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Bonker Bits

the monthly newsletter with a sense of humor

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Newsletter

BONKER BITS

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A supplement of
Going Bonkers Magazine

How to Make Responsible Decisions

Most people are decidophobic -- they fear making a wrong decision. Unless you can see into the future, you cannot know with absolute certainty that the decision you're making is the best one, because the results of your decision are based on future actions -- and future actions are often unpredictable. Recognize that making a decision is just choosing one, among many, choices. The easiest way to make a decision is by the process of elimination. Even the small decisions, grouped together and repeated day after day, have a huge impact on the quality of your life.

1. Don't make any decisions that you're not qualified to make, or are not yours to make.
2. Don't feel pressured by others to make quick decisions. Tell them you need time to consider your decision.
3. Do your decision making on paper. List all possible choices -- preferably at least 10. Be creative.
4. Review the principles you've chosen to live by, and then eliminate the choices which you know are not right, or those which will harm yourself or others.
5. From those remaining, determine the short-term "if-then" of each choice, and eliminate those with a negative outcome.
6. Evaluate the long-term consequences of your remaining choices. Eliminate those with negative consequences.
7. Research the remaining choices. Gather facts and information. Ask for input from those affected by your decision.
8. Evaluate all available information, and eliminate all choices but one. You've made your decision.

Overcoming Self-Doubt

"Am I good enough?" "Can I do this?" "Why do I deserve this good thing?" "Should I?" Self-doubt causes you to torture yourself, sabotage yourself, ask yourself a million whys -- and then it kills your dreams. It encourages you to give up before you've even.

To Overcome Self-Doubt:

1. Don't ignore the self-doubting mind chatter of questions. Briefly pay attention to them and write them down.
2. Answer the questions with only positive answers. If you think you can't do something, write down 10 reasons why you can.
3. Acknowledge and believe the 10 reasons to be truthful.
4. Make a list of every ability and talent that you have -- no matter how small-- that will help you in your project.
5. Make a step-by-step plan to do the thing that you think you can't.
6. Don't second guess your plan or change it - unless you learn new information that will make it better.
7. Follow your plan.



Reduce Guilt

and Frustration in Your Life

Most guilt and frustration occur when we don't do what we tell ourselves we're going to do. It's when we let things slip through the cracks.

You tell yourself you're going to spend more time with your family, but you can't find the time, so you don't. You tell yourself you're going to clean out the garage, but when Saturday rolls around you feel like you need a break, so you don't.

That's when guilt and frustration creep in. You're better off to *not*

set yourself up for failure and all the negative feelings that it brings. Don't make promises to yourself that you may not be able to keep. Do the best you can with each day, and don't beat yourself up. You'll get a lot more accomplished when you aren't carrying around extra "guilt" and "frustration" baggage.

*By David Allen,
Organizing expert and author of
Getting Things Done.*

Making Changes in Your Life

Feeling stuck? If so, you may want to consider these things, as suggested by author Deepak Chopra in *The Book of Secrets*. Here's what he says you should be thinking about:

- ✓ Ask yourself if you're ready for change. Do you enjoy your life as it is now -- and if not, then are you merely avoiding change out of fear?
- ✓ Are you too distracted to make progress in your life? Is your focus completely on outside matters, with no time left for the inner life? If so, this could be your stumbling block.
- ✓ Do you feel like things out of your control are holding you back? Take

some time for reflection. Is there something you have neglected and need to learn? Perhaps your timing is just off and you need to wait it out. Or perhaps you are filled with conflict and self-doubt, which are the things that are really holding you back -- not things in your external environment at all. Reflecting on the situation could reveal information that will help you move on.

- ✓ Are you clinging to outdated views of yourself or your life? If so, you may be serving as your own roadblock. For instance, if you see yourself as lacking in some way or weak, your self-perception might be the thing that needs to change.



A girl says
to her boyfriend:

One kiss and I'll be yours forever.
The guy replies:
Thanks for the warning.

How to Shake a Bad Mood

Bad mood? The worst thing you can do is wallow in it. Instead, survey results of more than 300 people shows exercise and listening to music as the best ways to beat a case of the blues. Bad moods usually emanate from tension and low energy. And when it comes to exercise, even a short brisk walk can increase your energy, reduce your stress and improve your mood.

