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The Local Biz Magazine

Winter 2021

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Published by
INSPIRED Media Inc.
Operating: INspiredcreative, Your one stop shop for all your marketing, advertising, graphic, and web design needs. Publishers of The Local Biz Magazine, The Pink Pages Directory, PinkPlayMags, and theBUZZ.
www.inspiredcreative.ca

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From the Publisher

Do you love the holiday season? I do. But I bet you don't particularly like the stress and chaos that often comes along with it. While the pandemic put a damper on holiday plans last year, this may not be the case this time around. This year, the holiday season may be looking a bit more like pre-pandemic times again, which means hosting, attending events, decorating, baking, shopping, buying and wrapping presents... The list goes on and on. The key to not getting overwhelmed over the holidays is to be organized. Professional organizer Catherine Davis shows you how you can do this in her article *10 Tips for an Organized Christmas Season*. It's a must-read. You can find it on page 6.

If you do find yourself getting stressed and need to find a way to wind down, how about trying your hand at knitting and / or crocheting? Research has found that the repetitive, rhythmic and automatic movements involved in crocheting and knitting have a positive effect on the brain. It promotes moving away from stress and worry, and toward focus and relaxation. It allows you to slow down and just be in the moment like meditation would. It's not hard to learn either. There are lots of tutorials on *YouTube* that can help you get started. If you prefer in-person learning, consider signing up for a class at your local community centre. Not only will you be gaining the numerous health benefits this hobby has to offer, but you will also be creating beautiful and practical pieces of art. For more on the benefits of crocheting and knitting, as well as it's fascinating origins, check out Julie Antoinette's article on page 16, *A Historical Look at the Mental Health Benefits of Knitting & Crochet*.

As always, I hope you enjoy reading the wonderful content we have for you in this Winter 2021 issue of *The Local Biz Magazine*. Feel free to share your thoughts on it with us. Don't forget to also connect with us through our website www.thelocalbizmagazine.ca and Facebook page. We love to hear from you! Until next time!

Antoine Elhashem
Publisher

In This Issue

- 6 **10 Tips for an Organized Christmas Season** Catherine Davis
- 11 **Domestic Abuse: A Play For Power** Haiqa Hammad
- 16 **A Historical Look at the Mental Health Benefits of Knitting & Crochet** Julie Antoinette

Regular Features

- 19 **Winter Events Calendar**
- 20 **Horoscopes** Julie Antoinette
- 21 **Soul Searching** Tara Richardson
- 22 **Get Fit: Inside & Out** Bianca Schaefer
- 23 **Tweens, Teens & In-Between** Afeefa Malik
- 24 **Family Matters** Josie Myers
- 25 **A Forkful of Healthy** Kim Dobie
- 26 **Finance & Real Estate Insights** Nicole Forrester
- 27 **Ask Sue-Ann** Sue-Ann Bavinka
- 28 **The Coach Corner** Malachi Brown
- 29 **The Golden Years** Linda Calder



From the Editor

The days are getting shorter, the nights are getting longer, and the air is getting colder. Winter has arrived and so has the Winter 2021 issue of our magazine. This issue, we have a variety of topics we're tackling in our feature articles; some are a heavier read than others. In my letter, I am going to focus on the 3-page feature article which is on domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse is a heavy topic that needs to be addressed, because sadly it still is a problem today. The annual rate of police reported family violence including violence against intimate partners rose 13% in 2019, continuing the increase that has been happening for two consecutive years before that according to *Statistics Canada*. The pandemic hasn't helped. Reports of domestic violence rose during the pandemic. Between April 1 and September 30, 2020, Canada's *Assaulted Woman's Helpline* received 51,299 calls, compared to 24,010 in the same time in 2019. That is a significant increase.

For many of us, the pandemic and the ensuing lockdown was an inconvenience. For those in a domestic abuse situation, it was unbearable. There was no place to go as everything was closed. Victims of domestic abuse were trapped in their abusive home environment. Although we are no longer in a lockdown, domestic abuse incidents still take place. Often, for a long period of time before they are ever reported to police. The key to stopping this upward trend is to raise awareness about it. I encourage you to flip to page 11, and read Haiqa Hammad's article *Domestic Abuse – A Play for Power*. If you are a victim of domestic abuse, please speak to a trusted individual and know that help is out there. If you sense someone is in a domestic abuse situation, please get them the help they need. There are lots of community organizations we have listed in the article that can offer assistance.

I hope you enjoy reading the Winter 2021 issue and are enlightened by the content. I'd love to hear your feedback on it. As always, if you would like to pitch us a story or write for us, feel free to email me editor@thelocalbizmagazine.ca.

Wendy Chiavalon
Editor-in-Chief

The Local Biz Magazine



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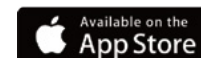
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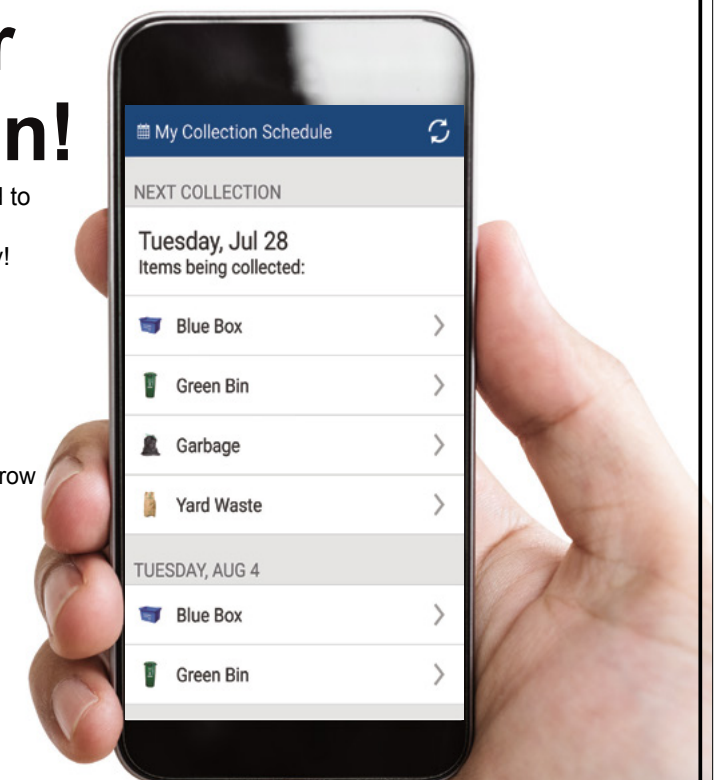


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10 Tips for an Organized Christmas Season

by Catherine Davis

The Christmas season is a joyful time of year, one that many people look forward to with anticipation. But it is easy to understand why many people feel overwhelmed and stressed out by the busyness of the season.

