

Next Chapter Notes

A Newsletter for those in
pre-retirement or retirement

Stress Awareness Month:

Managing Stress with Mindful Walking

Walking is a great way to manage stress, but many people carry their stress with them while walking. They replay conversations, worry about what's next, or try to solve work problems. In doing so, they undermine the benefit they are seeking. Instead, learn the skill of "mindful walking." Mindful walking combines movement with present-moment awareness. This means observing your environment, noticing your senses, and limiting stressful thoughts. In essence, it allows the mind and body to work together rather than cancel each other out, maximizing stress relief. How to do it: Start by noticing your breathing, the rhythm of your steps, and how your body feels. Pay attention to your surroundings—the sounds, sights, and air on your skin. When your mind drifts, gently redirect it without judgment. This is meditation in motion. Even a 10–15-minute mindful walk can lower tension, improve focus, and refresh productivity and a sense of personal effectiveness.



Better Work-Family Balance

Work can feel all-consuming. At the same time, doing right by your family isn't easy—and when you can't be there, guilt shows up. The good news is that you can improve work and family balance with focus and a little effort. Consider these work-family balance hacks. The Carve Out: Block just 5–15 minutes of fully present time each day. For example, walking a dog together, making tea and chatting, or playing checkers. Loving Chores: You must do chores, so invite family—cooking, grocery shopping, or quick yard work. Love Messages: When you can't make it to an event, instead leave a note, send a caring text, or record a voice mail. (This also helps reduce guilt.) These are also called "micro-rituals." Each creates emotional togetherness—and sustaining connections: that's your goal. Make these hacks a habit.



Learn more at: thekeeledeal.com/100-ways-to-make-memories-with-your-kids

Vaping Prevention Resource New Guide for Parents

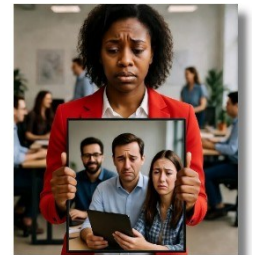
Across the United States, roughly 5–6% of minors (middle and high school students) currently use e-cigarettes, according to recent national surveys—that's about 1.6 million youth. In Canada, about 7–8% vape. Research has shown that youth who vape risk chronic nicotine addiction, lung damage, and an increased risk of heart damage and stroke, and later, they're more likely to smoke cigarettes and use marijuana. New information from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency to help you understand vaping, its harms, and how to prevent and intervene in its use is now available for parents and educators.



"Reducing Vaping Among Youth and Young Adults," the information is at: library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/pep20-06-01-003.pdf

Contagious Energy: Your Mood

Emotionally contagious is the process by which people unconsciously absorb and mirror the emotions of others through social interaction and observation. In marketing applications, ads with emotional content are proven to be shared more quickly. Research also shows that emotional states spread faster than information. This has important implications for workplace productivity, team morale, and work climate. Use this knowledge by managing your emotional state, recognizing how it can influence others. Your tone, facial expression, and attitude may affect peers more than you realize. If you practice staying calm and solution-focused, you will positively shape the workplace climate. Also, protect your well-being by appreciating the emotional contagion dynamic. The next time you are exposed to negativity, remind yourself: "This is their stuff, not mine." This prevents you from absorbing others' stress, and like putting your hand in a line of falling dominoes, you become the stopgap interrupting the spread of negativity.



See Routine, Pressure, and Responsibility In a New Way



Have you used the phrase, “I can’t stand this 9-to-5 grind”? The traditional workday can feel rigid and repetitive, but beware of societal messages that suggest your life should always be stress-free, fulfilling, and perfectly aligned with your values. This mindset is pervasive, fueled in part by social media. YouTube and Facebook frequently promote the entrepreneurial life, well-paid work for a few hours a week, and flexible lifestyles. Especially targeted at Gen Z and millennials, they do not show the “replacement stressors” that come with life. These include inconsistent income, self-discipline demands, blurred boundaries, isolation, and taxes due on time, all year. The “life is too short” narrative builds expectations for a frictionless life, but such a thing is virtually a myth. Leaving something undesirable for something new brings relief, but initial excitement can fade. As this happens, tedious or burdensome tasks emerge as new dominant stressors. Consider: The real challenge may not be finding the ideal frictionless life but deciding which demands of any situation you are willing to live with. Talk to the provider if you feel chronic low-grade or acute dissatisfaction. Get clarity on your stress. With awareness, you can better manage routine, pressure, and responsibility, which are inescapable. Doing so may help you discover new energy and meaning in your life.