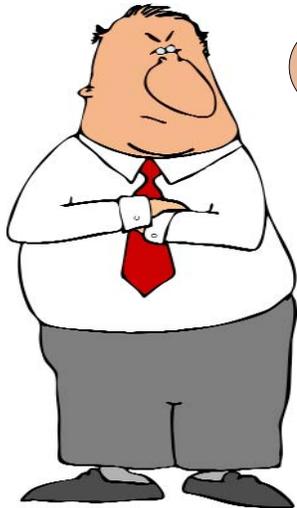
Psychologists believe listening to music may prompt you to remember a good mood or a good time and produce a conditioned response that makes you feel better.

Other ways to beat a bad mood? Take up a new interest. Sign up for a class in something you've always been interested in but don't know much about. Start a new hobby like knitting or carpentry, or get out and volunteer for a cause you care about.

The bottom line is if you're feeling bad, sitting around ruminating about it will probably not do you much good. Getting active will help you move beyond your present mood and connect you to new people and interests.

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BONKERISM**

Never go to a doctor whose office plants have died.



How to go from

Negative to Positive

If people have pegged you for having a negative attitude, and you know they're right, is there anything that can be done? Can you change?

The answer is "Of course you can." Attitudes can be changed, responses can be changed -- people can under-go complete transformations of character sometimes. If you feel you want to revamp your attitude, here are a few things to keep in:

- ✓ Attitudes are not something we are born with -- they are created, which means they can be recreated as well.
- ✓ Attitudes are infectious. Try to spend time around people who have good attitudes and who make you feel good. When you are around a positive person you will feel energized -- not robbed.
- ✓ Try to start your day on a positive note. It might feel phony at first, but it will become second nature if you keep at it. Possibly start each day with giving someone a small compliment.
- ✓ Greet people like you are genuinely happy to see them -- then try to think of reasons why you are genuinely happy to see them.

- ✓ Instead of heading straight for defensive mode and expecting the worst out of others, reverse the process and try expecting the best out of everyone.
- ✓ Don't be so hard on yourself. Throw your perfectionism out. It won't do you a bit of good and will likely make you seem like a grouch.

By Wolf J. Rinke, Author of The Six Success Strategies for Winning at Life, Love & Business.

Deciding what to Let Go

Getting overwhelmed because you can't get it all done? It's a common problem, and achieving some kind of balance is the answer. When you start feeling stressed because you've got a sinkful of dirty dishes you can't get to, ask yourself how much it really matters. Eventually you'll get them done, and it's not ruining your life to let them sit there. Sometimes it's a matter of learning how and what to let go, so you can live.

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We learn wisdom in three ways:

1. by reflection, which is the noblest;
2. by imitation, which is the easiest;
3. by experience, which is the bitterest.

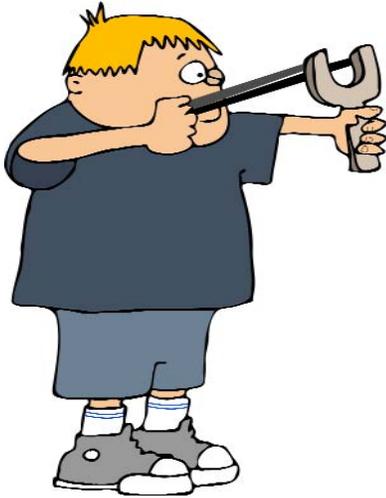


Time Management for Busy People

Need to manage your workload?

- ✓ Organize and get rid of the clutter. Make two piles -- important and unimportant. Deal with everything in the important pile that you can, and set aside some time to tackle the lower priority papers that still need to be dealt with.
- ✓ Set task priorities. Consider each task that needs to be done and ask yourself whether it needs immediate attention or can wait until later in the day.
- ✓ Break large projects into smaller tasks, then prioritize them as above.
- ✓ Use tools that can help you save time and energy. Don't choose electronic programs or devices that are complicated to learn or hard to use.
- ✓ Get focused and refuse to become distracted. Once you enter the flow of work, you might be surprised at how quickly you can get the work done.