Not only is there pressure to find the perfect gifts, there is worry about spending too much money, the expectation that you will fully decorate the interior and exterior of your home, the time commitment required for baking and planning special meals, the scheduling of multiple parties and get togethers, the obligation to send Christmas cards, visiting all your relatives, and when it's over, you still have the enormous task of packing up all the decorations for next year. If you are feeling a little overwhelmed just thinking about it you are not alone. But there is hope! By following these few simple tips, you can have a more organized Christmas and avoid that feeling of being overwhelmed.

Schedule to Avoid Conflicts

Many of the activities we do around the holidays involve coordinating multiple family members and their conflicting schedules. Scheduling activities in advance can cut down on your stress level and make for happier family relations. To do this, print a large calendar for the month of December and tape it on or near the fridge. Instruct everyone to add their December events to the calendar so that everyone in the family can easily tell at a glance the comings and goings of each family member. For example, by letting your family know that the second Saturday in December is reserved for Christmas baking, or that December 20th is reserved for classic movie night, it allows everyone to schedule their other events around those of the family, thus

avoiding hurt feelings and disappointment that comes from missing an event due to a conflict. Use the December calendar to schedule both family and work events, party obligations, get togethers, and volunteer commitments.

Stress Free Decorating

Does holiday decorating stress you out? Between work and your busy schedule when will you ever find the time to haul out Christmas boxes, sort decorations, set up the tree, hang exterior lights, and set up the lawn reindeer? Whew! I get tired just thinking about it! But there is a way to avoid all the stress and hassle that is associated with Christmas decorating. Break it down into smaller, more manageable tasks. Smaller tasks are easier to complete and give you a sense of accomplishment, making the entire project less daunting and more enjoyable.

For example, just finding and hauling out the Christmas boxes from storage can be a daunting task, never mind unpacking everything and decorating the house. The solution is to break the job down into smaller, manageable tasks. Task #1 could be "Find and bring Christmas boxes to the main floor". This task can be completed a day in advance of any decorating; that way you won't feel tired from hauling boxes. Task #2 could be "Move Christmas tree and tree decorations to the main room". Task #3 could be "Decorate the Christmas Tree". The idea of breaking the job into smaller, manageable tasks is not to exhaust yourself by trying to do it all in one shot. Space out the work and as you complete each task think of mentally crossing it off of your to-do list. Maybe you are up for completing two tasks per day, or even three. The point is to go at a pace that is fun and manageable for you. This might mean a straight weekend of decorating where everyone pitches in and every task gets completed. Or, it could mean that you complete one task per day and complete decorating over a period of two or three weekends.

Take Stock Before You Bake

If you are like most people, you probably have some special recipes that only get made once a year for the holidays. You may even have a tradition of setting aside a day to bake or inviting family members to share in the ritual of preparing a special family recipe. Whatever your tradition, avoid stress on baking day by checking your recipes a week in advance to see what ingredients you need to stock up on. You may have forgotten that Aunt Mary's shortbread recipe requires 4 pounds of butter, or that 2 dozen eggs are required for multiple batches. This is also a good time to check the pantry for ingredients you have on hand but may not be fresh. Brown sugar is notorious for going hard, and if your flour is years old it won't perform as well as a fresh bag. Avoid that last minute panic of running out to buy key ingredients by checking your recipes and pantry a week or two in advance and shopping for all the ingredients beforehand.

Christmas Cards Made Easy

Like to send Christmas cards but don't have time to write a personal note in each one? Consider typing a one-page letter detailing the highlights of your year. Can't remember what you had for breakfast last week, let alone what you did at the start of this year? Use your calendar to help you recall events that happened this year and write about them. If you have time, purchase Christmas letterhead to print your letter on. This will give it that extra special touch and make your letter appear more in line with your personality. (Note: There are some funky Christmas letterheads out there!) Ensure the content of the letter is generic enough that it's suitable for all friends and older relatives. And if you find postage costs prohibitive, or you have left card mailing too late, consider sending your letter by email or text to those who prefer electronic communications.

Preparing For Guests

With COVID-19 travel restrictions being eased, many people will have more guests for the holidays this year than last year. Chances are, the space in your home that was previously designated as a guest room has been repurposed during the last lockdown. Your guest room may now serve as your full-time home office, a home gym, or a catch-all room for kids toys and older furnishings. But there are some simple steps you can take to make this space welcoming for visitors again.

First, clear any horizontal surfaces of papers. This could be as simple as placing an elastic band around the piles and moving them to the floor under your desk or to another room that your guest won't see. All guests appreciate a clean, flat surface to place a few items on, be it their medication or toiletries.

Next, ensure the floor is clear. Remove any tripping hazards such as toys or boxes so that guests have a clear path to the bed. Last but not least, pull out your guest linens and towels and give them the sniff test a week ahead of any guests' arrival. If they smell musky, you will still have time to run a load of laundry before your guest arrives. (Note: To refresh clean towels, skip the wash and place them in the dryer with a scented dryer sheet.)

Gift Wrap Storage

To save time and cut down on frustration when it comes to wrapping presents, create a storage zone for all your gift-wrapping supplies. Keep everything you need for wrapping





presents (scotch tape, a pair of scissors, bows, ribbons and name tags) with the Christmas rolls so you don't have to search for each item when you are ready to wrap. Designate a convenient spot for all these supplies that is large enough to store them together. This could be a tall cardboard box stored in the basement, an under-the-bed storage box, or a garment bag hanging in a spare closet. It is also a good idea to keep an extra box of Christmas cards with your Christmas wrapping supplies to have on hand for any last-minute gifts.

It's OK to Say No

Too many times we agree to take on roles that we simply do not have the time for in an effort to be seen as accommodating. Did you agree to become chairman of a committee at your church because no other volunteer stepped up? Did you commit to drive for a local charity because they didn't have enough drivers in your area? Did you agree to bake gingerbread men for little Suzie's entire class because somebody heard you are a great baker? If these voluntary obligations keep finding you and you are negatively impacted by them, it may be time to set some limits on what you agree to take on. Remember, it is okay to say no if the task ends up causing you stress, disruption to your routine, or has other negative consequences. Think about what you can realistically handle. Perhaps you can commit to attend a meeting, but not be its chairperson. Or, you can agree to drive for the charity on an occasional basis but not once a week. Do your best to accommodate requests but don't stretch yourself too thin.

Priceless Gift Giving

Christmas is a time of year that budgets get thrown out of the window. There are so many people in your life who you would like to shower with gifts. Gift giving has become synonymous with appreciation, caring and love. The problem is, we all have a limited amount of money and no one who cares for you would want you to go into financial hardship for the sake of a gift. So how do we treat a multitude of people to gifts without breaking the bank? First, make a short list of people who absolutely need a store-bought gift and budget for those people. Next, make a list of all the remaining people you would like to give a gift to but would appreciate a personal gift that isn't store bought, such as preparing a homecooked meal or baked goods, offering to babysit or house clean, or volunteering at a loved one's favourite charity. The gift of your time is very valuable. It cannot be purchased but its value outweighs any gift card.

