

HEALTH

COPING

Tips for helping improve your life

By Dr. Charles Faulkner  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

• **Express yourself.** (Don't be afraid to tell people that they get on your nerves.) The greatest weakness of the abused person is his(her) refusal to say to the abuser — "Stop it, dam it!"

Some people abuse you only because you won't fight back. Some people abuse you because shouting, screaming, ranting and raving are their preferred ways of releasing their frustrations. They choose to kick you around. They are bullies and you are their punching bag. If you want to stop being abused, you are the only one who can stop it. Oh yes, remember, don't abuse anyone yourself.

• **Risk failure and you might find success.** (Don't be afraid to take a chance.)

Most people who take risks and fail are not killed in the process. They have a chance to do it over again. Risking doesn't hurt too much.

Risking failure in order to achieve success makes a lot of sense. People risk their lives every day when they drive on the freeway or consume the wrong foods.

However, when you get a chance for success, you just might succeed the first time, the eighth time or the hundredth time.

• **Get your priorities**

straight. (Don't make things important that are unimportant.) You lost your wallet last week and you are still in a state of depression. Is it worth it? Can't you get another wallet? Well, do it, then and forget that lost wallet.

Mary doesn't like you? So what? Why do you care? Is it really important? What's the very worst thing that can happen to you as a result of the fact that Mary doesn't like you? Not much. Mary is probably a rather unimportant person in your life. To hell with Mary!

POSITIVELY BLACK

Overcoming the emotion fear

By Junious R. Stanton  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Fear is defined as a strong emotional reaction involving subjective feelings of unpleasantness, agitation, and desire to flee or hide accompanied by widespread sympathetic (nervous system) activity. Fear is a reaction to a specific present danger, anxiety to an anticipated danger. Fear is probably one of the greatest enemies of the human race. Psychologists tell us that humans are not born with fears and phobias, they are acquired.

Whether we want to admit it or not, fear exerts a major impact and influence on our daily lives. Many seemingly normal people are caught in

Drop her from your life like a piece of dirty cloth. You have made her too important.

The people who are your true friends, and who like you, are your highest priority. Spend time with them and your entire life will improve.

• **Keep your mouth shut!** (Don't spread rumors about other people if you don't know what you are talking about.)

If you are a living, breathing human being, somebody is going to spread a lie about you, whether you are the nicest person in the world or the worst.

Get the facts before you give your opinion about somebody.

A fact is a statement that you can support with evidence. If you don't have facts, don't spread a rumor about another person. You could be condemning the wrong person. You could be labeling a good person as bad. You could destroy a person's reputation. You could also get sued for defamation of character.

And guess what, somebody else could spread an ugly rumor about you that could ruin your life.

the grip of fear and anxiety. Opportunistic or unscrupulous persons have long recognized fear's power and have exploited it to their advantage and profit. Fear has been used as a tool by many to control and manipulate children, spouses, subordinates and the masses. It is one of the largest obstacles to success and accomplishment we face in our lives. Many of us are afraid; afraid of making a mistake, afraid of failure, afraid of criticism, afraid of success, afraid of dying, afraid of life, afraid of being afraid, just plan afraid.

Throughout the history of mankind, sages, mystics and spiritual teachers have admonished us not to be afraid. Through their teachings and personal demonstrations they have shown us we do not have to be prisoners of our fears. The wisest among us understood clearly that overcoming fear, anxiety and doubt are major steps in achieving self-mastery, success and controlling one's destiny. Fear is a precautionary emotion (we're all aware of the fight or flight syndrome) but fear is not supposed to be a permanent condition! Fear can be overcome. Fear must be overcome if we are to actualize our vast potential and achieve our innate greatness.

Living is about making choices and decisions. We each make countless decisions and choices every day. Today, for instance, you decided whether

or not you would get out of bed, what you were going to wear and at some point you made a conscious decision about whether or not you were going to give your best at work or merely do enough to get by.

For many of us fear is our pattern, our habitual way of responding to the vicissitudes of life. The only way to break a habit is to consciously substitute another thought, feeling or action for the one you wish to break! Our thoughts determine how we perceive every situation. Our thoughts, not the thoughts of others, define what we perceive to be our choices and options. Our volition or will determines our actions which in turn determines the quality of our lives. Our choices are limited only by the scope of our creativity and our imagination. Fear is one of several options available to us. We can choose not to be afraid. We can choose to define ourselves as dynamic, competent and resourceful beings ready to take on the challenges of life. "As he thinketh in his heart so is he."

