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Breaking Yourself Out of a Rut



You've eaten the same things for breakfast every day for three years, then taken the same car pool to the same job. Your life is more of the same after work. It's time to break out of your rut.

"If you feel like you're stuck in a routine, you probably are," says Kenneth A. Wallston, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn.

A routine isn't necessarily bad; it can be comforting because it adds structure to your life and it isn't stressful. But Dr. Wallston says dissatisfaction may start to gnaw at you and erode your self-esteem if you believe you want something more in your life.

Recognizing you're in a rut is the first step toward making a change. Taking action is the next step. Making small, easy changes that show quick, positive results is the best way to start. "Add one new thing every day and choose things you like to do or expect to enjoy," Dr. Wallston says.

Taking any of the following small steps can lead to big changes in your life.

Personal Development

- Reduce the amount of time you spend watching television by an hour a day. Use the extra time for something special, such as reading a book, taking a class, visiting a friend or pursuing a hobby.
- Initiate a family project, such as planning your next vacation or planting a backyard garden.
- Fulfill a fantasy. For example, take tap-dancing lessons, perform at an "open-mike" club or join a neighborhood chess club or baseball team.

Better Health

- Take a walk. Use your lunch break to explore the neighborhood near your workplace, or use the weekend to visit local parks and scenic areas on foot.
- Vary your workout. Add new challenges by making your workout more interesting, not longer or harder. Alternate activities that complement each other, such as swimming and cycling or aerobic dance and strength training.
- Explore a new cuisine. Sample local ethnic restaurants. Learn to make low-fat versions of your favorite dishes.
- Take a healthful vacation. Attend a sports camp or sign up for a bike tour of a national park.

At Leisure

Play tourist in your own town. Check out a guidebook or ask your visitors bureau for information on local tourist attractions, walking tours and events.

Take your camera with you on daily activities. Look for scenes that would make interesting pictures. It will give you a different eye on your world.

Write a letter to someone you haven't heard from in a while. It might revive a friendship. Writing the letter can also help you clarify your thoughts about your life and work.

Family and Community

Ask your children, spouse or friends to suggest their favorite things to do, then join in, enthusiastically.

Volunteer at a nearby hospital, library or theater group. Start by committing yourself to a single event or project. If you enjoy the work, you can build a long-term relationship.

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Signs of Eye Problems in Children



Children's eyes change rapidly, and problems can occur at any age. It's important to observe your child's eyes and to pay attention to how your child acts and what he or she says.

How Your Child's Eyes Appear

- Eyes that cross or one eye that turns in, out, up, or down
- One eye that seems different in some way, such as a larger or smaller pupil
- Crusty, swollen, bloodshot, or red-rimmed eyes
- Eyes that water a lot
- Any discharge, bleeding, or red bumps on the eyelids
- A pupil that shows a white rather than a red reflection in a color photograph

How Your Child Behaves

- Closing one eye or turning or tilting the head to see things
- Squinting to see things in the distance
- Not seeing things you point out
- Consistently holding objects close to the face or sitting very close to the TV
- Blinking or rubbing one eye a lot
- Running into objects or falling down at night or in places that aren't well lit

What Your Child Says

- Can't see the chalkboard at school
- Things looking blurry or funny
- Eyes itch, burn, or feel scratchy
- Was hit in the eye or has something in one eye
- One or both eyes hurt, or has pain in or around one or both eyes
- Light makes the eyes hurt

Headaches and Dyslexia

Headaches (head pain) and **dyslexia** (an inability to recognize letters and words) usually aren't due to eye problems. But if your child has either problem, he or she should have an eye exam to rule out eye conditions or vision problems.

Krames Staywell

Ways to Enhance Your Self-Esteem



Feeling good about yourself is an essential element to living a healthy, happy life. Unfortunately, we are often our own worst enemy. Whether we are insecure about certain parts of our lives or we set unrealistic expectations for ourselves, how we feel about who we are and how we live our lives can greatly impact our quality of life. The good news is self-esteem is something you can work on and change for the better. Read on to find how you can increase your self-esteem and enhance your life.

Replacing Negative Self-Talk with Positive Self-Talk

What happens when you make a mistake? Listen to your internal monologue and find out what you're saying to yourself and about yourself. By tuning into how you treat yourself internally, you can make your internal monologue more positive. When you don't verbally beat yourself up, you can bring more positive feelings into your life.

Praise Yourself

Take some time to reflect. What have you accomplished? It doesn't matter if it is a big thing or a small thing, if it means something to you and makes you feel good, it's important. Write them down on a piece of paper or take time to think about each success. By noting them, you can realize that what you've done is significant.

Speak Up When Necessary

Don't be a doormat. Think before you speak, but speak up when it is necessary to do so. Respect the opinions of others, and also respect that you have an opinion, too. Teaching yourself to be assertive and to communicate effectively can help your relationship with others and your relationship with yourself.

Be Understanding

If you make a mistake or blunder, don't take it too seriously. Mistakes happen all the time, so forgive yourself and others when they happen. Don't criticize or dwell on what's happened, move forward and use it as a learning situation.

Nurture Good Relationships

Who do you spend time with? The friendships and relationships you choose say a lot about how you feel about yourself. It is important for the people who are close to you to be supportive and kind to you. If they aren't, reconsider those relationships. Finding people who support you helps you support yourself.

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For assistance with challenges like these, please call your

New Directions EAP at 800-624-5544 or visit us online www.ndbh.com