Online Shopping Tips

If you have ever ordered something online, you understand the frustration of waiting for something to arrive that you desperately need. While Christmas presents generally do not fall into the category of "desperately need", you don't want to disappoint a child or be without a gift for your spouse because you are waiting for a delivery. Delivery times have already been impacted by shortages in the supply of microprocessors (used in many electronics) and shortages in labour forces. To avoid disappointment, order your gifts well in advance of December 25th. If you require a deadline to motivate you, pretend November 25th is Christmas Day and make a game of it to see if you can have your online orders arrive by November 25th.

Still hesitant to shop online? If your hesitation is due to the difficulty of returning an unwanted or damaged item, try ordering something from a large retailer that has a store near you. Many large retailers permit online orders to be returned at the store. This option gives you an instant refund and no hassle with printing a return label or visiting a post office.

After Christmas: Storage Tips

- Only use red bins for storing your Christmas decorations in so it's easy to find next year.
- Pack decorations used in the same room together. Use one box for each of the following categories: tree decorations, mantelpiece decorations, dining room décor, hallway décor, etc.
- Dispose of light sets with faulty wiring and inexpensive decorations in need of repair.
- Any decorations that you do not use this year, consider donating it to a local charity. Many charities do not want Christmas decoration after Christmas so pack them in a box, label it as "charity" and donate it at the start of the season next year.
- Cardboard boxes used to ship wine bottles make the perfect storage containers for breakable decorations. Make sure the cardboard dividers are still inside.

In conclusion, the trick to not getting overwhelmed by the holiday season is to plan ahead and implement one or more of these organizing tips in the areas that tend to stress you out. Don't feel the need to implement all of these suggestions exactly as written. Pick and choose the ideas that resonate with you and modify them to suit your needs. Is the idea of creating a storage zone for gift wrap unrealistic given your small space? Just aim to keep all your wrapping supplies in a large shopping bag until you are done wrapping. Do you already own blue storage bins and don't want the expense of buying new red bins? Just use your existing bins and label them "Christmas" using masking tape. The point is to implement small changes over time that will help you feel less overwhelmed and more organized during the holidays.

Catherine Davis is a professional organizer and owner of *Organized by Catherine*, an in-person organizing service that helps women who feel overwhelmed by clutter in their homes or businesses. Catherine works 1-on-1 with clients to create customized organizing solutions for papers, home offices, basements, kitchens, and storage rooms.





DOMESTIC ABUSE: A PLAY FOR POWER

by Haiqa Hammad

Domestic violence is a term that many people have come across before, whether it be from movies and shows, the news, or social media.

Recently, the much talked about case of Gabby Petito has also sparked a conversation on domestic violence after many claim that the missing woman's tragic story could have been prevented had the police been able to identify that what was going on between Gabby and her fiancé may have been domestic abuse. Many people may have preconceived ideas of what domestic abuse consists of and may be overlooking other types of behaviours that are less talked about but also fall into a category of abuse. Knowledge on domestic violence and what falls under it is highly important in order to protect oneself and one's family and friends by being able to identify when it may be happening.

What is Domestic Abuse?

'Domestic abuse,' 'domestic violence' or 'intimate partner violence' can be defined as potentially violent and harmful behaviour within a domestic relationship or setting (i.e., marriage, living together, dating etc.) that is used to gain or maintain power over an intimate partner. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse regardless of age, sexual orientation, religion, gender, socioeconomic background, or level of education. Children, other relatives, and other household members may also be victims of domestic violence. Usually, domestic violence is a pattern of behaviour exhibited to have control over the victim. This behaviour can be manifested in several ways, such as mental, physical, sexual, or financial. Domestic abuse can have serious and detrimental effects on victims and it is important to be able

to identify it in order to get help or provide help to someone experiencing abuse.

Types of Domestic Abuse

As mentioned earlier, domestic violence can be experienced or seen in several ways, with abusers using various types of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual etc.,) to maintain power. Many behaviours, such as those that blame, manipulate, terrorize, humiliate, injure, or neglect someone, are often exhibited in one or more of these types of abuse.

Physical Abuse

Likely the most commonly thought-of type of domestic violence, physical abuse encompasses forms of abuse that affect the victim's physical body and health. An abuser who is partaking in physical abuse may hurt their partner by biting, shoving, kicking, striking, burning, or physically harming their partner in any other way. This also includes harming their partners physical health by denying medical care, forcing alcohol or drug use, or using force in sexual situations. In short, according to the Durham Region's definition of physical abuse, "it causes harm or death."

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse involves verbally demeaning an individual and causing emotional distress. This can occur through a variety of different ways such as constant criticism, humiliation, threats to you, your children, or your pets, attempts to isolate you from your friends and family, lack of trust in you or high level of possessiveness and jealousy. These are just a few examples of emotionally abusive behaviour. Any behaviour that continually



causes you emotional distress and leads you to submitting to your partner regardless of what you yourself want is likely emotional abuse. It is harder to detect emotional abuse compared to physical since there is less likely to be physical signs that the abuse is happening, but just because there may not be physical injuries, it does not mean that it is not abuse. Emotional abuse can be traumatizing and extremely distressing and is just as serious as any other type of abuse.

Economic Abuse

Economic or financial abuse involves the abuser controlling the victim’s access to money or other financial resources. The abuser may not let their partner go to work or get an education with the intention of keeping their partner dependent on them. They may not provide much money to their partner and withhold access to finances or knowledge of finances.

Psychological Abuse

Abuse through which the abuser will attempt to keep the victim confused and dependent by doing things such as playing mind games on the victim, trying to frighten the victim through intimidation, or isolating the victim from friends and family or school and work. Yet again, psychological abuse is an attempt by the abuser to keep the victim wrapped around their finger and unable to leave or do anything from the victim’s own choice.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse can be through physical, emotional, or psychological means and involves the abuser forcing their partner to take part in a non-consensual sexual act. They may do this by manipulating or forcing the victim to have sex or do sexual acts, accusing them of cheating or showing jealousy towards other relationships, hurting the victim with weapons or objects during sex, or demanding sex when the victim is sick, tired, or has just been beaten by the abuser. These are just a few

ways an abuser may sexually abuse a victim. The main component of any acts of sexual abuse are that the victim did not consent to take part in the sexual acts in question.

Consent

Since sexual abuse happens through a lack of consent, it is important to understand what consent is and how to know whether it has been given. As *Planned Parenthood* puts it, consent is as easy as FRIES: Freely given, Reversible, Informed, Enthusiastic, and Specific. When consent is given, it is given of a person’s own choice without anyone pressuring them. It can be taken back at any point. It is given when the person giving it is aware of all aspects of the sexual act. The person willingly gave the consent (they were not on the fence about it or seeming to be deciding whether or not they wanted to give consent - they wholeheartedly gave the consent). The consent was given for specific acts and nothing outside of what the person consented to. If the person ‘gave consent’ *after* being threatened, blackmailed, physically restrained or maimed, or was unconscious, then there was no consent and any sexual acts that ensued were non-consensual.

Domestic Abuse Trends

According to *Statistics Canada*, the annual rate of police reported family violence including violence against intimate partners rose 13% in 2019, continuing the increase that has been happening for the two consecutive years before that. 71% of victims of family violence suffered physical violence, making it the most common type of abuse that has gone on in Canada. It is important to realize though that these statistics are likely much lower than the reality since 70% of cases of abuse are not reported to the police according to the *Canadian Women’s Association*.