The opposite of fear is confidence, the opposite of agitation is serenity, the opposite of indecision is decisiveness and the opposite of confusion is strategic action. Confidence, serenity, decisiveness and strategic action are the traits of successful people. Cultivate these qualities and you will be a winner. A peaceful and

(See Fear, Page 16)

Vaccine for MS tested

Special to Sentinel-Voice

An experimental vaccine to treat multiple sclerosis is being tested at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

"Multiple sclerosis is believed to be an autoimmune disease in which the body's defense mechanisms become confused and attack and destroy myelin, the insulating material around nerve fibers," said Dr. Jingwu Zhang, associate professor of neurology at Baylor. "When myelin is damaged, patients develop lesions in the white matter of the brain or spinal cord."

These lesions affect the normal function of the central nervous system initially causing numbness and weakness. Patients often develop eye problems known as optic neuritis, and most MS patients eventually are paralyzed due to the lesions. The MS vaccine is based on the theory that certain immune system T cells become sensitized to myelin protein and attack it. These myelin-attacking T cells have been found in increased levels in the blood and spinal fluid of MS patients.

Zhang's Neurology Research Lab at the Houston Veterans Affairs Medical Center is the only facility in the United States that makes the experimental vaccine for MS treatment.

To make the vaccine, researchers isolate the myelin-attacking T cells from the patient's blood samples and grow the cells in culture. The T cells are then weakened by irradiation and given back to the patient through an injection.

The immune system attacks the inactivated T cells in the vaccine and then goes after active myelin-attacking T cells in the blood.

"With the vaccine, we are educating the immune system," Zhang said. "If the system learns to eliminate this type of T cell, we believe the clinical symptoms of MS will be relieved."

Zhang first tested the vaccine in Belgium in 1992. The vaccine worked best in patients with relapsing/remitting MS. In this type of MS, the patient's disease symptoms go up and down over a period of several years.

In patients receiving the vaccine, the number of attacks decreased and disease activity stabilized over many years. The results were published in Science and Lancet.

To gather more data, Baylor physicians are now testing the vaccine on patients who have had relapsing/remitting MS for more than two years. The injections are given at two-month intervals for six months.

"We will treat 15 patients and hope to see a decrease in MS relapses as well as a decrease in the number of myelin-attacking T cells in their systems," Zhang said.

Zhang plans to launch a larger clinical study this fall that will test the vaccine in both relapsing/remitting patients and those with chronic/progressive MS. While the current vaccine must be prepared individually for each patient, Zhang hopes to identify a way to make a common vaccine that will work for larger numbers of MS patients.

Eye drops can be risky

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Over-the-counter eye-drop medications designed to reduce redness can actually cause more serious problems, according to a new study.

Researchers at the Cullen Eye Institute at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston found that these nonprescription eye drops can produce redness, swelling and itching — symptoms of conjunctivitis.

"Some people experienced a rebound effect, where their eyes became increasingly red," said Dr. Douglas Koch, co-author of the study and a Baylor associate professor of ophthalmology. "The other problems we found were allergic reactions in the eyes and eyelids and swelling of the eyelids."

Patients who used the drops over a prolonged period of time increased their risk of developing complications. However, the study found that even people who used the eye drops only once experienced conjunctivitis.

While there does not appear to be any permanent damage to the eye due to the drops, they may be covering up or contributing to an underlying condition that needs to be treated.

"It's best to limit the use of the drops to no more than a few days," said Koch. "Almost every condition that these are used to treat can probably be better treated with another medication."

Artificial tears, without medications to reduce redness, are safe alternatives, according to Koch.

The study followed 70 patients, whose eye drop use prior to the study ranged from once a day to 12 times per day.

The widespread incidence of adverse reactions to these over-the-counter eye drops is unknown, but even if the incidence is low, the number of patients suffering reactions may be substantial, since more than 15 million bottles of the drops are sold each year in the United States.

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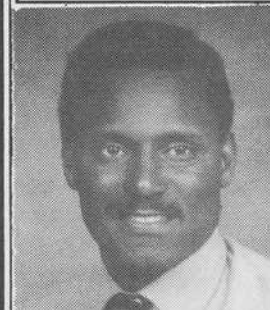
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