Depression: What It Feels Like



Symptoms of depression are easy to list, but here’s behaviorally what it can feel like to help you identify it more easily. You’re at your desk, but not present. You read the same paragraph repeatedly and retain nothing. Simple decisions feel exhausting. You’ve felt in the dumps for months, and everything seems flat. You smile when you should, say the right things, but it feels like you’re only 80% present. At home, the couch owns you. Screens become a refuge not because they’re interesting, but because they require nothing. Dishes pile up. Texts go unanswered. You cancel plans, feel guilty, and that guilt makes everything heavier. You tell yourself you’re just tired. Monday comes and nothing has changed—Monday has its own kind of exhaustion. Sleep isn’t restful. Appetite shifts. At work, projects you once cared about collect dust. You do just enough to get by, feeling ashamed as the cycle continues. You know something is wrong. You remember feeling motivated. But knowing doesn’t fix it—and that gap is its own suffering. It’s time to call for support.

Next Chapter by the Numbers: A Systemic Issues for Longevity



It goes without saying that as people approach or enter retirement, they want to thrive physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially in their Next Chapter. If people are going to live another 20, 30, or 40 more years (longevity!), it’s important to systematically practice the behaviors that accomplish this goal:

LONGEVITY.

Here are the main things people aged about 60+ commonly do not get enough of.

Physical activity (exercise): Only a small minority meet both aerobic and muscle strengthening federal guidelines. In 2022, an NCHS analysis found about 13.9% of U.S. adults age 65+ met the combined guidelines.

Adequate hydration: Prevalence estimates vary by setting and how “dehydration” is measured, but a recent meta analysis/systematic reviews show low intake (water loss) dehydration is common: estimates range between 19% and 34% for older adults, depending on living environment.

Adequate, nutritious food: Malnutrition risk: 5–10% of community-dwelling older adults are malnourished, and 20–30% of those are at risk; much higher in hospitals and long term care (up to 30–60%). Protein intake shortfall: between 30–50% of older adults consume less than the recommended protein for optimal muscle health.

Fruit/vegetable intake: fewer than 10% of older adults meet combined fruit-and-vegetable intake recommendations in many national surveys. Vitamin D insufficiency/deficiency: about 30–50% of older adults have low the D levels. Fiber intake: the majority of older adults consume substantially less than recommended fiber (mean intakes often from 15–20 g/day versus recommended, 21–30 g). Sodium: most older adults consume >2,300 mg/day; mean intakes often exceed recommendations. Overweight/obesity: about 70–75% of U.S. adults 60+ are overweight or obese (combined), with obesity prevalence rising over decades.

Rest/good quality sleep: Large proportions report sleep problems: community studies find around 30% of older adults get <7 hours, roughly 13% report frequent insomnia, and about 18% report frequent insomnia or poor sleep quality; many sources cite that 20–50% of older adults experience some sleep disturbance.

Social connection/loneliness and social isolation: Social isolation and loneliness are common: before and during the pandemic, reports suggested roughly 24% of adults 65+ were socially isolated, and about 40–43% of people age 60+ reported feeling lonely in some large surveys. Social isolation in older adults has been linked to worse health outcomes (higher dementia, cardiovascular, and mortality risk).

To reverse any of these negative trends and optimize your pre-retirement and in-retirement plans, work with supportive resources (physicians, financial advisors, family, friends, mentor, a retirement coach!, etc.) to enhance and thrive in your physical, mental, emotional, and social life in your Next Chapter.