The pandemic too has had an impact on abuse rates. Reports of domestic, intimate partner violence rose during the pandemic. Between April 1 and September 30, 2020, Canada’s *Assaulted*

Woman’s Helpline received 51,299 calls, compared to 24,010 in the same time in 2019. There was an increase in calls during the first lockdown as opportunities to leave the house (for example, daily school drop off and pickups) were eliminated. "Everything closed overnight, and our crisis lines lit up." According to *Statistics Canada*, data from 17 police forces across the country revealed that domestic disturbance calls rose by 12 per cent between March and June of 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. However, it is important to note that calls to crisis lines often outpace calls to police (this was the case even during the pandemic). The reason being? Domestic violence continues long before someone *actually* picks up the phone to call the police. As mentioned earlier, this means that cases of domestic abuse are likely higher in the community than what is documented.

Signs of Abuse

In the case of Gabby Petito, the American travel vlogger who was road-tripping with her fiancé, police were called during their trip on a potential domestic abuse investigation. In the footage, a distressed Gabby is seen taking the blame for a physical altercation between herself and her partner while her partner seems more relaxed and not showing the “level of concern one would expect” according to psychiatrist Dr. Ziv Cohen. Police dismissed the call as a case of disorderly conduct and a short while after this event, Gabby went missing with her body to be found later. Many people claim that had police read body language better, Gabby may still have been alive today as according to Dr. Cohen, “When [the police separate Gabby from her fiancé to interview her], she proceeds to just blame herself for the incident, but appearing quite scared and not really being able to explain how the incident began. That seems to fit the profile of a domestic abuse situation, where you have the victim self-blaming and trying to protect the abuser.”

When it comes to signs of abuse, some obvious ones come to mind such as black eyes, bruises, sprained wrists, or busted lips. Usually signs of physical abuse are easier to detect since even attempts by the victim to hide physical signs of abuse can be detected (i.e., wearing sunglasses indoors, scarves and long sleeves in summer or a heavier than normal amount of makeup), but in cases where other forms of abuse are happening it may be important to be more perceptive to pick up on signs. In order to do so, it is important to know how signs of abuse may manifest in a victim’s personality or behaviour while also paying attention to their physical well-being. In some cases, victims may also be unaware that the situation they face is in fact abuse. Thus, it is important for signs of abuse to be common knowledge.

Some emotional signs to look out for include constant agitation or anxiety, meekness or extremely apologetic behaviour, changes in sleep habits, symptoms of depression, development of substance use problems, loss of interest in activities, fearfulness or talking about suicide. While these signs could also indicate several other conditions, they are highly prevalent in victims of abuse.

Other signs to look out for are behavioural changes, such as a cheerful outgoing individual becoming reserved and withdrawn, isolating themselves from friends and family, cancelling appointments at the last second, dropping out of activities they usually enjoy, being excessively secretive about their personal life (especially concerning their intimate relationship), and being

constantly late to work or appointments. Children of victims may be quiet and reserved as well as more well behaved when the potential abuser is around.

Victims may seem extremely anxious when away from their partner, may refer to their partner as ‘moody’ or as having a bad temper, particularly after they’ve had alcohol. They may always ask their partner’s permission before doing anything, be constantly tracked by their partner, or not have access to much money or a vehicle. Victims may get to a point of fearfulness where they get too paralyzed to even protect themselves or their children.

Getting Help

Abuse endangers the lives and well-being of victims. It is important for victims to get help and escape abusive situations. If you know someone who is experiencing abuse, you can get them help. If you are a victim of abuse, it is important to have a safety plan of what you will do if you are experiencing abuse. Some ways to escape an abusive situation are by calling 911 (if it is an emergency), going to a safe shelter, or by calling a help / crisis line. Many of these are 24-hour services.

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- Bethesda House - 905-623-6050
- Herizon House - 1-866-437-4066
- Anishnaabe Kwewag Gamig - 1-800-388-5171
- Muslim Welfare Home - 905-665-0424
- The Denise House - 905-728-7311
- Y’s Wish Shelter - 905-576-2997

Help / Crisis Lines:

- Assaulted Women’s Helpline - 1-866-863-0511, or dial #SAFE (#7233) on a Bell, Rogers, Fido, or Telus mobile phone
- Distress Centre Durham Helpline - 1-800-452-0688
- Rape Crisis Centre - 905-668-9200
- Kids Help Phone - 1-800-668-6868
- Children’s Aid Society - 905-433-1551
- Durham Health Connection Line (Monday to Friday - 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.) - 905-668-2020; After Hours - 905-576-9991

Partner Assault Program

If you realize that you may be mistreating your partner, there are resources available that can help you put an end to the abuse. The *Partner Assault Response* program provides counselling and information for adults who may be involved with the justice system due to abuse against a current or past partner. More information can be found by calling 905-668-4113 ext. 3661 or toll-free 1-866-840-6697 ext. 0.

Haiqa Hammad is a student of Political Science and Philosophy. A creative writer with a journalistic streak, she strives every day to gain and share knowledge and aspires to change the world one word at a time.



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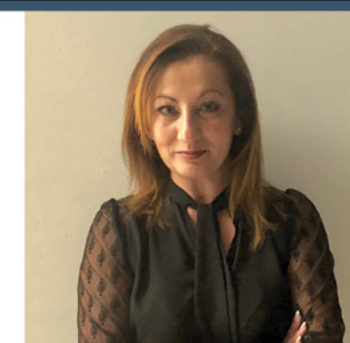
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A HISTORICAL LOOK AT THE MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS OF KNITTING & CROCHET

by Julie Antoinette

An accurate history of the origins of knitting and crochet is impossible to confirm as there are very few surviving artefacts predating the 17th century.

Some historians trace the origins to an early form of Chinese needlework embroidery, also known in Turkey, India, Persia and North Africa. A more comprehensive history is available from the 1700s onward.

Italy and France 1700s

Crochet may have appeared in Europe as early as the 1500s but remained relatively unknown until the early 1700s when Italian nuns took on the very exclusive-to-nuns work of creating handmade lace. Lace was exported to the noble families in Europe and became esteemed in the high fashion of the day.

As it grew in popularity through the nobility, crochet migrated to France under the influence of King Louis 14 in an effort to eliminate costly importing. Instructors from Venice were brought to France to teach handmade lace. This collaboration of Venetian lace and French culture produced what became known as “Pointe de France” or “The Lace of Queens.” This type of intricate lace was made by weaving lace thread through a background netting which acted as a canvas of sorts.

This early form of crochet was known as “tambouring”. This word comes from the French meaning “drum” and describes a method similar to cross stitching and embroidery where a hook wove thread through a background fabric held taught on a drum-like apparatus to form beautiful lace patterns. Eventually the drum and netting were no longer necessary as stitches were found to hold themselves together in one fabric rather than being affixed to a background netting fabric. The French called this new method, “crochet en air.”