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Spirited children sometimes have trouble handling their energy. (If you have one, you already know this.) There are some things parents can do to make it easier for these children, and themselves. High-energy kids are often highly intelligent, demanding and emotionally intense. If you've got one on your hands here are a few tips:

Give your child information.

This should help keep anxieties down about what is going to happen.

Is anger always bad?

Does anger always blow out the light of reason? Researchers found that anger can be blamed for flawed thinking because it can alter our perception of risk and trigger aggression. But anger, it seems, does not always impede analytical thinking. Instead, anger-induced action often resulted in clear-minded and deliberative processing. In the experiments, researchers induced anger, and found that angry people were more likely to be able to discriminate between strong and weak arguments than people in neutral moods. Researchers believe there are times when anger triggers analytical thought.

By Wesley G. Moons and Diane M. Mackie published in the Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, "Thinking Straight While Seeing Red: The Influence of Anger on Information Processing"

How to

Help your High-energy Child

Be consistent. Set reasonable rules and stick to them. Don't try to placate children in the short-term by giving in to their demand, especially if they whine or throw a fit to get their way. You will only condition them to turn the heat up the next time if you do this.

Think ahead. If your child acts up in certain places, try to make other arrangements. For instance, save the restaurant for you and your spouse or friends. Take your child on his own picnic instead, where he can be noisy without getting into trouble.

Praise your child. When you catch your child behaving positively make sure you let her know. Tell her

that you think it's great that she's sitting down to eat her dinner, if she's had a problem with that in the past and has shown some improvement.

Recognize your child's feelings. If you see your child getting upset, tell him you feel that way sometimes, too. Soothe his senses by letting him know his feelings are normal.

By Richard Saul Wurman, Johnson & Johnson, and author of Understanding Children.

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A rumor will travel fastest to the place where it will cause the greatest harm.



An artist asked the gallery owner if there had been any interest in his paintings on display at that time.

"I have good news and bad news," the owner replied.

"The good news is that a gentleman inquired about your work and wondered if it would appreciate in value after your death. When I told him it would, he bought all 15 of your paintings."

"That's wonderful," the artist exclaimed.

"What's the bad news?"

"The guy was your doctor."

Want to have more energy and feel better?

Are you grateful for what you have in life? Most of us are, but amidst life's daily problems, it's easy to forget the good stuff. In a study of those who kept gratitude journals, Robert Emmons, a professor of psychology at University of California, found that those who wrote down what they were grateful for were more optimistic and felt better than those who wrote down what was bothering them or just wrote down neutral observations about their lives. Solution: Keep a "gratitude journal," in which you list the good things that you are grateful for in your life. Counting your blessings will help you feel great!



How to

Bring your Goal to Life

When you really want to bring a goal to life, create a picture for yourself of what it will feel like when you actually achieve your goal. To do this, try one or two of the following things:

- ✓ Think of the day you finally achieve your goal. Now write a one-page story about what that day is like.
- ✓ Write your story of achievement as if it is a newspaper article reporting on what you have done.
- ✓ Make a list of 20 things that will be different about your life once you achieve your goal.
- ✓ Write an imaginary letter to your best friend telling him or her what you have achieved.
- ✓ Make a visual collage of your life and your achievement.

By David Rock, Personal development expert and author of *Personal Best*, <http://resultscoaches.com>



Wacky Wisdom

4 Positive Living

Know Yourself Well !

One night after a boxing match, Howard Cosell, the world-famous sports commentator, and a friend were making their way back to their hotel room via a chauffeur-driven limousine. While being driven by an alley, Cosell and his friend saw a crowd of young people whooping it up as two boys punched and kicked each other.

"Pull over," Howard said to the driver.

"I'm sorry, but this is not a safe neighborhood!" said the chauffeur.

But Cosell was adamant, "Pull this limo over NOW!" he commanded.

