

From the Heart...

...Lifeskills for Today's Family
By Sharon L. Benedict MS



Food Fun on the Fourth

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, July 4, 2014)

When sitting in front of my computer to write this article for July's *Wellness* lifeskill, for whatever reason food was the focus I just couldn't ignore. Why not? It's the Fourth of July, Independence Day. Time to celebrate. And what better way to celebrate than with your favorite foods, family, and friends.

What favorite foods do you instantly think about for your food fun on the fourth? When everyone gathers together, do you create the spread or does everyone bring their favorite dish for a potluck party? I know one thing, for most of us barbequing that brisket, or chicken, or sausage . . . or even a combination of all three is a given! And what is America's Independence celebration without corn on the cob and peach cobbler!

I realize when we think of wellness, all kinds of do's and don't are served up. And the don'ts always seem to be more than the do's. So, let's give ourselves a little break during this celebration as we remember how very fortunate we all are with the freedoms we have in our wonderful America. Now for some foods that Americans love on the Fourth. Here are some possibilities that may whet your appetite from FoodNetwork's Fourth discovery of what just might be some of your favorites.

Mustard-Glazed Mushroom Burger - Melissa d-Arabian glazes her burgers halfway through cooking with a mustard, soy sauce and sugar sauce. Top the finished burgers with Swiss cheese and sautéed mushrooms. Recipe: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/melissa-darabian/mustard-glazed-mushroom-burger-recipe.html>.

Grilled Pork Tenderloin with Corn on the Cob - Rub pork tenderloin with paprika, brown sugar and other spices, then grill the meat to perfection before drizzling it with a brown sugar and ketchup

sauce. Recipe: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchens/grilled-pork-tenderloin-with-corn-on-the-cob-recipe.html>.

Gina's Orzo Salad - Gina Neely makes her own quick dressing for this easy orzo salad that's a colorful centerpiece for any picnic table. Recipe: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/patrick-and-gina-neely/ginas-orzo-salad-recipe.html>.

Easy Peach Cobbler – Trisha Yearwood uses canned peaches for this easy cobbler because they're softer, but you can use fresh peaches if they're available. Recipe: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/trisha-yearwood/easy-peach-cobbler-recipe.html>.

Gazpacho – Anne Burrell's cold soup is a great make-ahead meal. Puree all of the fresh ingredients in a blender and chill before serving with a topping of diced cucumbers. Recipe: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/anne-burrell/gazpacho-recipe.html>.

Muddled Lemonberryade - Muddle lemons with fresh mint and sugar, then add berries and lightly mash. Add water and chill in the refrigerator until guests arrive. Fill each glass with ice and your lemon juice mixture, then top with club soda and serve. Recipe: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/michael-chiarello/muddled-lemonberryade-recipe.html>.

There are lots more. Check out America's favorites at Food Network, <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/photos/july-4th-favorites.html>. And remember, any recipe can be tweaked a little for a more healthy result. Be creative and by all means make it fun for all.

As we celebrate our freedoms, family, friends, food, and fun together let us reflect on the potential we all have for a stronger and even more compassionate America. Let us reflect not so much on what is wrong but what is so right about the heart and soul of our nation that has held us together so far. We then just might commit to helping others experience what America has to offer. We will then see what is wrong made right in our own communities and our nation. Enjoy your Fourth filled with family, friends, and, of course, your favorite foods to share with those you love.

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comments and can be contacted at seekreachachieve@gvtc.com. Visit her website at www.celebratingyourjourney.com.

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Wellness—What is most important to you?

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, July 11, 2014)

Healthy People 2020 (HP2020), Leading Health Indicators: Progress Update offer a set of 10-year, national goals and objectives for improving the health of all Americans (<http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/LHI/LHI-ProgressReport-ExecSum.pdf>). This initiative tracks the nation's health through over 1,200 objectives that span 42 distinct public health topic areas. These leading indicators (LHIs) are a subset of Healthy People objectives chosen to communicate high-priority health issues and actions that can be taken.

“As of March 2014, progress generally has been positive toward achieving the HP2020 targets for the 26 LHIs, with 14 indicators (53.9%) having either met their target or shown improvement.” Progress has been made for many of the indicators, such as fewer adults smoking cigarettes, fewer children exposed to secondhand smoke, more adults meeting physical activity targets, and fewer adolescents using alcohol or illicit drug.