Through to the early 1800s, French cloistered nuns particularly in the city of Argentin continued producing handmade lace in the

traditional way to honor its history. Argentin lace became renowned in Europe as the epicenter of lace among the aristocracy. Queen Charlotte sported Argentin Lace in her wedding train in 1761.

Irish Lace - 1850s - 1900s

From 1845 to 1852, the Great Potato Famine in Ireland brought devastation to Irish economy. In 1846, a very skilled designer, Eleonore Riego de la Branchardiere, published a book titled, “Knitting, Crochet and Netting” where she turned old netting and bobbin lace designs into knitting and crochet patterns. This would revolutionize the traditional cloistered nun’s monopoly over this craft and would further influence fashion in the Victorian Era. Intricate lace collars and cuffs were designed, produced and exported from Irish workers who had organized themselves into Crochet Cooperatives. Teachers were sent all over Ireland to teach workers to create lace to be sold in Victorian England and mainland Europe. Queen Victoria endorsed the purchase of this lace and thus elevated its popular status. The Irish economy was thus saved by the craft and birthed what is known today worldwide as Irish Lace.

Wartime - 1914

From 1914 onward, crochet and knitting surged in popularity as women all over were encouraged to pick up their needles and hooks to create much needed items for the war effort such as socks, bandages, rags and towels. This effort encouraged a great circulation of patterns and the growing popularity of “Knit-Ins” and contests. Demonstrating patriotism, women carried their projects around publicly in support of the troops. Yet again, the yarn arts emerge to assist in yet another dire period for humanity.

The Post War / Hippie Age - 1960s-1970s

Knitting and crochet re-emerged again in the 1960s and 1970s with handmade vests, dresses, ponchos, headbands and wearables of all kinds coming into fashion. The traditional

“Granny Square” made its mark and was even published in Vogue magazine. This surge soon lost steam as the 80s approached and alternate fashion trends took over.

Present Day

There is a formidable following of yarn craft groups, websites and videos online where communities, patterns and full demonstrations are at your fingertips. Literally. At the helm of all things yarn craft related worldwide is a site called Ravelry.com where creators around the world can publish and sell their patterns and supplies.

Publically displayed community yarn arts projects known as “Yarn Bombing” movements have also emerged in the digital age, being shared worldwide and going viral seemingly overnight. June 11, 2011 WAS named International Yarn Bombing Day. In the fashion world, knit and crochet items regularly appear on the runway.

Mental Health Benefits of Crochet and Knitting

Mindfulness

The “mindfulness” movement has made an appearance in the yarn arts. Research suggests the repetitive, rhythmic and automatic movements involved have a profound effect on the brain processes as they promote moving away from stress and worry and toward focus and relaxation.

This meditative element enables a slowing down and sense of being in the moment. In this age of high mental activity, many have forgotten what it actually feels like to be relaxed. Engaging in repetitive, rhythmic, automatic, bilateral movements bring the mind from a scattered anxious state into a present focussed state. The business of the mind is suspended, creating a feeling of relaxation. The process at core is getting the mind into flow with the hands therefore creating a sense of calm and presence. Psychoanalyst Tarz Palomba says, “It is very grounding, brings you back into the body and your working memory is occupied. It interrupts a lot of the ruminative thoughts that we have and can help us stop the cycle of worry, having something to focus on and being in the body.”

Trauma and Other Afflictions

Those recovering from traumas, addiction and other afflictions have found benefit through knitting or crochet. Palomba says, “Knitting and crochet achieves bilateral stimulation in the body that can help break through right-left issues in processing memory. That can be helpful with traumatic experiences and worries.” She describes this process akin to a psychotherapeutic modality named EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing).

“EMDR is a therapeutic technique using eye or tactile stimulation back and forth to help the right and left brain connect and process a frozen memory. PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) results in a frozen unprocessed memory causing (a looping) repetition in a spiral.”

French Psychiatrist and knitting enthusiast, Dominique Kaehler-Schweitzer, aka Madame “Tricot” (French for knitting), comments on the effect that knitting has on the post-traumatic brain. “When one has had a trauma, one disconnects the two parts of the brain. And to rebuild those connections, we need repetitive movements



on both sides to coordinate. With knitting you have two needles and you always do the same repetitive movement. And so, it’s as though you are knitting the two halves of the brain back together and its very effective for treating trauma.”

Various studies have been conducted exploring the benefits of knitting and crochet on depression, anxiety, self esteem, reducing or postponing the likelihood of dementia, insomnia, restlessness or boredom related to addiction, binge eating and stress relief. As an adjunct, it builds a supportive community and assists with problem solving.

Another successful historical rescue as the yarn arts assist humanity again through another dark chapter.

Why people are drawn to it?

There is a particular satisfaction when in a creative space, working with one’s hands making items that are both beautiful and useful. With the majority of products being the result of machine work, it becomes valuable to create something handmade. It gives a sense of achievement that directly reflects in self-esteem. The mental health therapeutic element is evidential.

It’s very accessible, low cost and portable. You can take your yarn projects anywhere and they will turn any waiting period into a private therapeutic delight. There is also a sense of community associated as people gather to share patterns, teach and create. There is also a feeling of being a part of a vast history that has survived so many incarnations and yet remains so versatile in its simplicity. Crochet and knitting are beneficial to overall wellbeing in so many ways with virtually no side effects!

Julie Antoinette is a crochet enthusiast, piano teacher/ accompanist, and astrological horoscope writer for *The Local Biz Magazine*.



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Usually, our Events calendar is filled with event listings. Unfortunately, this year, due to the ever-changing COVID-19 pandemic, many events have either been cancelled, postponed, or gone virtual. The good news is that things are starting to return to some sort of normalcy and we expect to see an increase in many local events in the coming months.

Below, is a current listing of events planned for the winter months in Durham Region. If an event you would like to attend is not listed below, we suggest you contact the event organizer directly to determine the status of the event.

November 20 to December 19, 2021

Santa Express Train Ride

All Aboard with Santa! This popular train ride is a great family holiday experience. On-board entertainment keeps everyone occupied while waiting for Santa's arrival. Have your wish list ready to share with him when he visits children big and small at their seats. Book early to avoid disappointment; this popular feature trip sells out quickly. The Heritage Train is wheelchair accessible in Uxbridge and allows for full wheelchair accessibility to the train.
Uxbridge
www.ydhr.ca/santa-train
905-852-3696

November 26 to January 5, 2022

Whitby Lights' The Night

Whitby Lights the Night and Holiday Festival is an annual event that marks the official start to the holiday season. Find the perfect family photo or selfie location among the lights, enjoy your tour before dinner at one of the local featured restaurants and/or take out at home. FREE
Whitby
www.whitby.ca