Before the driver was able to get the car to a full stop,

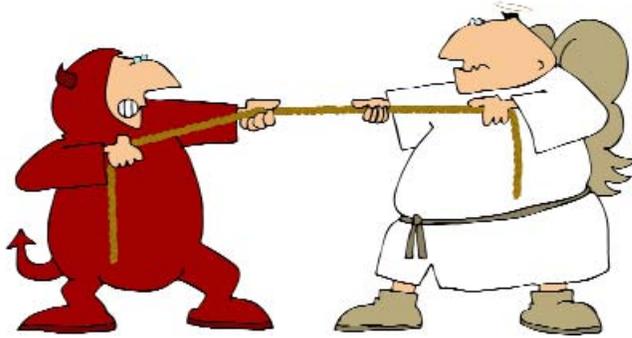
Cosell had the door open and was out on the street striding over to the gang of teens. And then Cosell did something truly unexpected. He did not try to break the fight up as the onlookers had assumed he was going to do. Instead, he started calling the fight.

In only minutes the fight broke up and the teens gathered round the famous sports announcer. Cosell handed out autographs and talked to the young people about what it meant to be a real man, instead of a punk.

When Cosell got back into the limo, the driver turned back and asked, "How did you do that?" Cosell answered simply, "Because, I know who I am."

By Howard Cosell, as retold from a TV Interview.

How to Live with Integrity



- ✓ Speak your truth, even if it creates conflict or tension.
- ✓ Don't settle for less than you know you deserve in relationships.
- ✓ Ask for what you want and need from others.
- ✓ Keep your behavior in harmony with your personal values.

By Barbara De Angelis, Personal Transformation Expert and Best Selling Author



Relaxations in Minutes

Feeling scared, stressed or annoyed? Researchers at Harvard Medical School say there are really some quick fixes. Here are some of their recommendations:

A one-minute mini-relaxation. Put your hand just beneath your navel. Breathe and feel the rise and fall of your breath. Then breathe in slowly-pause to the count of three-and exhale for a count of three. Practice this technique for a full minute. Take note if your body starts to relax. Notice how when you change your breathing, you change your body and mind-set as well.

A two-minute mini-relaxation. Count down backward from 10 to zero -- and while doing so fully inhale and exhale to each number. Say "Ten" to yourself-and breathe in deeply. Then breathe out slowly. Next say "Nine" to yourself and repeat the practice until you reach zero. When

you reach zero you should feel more relaxed. Repeat until you feel changes in your body and mind. Note: If you feel lightheaded, you should count down more slowly and space your breaths further apart.

A three-minute mini-relaxation. Take a deep breath and note where you're feeling tension in your body. Relax your face, allowing your jaw to drop open slightly. Drop your shoulders. Feel the weight of your arms at your sides. Loosen your hands so that spaces open up between your fingers. If you're sitting with your legs or ankles crossed, uncross them. Let your thighs sink into the chair and feel their weight. Feel the heaviness of your shins and calves, and visualize your feet growing roots into the floor. Breathe in and out slowly.

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Calm your emotions before they get out of control

If your buttons get punched up pretty easily, you might need to practice some simple relaxation techniques, so you don't lose control. According to the American Psychological Association (www.apa.org) a few simple relaxation tools can help calm angry feelings. Once you learn how to use these tools you can call upon them in any situation where you may be losing control of your emotions. Here are some things to try:

Deep breathing. Breath from your diaphragm -- breathing from your chest will not relax you. To do this picture your breath coming up from your "gut."

Choose a calming phrase and repeat it to yourself. "Relax" or "Take it easy" might work. Repeat this to yourself while you practice your deep breathing.

Visualize a relaxing experience. You can use something from your experience or imagination.

Practice slow, yoga like exercises to relax your muscles and calm your nerves.

Practice these techniques daily. Learn to use the techniques whenever you find yourself in a tense or hard-to-handle situation.



When I was young I used to pray for a bike, then I realized that God doesn't work that way, so I stole a bike and prayed for forgiveness.

Healing from Family Estrangement is Possible

Why do family members become estranged, sometimes for decades or even forever?

What is often striking is that monumental fights are sometimes over things that seem petty or unimportant at first glance -- things that just aren't that big a deal. So how does it happen that parents, adult children and siblings sometimes stop talking permanently over these matters?