This is good news for our nation's families. Yet, we have a long way to go as a nation, particularly with obesity being one of the primary problems for our nation's families. So, let's for moment get a little personal here. How are you doing? I know for myself after many years working hard to get my life and health back, today, I still need to stay disciplined. It's a daily walk, and it's so easy to still be tempted with those sweets and deliciously served fatty foods. Also, there are some days I just don't want to exercise and have somehow lost my inner drive to stay on track. Dropping the ball on healthy eating and exercise tends to happen more frequently when stress or that “to do” list gets so long I feel overwhelmed. I try to get the list done by a fast-food meal and missing my exercise several days in a row. And guess what? I begin to feel more lazy, tired, stressed, and sleep doesn't come easily as it did.

See the snowballing results most of us experience possibly on a routine cycle through the year? With the complicated healthy history I lived with for more than 20 years, fortunately, it get a wake-up call quickly. Who wants another health crisis, and I definitely don't want to go back to those days, that's for sure. Does all this sound familiar?

I think so for many of us with such worthy intentions, goal planning activities, and jump starts. How do you get back on track? Maybe, each of us need to take a moment to reassess what is most important to us. I have found over the years when I reflect on what is most important, I find eating healthy, exercising routinely, and maintaining a stress-free life as much as possible actually helps me stay on track with what is most important in my life.

During these remaining summer months, I encourage you to focus on what is most important to you. Consider how a disciplined routine of healthy eating, exercise, and stress management can make all the difference in your life and family. And let's not forget to enjoy the moments of leisure, laughter, and loving each other.

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Wellness—Anger, Friend or Foe? part 1

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, July 18, 2014)

The other day someone near and dear became angry with me. I was surprised and really didn't know how to initially respond. Ever get stuck with steaming back? Ever react and rant instead of respond? Or just retreat in silence? We all know we have done them all sometime along the way in life. If you believe you haven't, just wait a few moments in the hours and days ahead!

WHAT REALLY IS ANGER ANYWAY? Just an emotion or something more? A couple noun definitions include "a strong feeling of displeasure and belligerence aroused by a wrong; wrath; ire. A series of definitions from Webster is "a strong feeling of being upset or annoyed because of something wrong or bad; the feeling that makes someone want to hurt other people, to shout, etc.; the feeling of being angry." What other synonyms come to mind? Here are a few - enrage, incense, inflame (also enflame), infuriate, ire, madden, outrage, rankle, rile, roil, steam up, tick off, get one's goat, rub the wrong way. You can always add "getting p . . .d off!"

The American Psychological Association (APA), Anger Research Consortium offers this perspective. "Anger is a normal emotion with a wide range of intensity, from mild irritation and frustration to rage. It is a reaction to a perceived threat to ourselves, our loved ones, our property, our self-image, or some part of our identity. Anger is a warning bell that tells us that something is wrong."

What may be wrong can be a mixed bag of things for the person getting angry.

According to the APA anger has three components:

- **Physical reactions**, usually starting with a rush of adrenaline and responses such as an increased heart rate, blood pressure, and tightening muscles; often known as the “fight or flight” response
- **The cognitive experience of anger**, or how we perceive and think about what is making us angry. For example, we might think something that happened to us is wrong, unfair, and undeserved.
- **Behavior**, or the way we express our anger. There is a wide range of behavior that signals anger. We may look and sound angry, turn red, raise our voices, clam up, slam doors, storm away, or otherwise signal to others that we are angry. We may also state that we are angry and why, ask for a time-out, request an apology, or ask for something to change.

THE PROBLEM WITH ANGER – when does it become a foe? when does it remain a friend? The APA states “Everyone experiences anger, and it can be healthy. It can motivate us to stand up for ourselves and correct injustices. When we manage anger well, it prompts us to make positive changes in our lives and situations. Mismanaged anger, on the other hand, is counterproductive and can be unhealthy. When anger is too intense, out of control, misdirected, and overly aggressive, it can lead to poor decision making and problem solving, create problems with relationships and at work, and can even affect your health.”