December 2, 2021 to December 11, 2021

Succulent Workshop

In this 'Make & Take Workshop' you will utilize a variety of succulents to create a living centerpiece for your home or desk that you can enjoy all year round. Set in the Potting Shed of the newly restored Greenhouse complex, in an intimate group (10 adults) you will be guided by our Greenhouse Grower Assistant, who will provide her guidance and expertise. Your fees cover your container, 3-4 succulents, soil, and terrarium bar toppings (coloured sand, stones, etc). If you have special items you would like included in your succulent centerpiece please feel free to bring them along. Aftercare will also be discussed before you leave.
Oshawa
www.parkwoodestate.com
(905) 433-4311

December 4 to January 2, 2022

Uxbridge Optimist Fantasy of Lights

Drive through fantastic light displays – over 75 light displays from community groups, businesses, schools, churches, families etc. from all around the Uxbridge area. Donations appreciated.
Uxbridge

December 4, 2021

Scugog Santa Claus Parade

Port Perry Santa Claus Parade returns in 2021 with the theme 'Christmas Together Since 1871'. It will be a safe and socially-distanced "reverse parade"! Enjoy decorated floats, Christmas trees, live music and of course, the big man himself as you stroll through the parade route at the Port Perry Fairgrounds.
Port Perry

December 5, 2021

Children's Old-Fashioned Christmas

Step back in time and tour the historic village traditionally decorated for the holidays with evergreen boughs, bright ribbons, and berries. View heritage demonstrations, visit with Santa, and take home a holiday package with a treat and activity. \$2-\$5.
Port Perry
905-260-2017

December 9, 2021

Paint Night - Christmas Edition

Kick off your holiday decorating in the McLaughlin Room at Parkwood. While enjoying a cup of apple cider and cookies, you will be led by local artist Sarah Shaw through the process of creating your own take home 16 x 20 Christmas themed Masterpiece. All painting supplies, including canvas and paint brushes are included.
Oshawa
www.parkwoodestate.com
(905) 433-4311

December 9, 2021

Christmas Wreath Workshop

Kick off your holiday decorating in the Potting Shed of the newly restored Parkwood Greenhouses. While enjoying a cup of apple cider, you will use seasonal fresh d,cor to create a period inspired Christmas wreath that is perfect for your holiday d,cor. At the conclusion of this event you will enjoy a quick look into the additional Greenhouses, all led by the Greenhouse Grower. All supplies are included.
Oshawa
www.parkwoodestate.com
(905) 433-4311

December 11, 2021

Santa Drive-Thru

Santa Drive-Thru at the 420 Wing of the Airforce Veterans Club. 10am-12pm and 1pm-3pm. Free to anyone. No need to register
Oshawa
www.oshawasantaclausparade.org

December 30, 2021

Benefit Celebrity Hockey Game: Pro Hockey Heroes vs Whitby Firefighters

In this exciting, Benefit Celebrity Hockey Game, the Whitby Firefighters will face off against a full line-up of former NHL heroes in support of the Durham Regional Crime Stoppers. This fantastic community event promises lots of skill and lots of laughs, and is guaranteed to be a fun and memorable game for all ages! \$30 per ticket at the door -- or order in advance!
Whitby
www.prohockeyheroes.com/2021/08/pro-hockey-heroes-vs-whitby.html
1-800-516-5810

For events that may have been added after the publication date and other ideas to plan your perfect day in Durham Region, visit www.durhamtourism.ca.

Winter Horoscope

DECEMBER 2021 to FEBRUARY 2022

Aries (March 21 – April 20)

All kinds of old friends are coming out of the woodwork. For quite a while it seemed as though life had led you all in disparate directions. Now it seems that a homecoming movement has inspired many reunions. Take note of those that have returned, they are the keepers.

Taurus (April 21 – May 21)

In your nightly dreams, you find yourself relocated to new places where you encounter new people as well as people from your past with whom you have unfinished business. Despite your awkward history, you feel oddly comfortable and at peace. Your subconscious is trying to show you what awaits on the other side of forgiveness.

Gemini (May 22 – June 21)

You are in serious purge mode. You are re-evaluating each of your items and how long they have been with you on your journey. You've grown tired of seeing them daily for so many years. Perhaps even they are begging for new vistas? You must send them on their way. Think of all the square footage you will reclaim!

Cancer (June 22 – July 22)

The Universe has gifted you with your own private champion and cheerleader. This person is always present to cheer you on, point out your talents and gifts and encourages you to take the next step. The Universe must feel you have work to accomplish. You too know what it is you were meant to do. Never doubt that you are fully supported.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)

At the oddest and most mundane of moments, and completely unprompted, long-forgotten and emotionally-charged memories are surfacing. Rather than question the seemingly randomness of their appearance, consider these little opportunities to make peace with yourself. Feel the emotions as if they were fresh and let them move through and out of you. One memory at a time, you'll feel oceans lighter.

Virgo (August 23 – September 23)

Someone in your life is displaying a great need and has found its fulfillment in you. You are a very compassionate person and sometimes overextend yourself. Unfortunately, there are those who feel entitled to have others rescue and carry them indefinitely rather than constructively embrace assistance to better themselves. Be very careful of becoming a target and long-term host to someone's parasitical tendencies.

by Julie Antoinette



Libra (September 24 – October 23)

As the holiday season approaches, it seems you've come down with a case of the Crafter's Bug. It's crafter's time in the city! A creative burst of energy inspires ideas that shoot out as energetic firecrackers from your head as you walk down your favorite local crafter's aisle. This Christmas, handmade gifts will be under the tree for all your near and dear ones. Gather your supplies and hop to! Moments of inspiration like these are meant to be milked "udderly" and entirely.

Scorpio (October 24 – November 22)

An uncomfortable feeling of guilt surfaces in your life as you go about your interactions. It may be helpful to stop and explore the origins of this feeling. As you process this emotion, consider this: It is said that guilt always seeks punishment. It is also said that guilt is a useless and crippling emotion, when re-lived over and over. Guilt's only function is to indicate an action that you do not wish to repeat. Let this set you straight and set you free.

Sagittarius (November 23 - December 21)

There is something that only you are exceptionally good at. There is no one that you've encountered or heard of that has this same talent you have. When people find out about your talent, they are always fascinated, impressed and interested. You've always been modest, but now it's time to share yourself with the world. Once word gets out, you'll be set for life and your gift will gift you back. Your niche awaits you.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

You've become involved in a particular charity that touches your heart. Surprisingly, you find that the more you give the more you receive. It seems paradoxical but there it is. There are other forces at play. It is cosmic law that the universe abhors a vacuum. Any thing given from the heart will be given back wholeheartedly. It is truly more blessed to give than to receive.

Aquarius (January 20 – February 19)

You're feeling the call to adventure and a need to break out in your life somehow, yet simultaneously you feel the daunting taunting of risk-aversion. Some feeling holds you back. Whether it is financial, career, home, family or any other perceived safety net. Remember: "A ship is safest in the harbor, but that is not what a ship is for."

Pisces (February 20 – March 20)

Every time you look in the mirror you catch yourself cringing or scoffing. Perhaps you could use a little lift to your aura? How about a new wardrobe or pair of shoes? Maybe even a root touch-up? Whatever the detail, do it. Your mirror will thank you.