When families who have poor communication skills need to express an issue, they often choose to do so without words and resort to symbolic actions to show the intensity of their feelings. One very symbolic action is severing ties with someone.

Often fights are expressions of longstanding and unresolved issues in the family, and these can stem from poor self-esteem, feelings of deprivation, or a host of other problems.

Family estrangement is usually the result of a build-up of bad feelings and a lack of communication.

Living with a family estrangement can be painful and even debilitating, but healing is possible.

1. Reconcile the problem within yourself.
2. You may need to accept your family's unwillingness to be a part of the healing process.
3. Strive to feel good about yourself and how you relate to others and you will maintain your peace of mind.
4. Move on no matter what others in the family choose to do -- or not to do.

By Mark Sichel, Therapist, and author of Healing Family Rifts, www.SelfGrowth.com and www.SideRoad.com

When the Going Gets Tough

Here are a few nuggets of wisdom to cling to when the going gets tough.

- ✓ Energy and positive self-motivation come from seeking your dreams and doing things you love.
- ✓ All people are a composite of strengths and weaknesses. If you want to experience your maximum energy, you will need to build your strengths.
- ✓ Figure out which of your weaknesses keep you from reaching your lifetime goals. Get rid of them -- and don't worry about the rest.
- ✓ Successful people love what they do. To be successful, find work that lets you build your strengths.
- ✓ When you pursue what you want to do, you'll have fun and you'll feel naturally high.

*By Wolf J. Rinke
www.wolfrinke.com
author of *The 6 Success Strategies for Winning at Life, Love & Business.**



Mike walked into a doctor's office and the receptionist asked him what he had. Mike said, Shingles. So she wrote down his name, address, and told him to have a seat.

Fifteen minutes later a nurse's aid came out and escorted Mike to the examining room.

A half hour later a nurse came in and asked Mike what he had. Mike said, Shingles. So the nurse drew blood for a test, took his blood pressure and ask Mike to take off all his clothes and wait for the doctor.

An hour later the doctor came in and asked Mike what he had. Mike said, shingles. The doctor asked, "where?"

Mike said, "Outside on the truck. Where do you want them???!!!!"

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If you can solve your problem, then you have no need to worry.
If you cannot solve your problems, then what is the use of worrying?

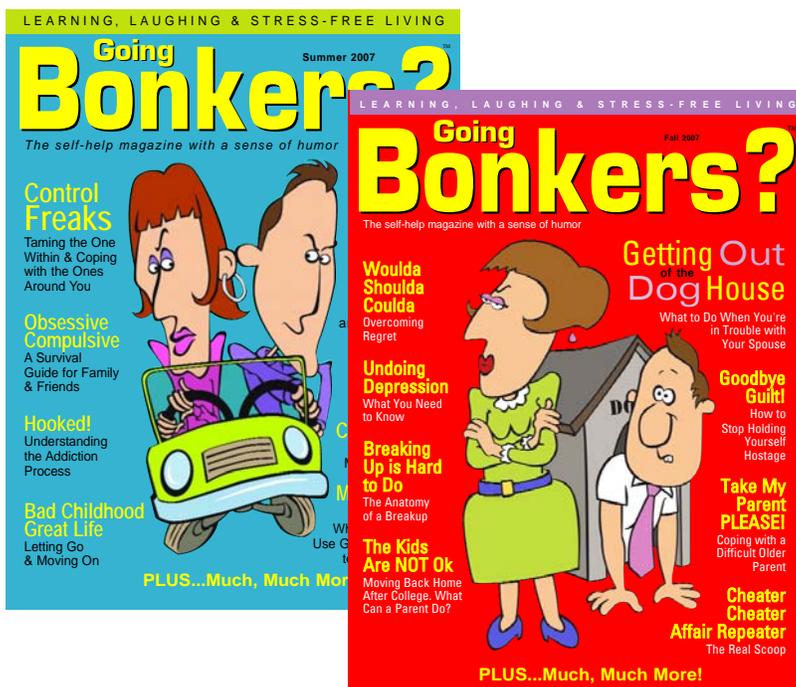
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