Where do you stand on handling your anger? How much time does it take to move from ranting to resolving the rage or even just frustration? Give yourself time this coming week to ponder the following quotes, the purpose of anger, and any pouting that lingers with a grudge match. Part 2 next week will offer some **SOLUTIONS WITH ANGER**.

“Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.” Mark Twain

“ It is a waste of energy to be angry with a man who behaves badly, just as it is to be angry with a car that won't go.” Bertrand Russell (1872 - 1970)

“Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be.” Thomas a Kempis (1380 - 1471), Imitation of Christ

“Do not speak harshly to any one; those who are spoken to will answer thee in the same way. Angry speech is painful: blows for blows will touch thee.” The Dhammapada (c. BC 300)

“Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned.” Buddha.

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Wellness—Anger, Friend or Foe? part 2

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, July 25, 2014)

In part one I shared that someone near and dear became angry with me. I was surprised and really didn't know how to initially respond. Do I just steam back, react, and rant? Or have a calmer attitude prevail? Did I really listen to what was being said, or was I wrapped up too much in my own feelings, hurt, and insecurities?

Where do you stand on handling your anger? How much time does it take to move from ranting to resolving the rage or even just frustration? **WHAT REALLY IS ANGER ANYWAY?** The American Psychological Association (APA), Anger Research Consortium offers this perspective. "Anger is a normal emotion with a wide range of intensity, from mild irritation and frustration to rage. It is a reaction to a perceived threat to ourselves, our loved ones, our property, our self-image, or some part of our identity. Anger is a warning bell that tells us that something is wrong."

What may be wrong can be a mixed bag of things for the person getting angry. According to the APA anger has three components, physical, cognitive experience, and behavior as discussed in the previous article.

THE PROBLEM WITH ANGER is we often don't handle it very well. When does it become a foe or remain a friend? Again, the APA states "Everyone experiences anger, and it can be healthy. It can motivate us to stand up for ourselves and correct injustices. When we manage anger well, it prompts us to make positive changes in our lives and situations. Mismanaged anger, on the other hand, is counterproductive and can be unhealthy."

Hopefully, you have given yourself some time to ponder the purpose of anger, and any pouting that lingers a grudge match. There are ***Solutions with Anger***. The first question is “Where is your anger taking you?” You do have a choice. Let’s hear what others have learned. The first comes from Lee Iacocca, retired president and CEO of Chrysler Corporation. “In times of great stress or adversity, it’s always best to keep busy, to plow your anger and your energy into something positive.” Start with this approach and all the other solutions become much easier to try.

Consider these possibilities from those who learned that anger can be an eye opener, as well as bring about positive change and challenges in a variety of ways. We just may find the solution to the anger that troubles you and I. Let us all have anger actually become more of our friend than a foe.

“Usually when people are sad, they don’t do anything. They just cry over their condition. But when they get angry, they bring about a change.” James Russell Lowell

“When you are offended at any man’s fault, turn to yourself and study your own failings. Then you will forget your anger.” Epictetus AD c. 55 – 135

“Bitterness is like cancer. It eats upon the host. But anger is like fire. It burns it all clean.” Maya Angelou

“Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.” Mark Twain

“ It is a waste of energy to be angry with a man who behaves badly, just as it is to be angry with a car that won’t go.” Bertrand Russell (1872 - 1970)

“I am completely in charge of the choices I make about what I am doing to lose weight and get healthy. And you know what? We all have this power. Don’t be angry with me for something good I’ve done for myself. Be angry with yourself for not having the courage to do the same in your own life.” Jennifer Hudson, *I Got This: How I Changed My Ways and Lost What Weighed Me Down*, 2012

“When you get angry at your ex, only about 10 percent of your anger can be attributed to the current situation. The other 90 percent comes from your past experiences with your ex, as well as those with your parents, caregivers, and other significant people in your past. The current situation has simply triggered your past anger and allowed it to resurface. It’s been said that if you’re hysterical, the cause is probably historical.” Julie A., M.A. Ross and Judy Corcoran, *Joint Custody with a Jerk: Raising a Child with an Uncooperative Ex*, 2011

“Anybody can become angry, that is easy; but to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way, that is not within everybody’s power and is not easy.” Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC)

“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” Bible, Ephesians iv. 26.

“When angry, count ten before you speak; if very angry, a hundred.” Thomas Jefferson (1743 - 1826), Writings.

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