Written by Julie Antoinette. In this horoscope, she relays intuitive messages of guidance from the collective astrological archetypes. As above, so below.

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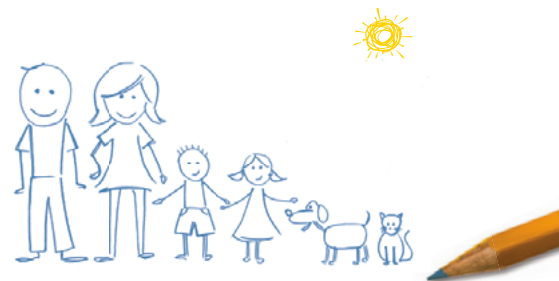
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by Tara Richardson

Soul Searching

How's your anxiety level right now?



If you're like many people, you may find that sometimes you're a bit on the edge of either tears or verbal diarrhea. The pandemic has certainly tested our resiliency and mental health. Others may ask you if you're okay and you respond that you're "fine", but let's be real, we all know that you're not.

You do not need to have a diagnosable anxiety disorder to feel anxious and worried. There's a spectrum of anxiety ranging from a little apprehensive to absolutely terrified. It is important to learn your personal signs that indicate it's time to recharge your batteries. Maybe for you a sign is that you're feeling knackered all the time. Maybe you find yourself snapping at your toddler. It's important that when you recognize these indicators you take a break and apply some TLC in your life. Here are 6 tips that can help you cope with worry and anxiety:

Check in with yourself periodically. Whether this is a journaling session or a good chat with your best friend, there's nothing like writing your thoughts on paper or saying them out loud to understand what is going on in your mind.

Try a "brain dump". A brain dump is a list where you write every.single.thing going on in your head. It can be things you need to remember, household tasks, your thoughts- basically anything that pops into your consciousness.

Stop ruminating. Did you know that the word 'ruminate' is actually used for cows who chew their cud over and over again? Gross, right? Break the rumination with a mantra. It could be simply 'stop' or it could be 'it is what it is, and I will figure it out'. Pick something that will speak to you in a stressful moment.

Exercise. Before you roll your eyes at this notion, consider how good endorphins are for your mood and health. And if you're truly engaging in a workout then your mind is pretty distracted. Choose an activity that you enjoy so that you're more likely to follow through.

Ground yourself. Bring your anxiety level down by participating in grounding activities. This involves being mindful of what soothes you during times of high anxiety. A popular technique is scanning your surroundings for items of a certain colour or noticing all the things you can see.

Consider therapy. Sometimes an impartial outsider is just what we need to heal. And if you're reluctant to go in person, many therapists are doing virtual sessions, so you can do therapy from the comfort of your own home.

I know that anxiety is uncomfortable and downright scary sometimes. I also know that when you fight anxious feelings, they don't dominate your life anymore. And in 2022, let's leave our worries behind.

Tara is a wellness blogger for The Local Biz Magazine who hopes to publish her memoir on finding hope and meaning while living with a mental illness.

Get Fit: Inside & Out

Your 3-Month Winter Wellness Plan Designed to Last a Lifetime

We all know what happens during the holidays: stress soars and maintaining healthy habits diminish. Then comes January and the New Year's resolutions roll in. Come February, you're tired of the strict diet and exhausting exercise routine. If you want to avoid riding the wave of extremes, here's your 3-month winter wellness plan that will keep you healthy, happy and balanced!

December: Choose your Yes's and your No's.

The holidays tend to throw off our healthy living habits. Whether it's eating or drinking too much, not getting enough sleep or letting the workouts fall to the way-side, when compounded together, it's a recipe for anxiety and weight gain. Keep your physical and mental health in check by devising a plan to help you stay on track, all while enjoying a little holiday bliss. Be selective in how much (quantity) and how often you want to consume those specialty treats and drinks. Choose which social engagements you'll attend and which ones you can decline. Then make it a priority to catch up on sleep and rest. If you find yourself skipping your workouts for lack of time, try reducing the duration of your workouts so you can still get some exercise instead of nothing at all.

January: Eliminate extreme behaviours that lead to deprivation and over indulgence.

Maybe it's time to make some changes to your lifestyle habits. Instead of drafting up hefty resolutions bound to fail, choose only one to two things you want to improve. Maybe it's incorporating more veggies into your diet, spending less time in front of a screen, or making it a priority to go outside for fresh air despite the cold weather. When you choose to incorporate changes gradually, you're bound to develop habits that will actually stick.

February: Be consistent and evaluate your plan.

Developing and maintaining healthy lifestyle habits is a process. Reflect on the changes you incorporated in January and evaluate your progress. Were they relatively easy to maintain? Did you enjoy incorporating these changes? Were you able to do them consistently? If your answer is yes, you can go ahead and add another wellness goal to your routine if you want to. If you discovered some unmet expectations, no need to panic or throw in the towel. Instead, give yourself some grace. Change what didn't work, devise a new plan and re-evaluate in four weeks.

When it comes to maintaining our health, we have to remember that whole health encompasses more than just what we eat or how often we exercise. Incorporating wellness habits that help us cope with stress, getting more rest, and improving our mental, emotional and spiritual well-being are all keys to supporting a balanced, healthy life.

Bianca Schaefer is a Holistic Health Coach who inspires a global community to take charge of their health through nourishing their body, mind and soul with delicious foods, an active lifestyle and a mindset that believes anything is possible. Check out Bianca on her personal website, Bianca Schaefer.com or follow on Social @biancaschaefer1.

by Bianca Schaefer



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Tweens, Teens & In-Between

by Afeefa Malik



Hello everyone! Winter is here and it's time to enjoy the cold weather! As we get into the spirit, what better way to start this column off than by talking about knitting!

Whether you have tried your hand at knitting or not, knitting is a great way to relax and develop your creativity. Over the summer, I picked up knitting and started making a fuzzy warm blanket. But I quickly ran into problems - I didn't have enough yarn and I picked too big of a project. By the end of the summer, a half-finished ball of yarn sat in my bedroom and I eventually forgot about the project.

If you are an avid knitter, I am sure you have encountered a similar situation. Many times, it seems too hard to get back into knitting after taking a break, so here are some tips that can help you from getting overwhelmed and demotivated.

Before you start, find your inspiration! You can discover new ideas from *Pinterest*, *Instagram*, or *YouTube*. You can even find easy-to-follow instructions on how to knit a certain design. If you are looking at inspiration from another source, it is important to find something that fits your timeline and skills. Don't pick something too complicated or time-consuming (especially if you are under pressure). Finding something that suits you is really important.

Secondly, I recommend using soft and appealing yarn. Buy thicker yarn for a warm sweater and thinner yarn for a cool shawl. You can even mix and match colours so that there is more variety. This also makes your piece look very colourful! However, mixing colours between different yarns requires more skill and experience, so I would recommend watching a *YouTube* tutorial or asking someone who knows how to knit well for help before you do so.

