

Improve your day — every day

Advice Line

by Dr. Betty Phillips



Yes, you do have it within your power to improve your life one day at a time. With all the personal stress, economic distress and worldwide turmoil, it seems that the Stress Monster has won and we need to give in and give up. By now you know my attitude: No Way! Today is the first day of the rest of your life. We were all born with intrinsic curiosity and a delight in life. Watch little children bringing the world to themselves, touching, tasting, laughing, experimenting, playing with the marvelous world around them. Let's rediscover our original joy of life.

There are two components to improving your day, self-care and care for others. Self-care? Isn't that selfishness? No. Selfishness is when we care for ourselves in a narcissistic or egotistic way, prioritizing our needs over those of others, even being willing to hurt others while satisfying our needs. Self-care is just caring for ourselves, giving time and attention to meeting our needs as well as the needs of others. When you nurture and nourish yourself you'll find you have more to give to others. When you give to others, you will feel that warm inner glow of loving kindness. You may also experience

a secondary benefit of gratitude from others, but that's not the real motivator. As we grow our garden of positive feelings for ourselves and others we will be making great strides in improving our lives and overcoming, at least for part of the time, the negativity that seeks to overwhelm us.

When we think about self-care, we first think about cultivating pleasures in our lives. And of course we should strive to experience some pleasures throughout the day. Maybe we have a hot muffin in the morning, maybe we pick a flower for our table or maybe we buy a new CD. Happiness researchers, however, have helped us understand that such pleasures are fleeting and need to be repeated on a regular basis. Rarely, except perhaps on a vacation, are we able to pack enough pleasures into our day to feel more than a transitory sense of happiness. And as soon as the pleasure is consumed, finished or withdrawn, we often feel disappointed or depleted. The trip back after a vacation is rarely enjoyable as you reenter the daily grind. While we all have our ideas or dreams about the pleasures we feel would bring us lasting satisfaction, once obtained the newly found sense of happiness fades.

So when I'm talking about self-care, I'm also talking about developing and

cultivating positive emotions of caretaking toward ourselves and others. If you want to pursue this kind of self care, a great new reference for your summer reading is *Positivity* by Dr. Barbara Fredrickson, Crown, 2009. She has discovered that experiencing positive emotions in a three-to-one ratio to negative emotions is critical to experiencing true life satisfaction. You can find another reference online (www.heartmath.org) which can help

us improve our lives by increasing the emotional coherence between our mind and heart. All of these new resources to increase the positivity of our life lead us from self-care into care for others: love, appreciation, gratitude and altruism.

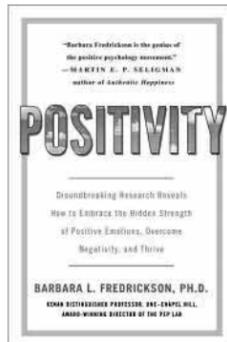
Today I'm going to help you improve your day in two ways. You can subscribe to a website, <http://www.dayimprover.com>. On a regular basis you'll find something new and delightful in your inbox. It could be beautiful, silly, profound, heart-warming, informative. Check it out. It's free!

I also want to tell you how this website was developed by a friend of mine, Andrea Ferguson, also a resident of Chatham County. Experiencing the all-too-common problem of an unexpected job transition, she had to pick up the pieces of her pride and begin again to search for employment. Rather than succumb permanently to gloom and doom, she decided to apply her many talents to a new web design business, www.andisites.com. Spending a lot of time at her computer,

Need advice?

Send Dr. Betty Phillips questions about individual, relationship, marriage or family issues to BettyPhillips@BellSouth.net or 466 Eagle Point Road, Pittsboro 27312. Questions can be anonymous. Betty looks forward to hearing from you!

she developed a personal library of mood boosters and spirit lifters. Somewhere along the way, drawing from her personal philosophy and positive energy, she developed the idea of sharing her day-improving finds with the rest of the world. She realized that the pleasure of self care and the pleasure of helping others can blend together and expand, assisting her in this new transition but also contributing some lightness and joy to the rest of the world. Andrea ("Andi") found that she enjoyed creating the dayimprover website even though it does involve time and responsibility for her, usually every day. As subscriptions to the new website increased, Andrea encouraged others to send contributions. At this point she has readers and contributors from around the world. I have enjoyed sending contributions, and I find myself looking around for new dayimprover ideas. Some readers, enjoying the dayimprover, take the opportunity to look back at her business website and may choose to employ her talents. But this has been a clear secondary focus for Andrea as she continues to enjoy both her new business and her free website. So let's all celebrate a great example of self-care and altruism and enjoy the new dayimprover website!



SHRINKING

continued from page 11.

solid reporters to cut costs.

I'll say this for the Paxton folks. They cut their circulation expenses in half. It's easy. Just print half as many.

This is only a brief account of how a newspaper is run but the most important word of all is missing. Nobody was ever concerned about news.

That might be just the thing to shoo off the buzzards that are getting closer and closer.

R.L. Taylor is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. He has been a newspaperman for more than 50 years, working as a reporter, editor and publisher. He worked as Director of Special Project for the Durham Herald Company from 1982 to 1991.

WE'RE TURNING ON TOMORROW'S LIGHTS TODAY.



Reliable power for the future begins today, with innovative and environmentally responsible solutions from Progress Energy. We're increasing energy efficiency, pursuing renewable energy, upgrading existing plants and planning for new power plants along with better ways to get electricity to you. All for clean, reliable, affordable power — today and tomorrow. To learn more, visit progress-energy.com.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY
ALTERNATIVE ENERGY
STATE-OF-THE-ART PLANTS

 **Progress Energy**

LOOKING AT POWER IN A NEW LIGHT.



we appreciate everyone's taste in homes

cottage, condo, cul-de-sac, cabin, castle or cave

call us with your real estate cravings

542.7122

WeaverStreetRealty.com

