of resources that you can access to ensure that you avoid GM foods. An epiphany takes only a moment of clarity, a resolution, only the sincere intention of doing better. If you haven't already, know that when you make your resolution this year that you will not only be benefitting yourself but your family and generations to come. ♥

Wipe Out Winter Tiredness

By Dr Allison Ziegler ND

As the temperature turns cold and the days become shorter, it makes it harder to roll out of bed with an energetic bounce in the step. Rather, curling up under warm blankets and hitting the snooze button become routine during the winter months. Although it is normal to slow down during the winter months, understanding the processes involved can lend to energy-giving solutions.

Sleep-Wake Cycle Imbalance

Many, if not all, processes occurring in our body function on a cyclical basis governed by our natural circadian rhythm or our 'body clock'. This clock is driven by environmental cues based on light, temperature etc. One important aspect of this circadian clock is the hormone melatonin that regulates our sleep-wake cycle.

Melatonin is a hormone produced in our body, which allows us to sleep at night. At night melatonin production and secretion from the brain rises in order to allow us to sleep. In the morning, that level drops allowing us to wake up and be ready for the day. In the winter months, melatonin secretion lasts longer meaning that individuals will feel tired longer during the winter months compared with the summer months.

So why does this occur? Melatonin production in the brain is stimulated in dim light, making sense that it is our sleep hormone. In the evening, we are naturally in dimmer light, melatonin production occurs, we feel tired and we go to sleep. In the winter however, when the days are shorter and there is longer periods of dark-

ness, melatonin production begins earlier and takes longer to decline in the morning causing tiredness and a desire to sleep longer and more often.

Neurotransmitter Imbalance

Neurotransmitters are chemicals produced by the cells in the brain in order to communicate with one another – they are the brain messengers. There are many neurotransmitters; however, there are 3 specifically known to be involved in the development of feeling tired, sluggish and down during the winter (serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine). Each messenger is responsible for a different task. The interplay of all three and a precise amount of each is required for "normal" mood and functioning.

Serotonin

Serotonin is the brain messenger responsible for feelings of well-being and happiness. Studies have shown in winter months, there is a decrease in the amount of serotonin leading to the feelings of sadness or depression.

Serotonin is also involved in regulating appetite. The body is continually trying to achieve balance; therefore, if the body is deficient in something, it will try to gain it some how, usually through food. Cravings of chocolate, sweets or carbohydrates are common because it is high in tryptophan, an amino acid needed for the production of serotonin. In the winter, a person begins to subconsciously eat a diet higher in these foods as the body tries to achieve the balance it is looking for. As a result, the poorer dietary choices associated with the decreased serotonin is responsible for weight gain. A diet lower in nutrients coupled with weight gain contributes

to feeling down, sluggish and less energetic.

Dopamine

Dopamine is the brain messenger involved in behavior and cognition, voluntary movement, motivation and reward, sleep, mood, attention and learning. It is involved in allowing us to develop new behaviors because a main role of dopamine is the "reward" system. It is the reason we tend to repeat behaviors that give us maximum reward for our action. Again, dopamine tends to be decreased during the winter months. A decrease in dopamine leads to loss of pleasure in activities of usual interest, decrease in focus/concentration and poor sleep.

Norepinephrine

Norepinephrine is the brain messenger responsible for controlling attention and response. Norepinephrine is a stress hormone that is involved in the 'fight-or-flight' response, giving us that immediate energy in a stressful situation. Typically we notice our heart rate increase, which is that "rush of adrenaline" (epinephrine is also known as noradrenaline). Also during the 'fight-or-flight' response, sugar or glucose is released from the stores in our body to our muscles preparing us to move/run.

During the winter months, norepinephrine is decreased. A decline in norepinephrine contributes to anxiety (heart racing), fatigue and weight gain.

The Vitamin D Connection

Vitamin D3 is needed for adequate production of serotonin in the brain. The way our body produces vitamin

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D is through sun light exposure. In the winter, Canadians do not receive enough sunlight to produce adequate vitamin D3. With lack of vitamin D3, we have lack of serotonin, which leads to a depressed mood, weight gain and lower energy. Unfortunately, we can't store vitamin D in our body so receiving plenty of sunshine in the summer, will not hold us over during the darker winter months.

Energy-Giving Solutions

Vitamin D

With lack of sun exposure in our frigid winter months, supplementation is often required in order to prevent deficiency. A recommended 2000 IU of Vitamin D3 during the winter months can prevent deficiency and increase mood and energy.

Food sources rich in vitamin D are oily fish (salmon, mackerel and sardines), eggs and meat.

Nutrition

Once the summer ends, salads, vegetables and fruits tend to be replaced by sweets, breads and pastas. A continued effort to select nutrient rich foods in order to supply the body with the nutrients it requires

for the proper amount of neurotransmitters and to avoid unwanted weight gain. Winter vegetables such as carrots, parsnips, swede and turnips can be roasted, mashed or made into soup for a warming winter meal. Stews and casseroles are also great options, providing lean protein and vegetables.

Including protein sources that favor serotonin production can help to improve energy and mood. Protein sources that favor serotonin production are high in the amino acid tryptophan, which is a building block in its production. These sources include chicken, white flakey fish, lean cuts of pork, veal, cottage cheese, lamb, low fat cheeses, low fat milk and dairy products, and legumes.

Increase Positivity

Dopamine floods into the brain when positive, which makes us more energetic, happier and turns on the learning centers in the brain allowing us to not only learn, but also improve focus and concentration. Some ways to increase positivity are:

- ~ 3 Gratuities – Write down 3 new things each day for 21 days. This teaches the brain to scan the world for the positive first, not the negative.
- ~ Journaling- Journal about 1 positive

experience you've experienced over the past 24 hours. This allows your brain to relive that positive event.

- ~ Random acts of kindness- When opening your email inbox, write 1 positive email praising or thanking someone.
- ~ *Physical Activity:* Achieving 150 minutes of physical activity a week can help increase energy levels by improving serotonin and norepinephrine levels. Engaging in physical activity in the late afternoon, early evening can help beat early evening fatigue as well as improve sleep quality at night.
- ~ *Keep Regular Sleep-Wake Schedule:* The production of serotonin for the next day requires at least 7 continuous hours of sound high quality sleep the night before. Try and stick to a regular schedule, going to bed and rising at the same time each day. A consistent sleep schedule helps to improve quality of sleep achieved.♥

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Wishing you a Happy, Healthy Holiday Season from all of us at the Cathedral Centre for Wellness.

Thank you for making us your first choice for Naturopathic Medicine in Regina!