Thirdly, something that I learned is that knitting takes time and practice to fully master. You may get overwhelmed and run into problems quickly. But keep going even if you make a mistake. Ignoring holes will allow you to complete your project faster and give you a finished product. Even if it is not perfect, you will feel accomplished and can learn from your mistakes. If you are a more experienced knitter and would like to create a clean, finished project, I suggest starting over every time you make a mistake. This will make sure that the piece is perfect and will give you an overall better look. I have done both methods and appreciated both results too!

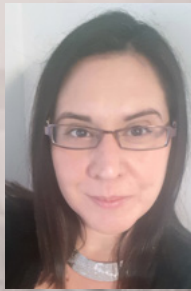
As we continue on our knitting journeys this winter, make sure to set reasonable goals to finish that special winter accessory! Most importantly, make sure to enjoy what you are doing. It will set you up to be a more successful knitter in the long run!

If you made it to the end of the article, thank you for tuning in! Until next time!

Afeefa Malik is a grade 10 student at Grand River Collegiate Institute. She loves to learn new things, code and create games in her free time.

Family Matters

by Josie Myers



3 Ways to Make Memories and Holiday Traditions

The holidays are such a magical time of year. Holiday trees are dressed and homes are decorated with twinkly lights! Our children are excited about everything the holidays have to bring. If you are looking to add a new holiday tradition this year, I've got you covered. Here are three holiday family friendly activities you can add to your holiday traditions.

Holiday Tree Decorating Night

Decorating the Christmas/Holiday tree has been a tradition in our home for many years. We choose a day in December; invite our family and we decorate our tree and home together. Everyone brings food to share, we decorate, eat and enjoy our time together. My son really gets excited because we get to gather with grandparents, aunts, uncles and his cousins. As an extra touch of magic, my parents usually bring my son an ornament for the tree.

Gingerbread House Decorating

One of the long-standing traditions in my family is gingerbread house decorating. Every year my parents come over to decorate a gingerbread house with my son. There are plenty of kits out there to purchase but don't forget to pick up extra candy if you want a more intricate design. You can also opt to bake the gingerbread house together and decorate it. This tradition has brought many smiles and laughs to our home. We always take a picture of the gingerbread house and compare them as the years go on. It's been amazing to see how each house is different each year and how our son changes from year to year.

Slumber Party by the Christmas/Holiday Tree

This is a newer tradition for my family but leading up to Christmas Day we plan a night to sleep by the Christmas/Holiday tree. Sleeping bags and pillows are placed by the tree. We get into our snuggliest pajamas, eat our favourite treats and watch a holiday movie. After that, we fall asleep by the lit-up Christmas/Holiday Tree. My son thinks it's the most magical experience and it's totally worth the sore back you have the next morning!

The key to adding traditions to your family is making sure they work for you. You don't want to make them stressful, otherwise it can feel like a chore and the whole point is to have fun with it. Adding traditions is a way to not only make memories but to also show our children that we can have special connections with each other. Families stay connected by being connected; having traditions and making memories are a great way you can ensure that for your family.

With a master's degree in education and a background in Reiki, Josie Myers is an expert teacher and healer at her private practice Josie Myers - Opening and Balancing Life Force Energy. Josie helps moms find peace by supporting and guiding them to make the most of their motherhood journey. Josie lives in Ontario, Canada with her husband and son and her two cats.

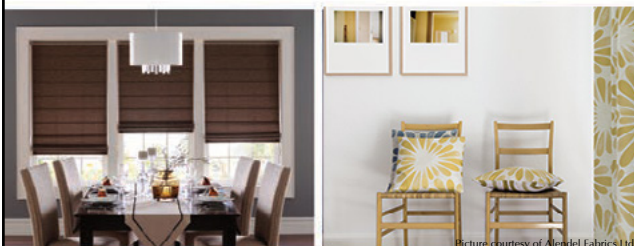
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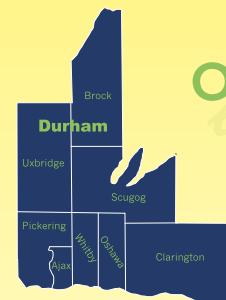
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by Kim Dobie

A Forkful of Healthy



Butternut Squash Soup

Fall is the time for getting your fresh vegetables from your local farmer's market. This is a hardy, healthy, butternut squash soup that makes enough to store away in the freezer for those cold winter days. It's also a good source of Vitamin A, B6 and C.

Ingredients:

- 2 butternut squashes - roasted
- 1 medium / large, sweet potato - cooked
- 1 medium / large white potato - cooked
- 1 medium carrot - cooked
- 1 cup of red onion - diced
- 1/2 roasted red pepper - chopped
- 1 apple – peeled and grated
- sprig of thyme
- 3 tbsp butter



- 6 cups broth (You can use any broth. Preferably organic)
- 1/3 cup to 1/2 cup pure maple syrup (Optional)
- Salt and Pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Mash your cooked vegetables together; they should measure approximately 10 cups.
2. Melt butter in a large pot. Add the onion and cook just until translucent.
3. Add the vegetables, grated apple, thyme and broth. Bring to a light boil, reduce heat to medium-low and let simmer for 20-30 minutes to blend the flavours.
4. Remove the thyme. Puree the soup until smooth using an immersion blender. Add the maple syrup if using.
5. Taste soup and add salt and pepper. (Do not skimp on salt as it is key to bringing out all the flavours of this soup.)

Kim is a country girl who enjoys growing a variety of vegetables to add to her nutritional recipes which help her with healthy aging.

FINANCE & REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

by Nicole Forrester



Is Your Home Winter Ready?

Canadian winters can be long, cold, and snowy. We make sure we have warm coats and boots and put on snow tires. Why not get your home ready as well? Here are some great tips to save money on energy costs and get your home winter ready.

Arrange furniture and window coverings for optimal heat efficiency – Arrange your furniture inside your home to ensure no vents are blocked allowing maximum warm air circulation. You can strategically open and close your drapes or blinds to catch the sun's heat. For some of your colder floors, add a trendy comfy rug.

Check and clean your fireplace and furnace – Changing out your furnace filter is especially important in the winter months. It contributes to better efficiency and air quality. Having your fireplace inspected for birds' nests and any other clog ensures functional usage and is important for fire safety.

Clean, inspect and repair gutters and roof – Your roof is literally your first line of defense against snow and rain. Inspect your roof for loose shingles and damage to ensure no leaks during the winter. Clean out your gutters so that run off doesn't pile up and turn into an ice hazard during wet and icy periods.

Set your timers for heat and electrical efficiency – Program your thermostat according to your time-of-day usage. If you're out of the house all day, no need to crank the heat. Don't forget to put your LED holiday lights on a timer to ensure they're not on all night long.

Time to turn your fans – Your fans that have been keeping you cool all summer can be set to change direction to enable warm air to be pulled downwards in a room.

Seal all cracks around your windows and doors – You will want to keep your heat inside so look to seal any gaps or cracks around your windows and doors. You can use weather seal, caulking or even plastic wrap for the windows.

Turn off all outdoor water valves – Any outdoor pipes with water in them can freeze and crack. Make sure you drain and turn off all outdoor water valves.

The winter can be fun and cozy - if you're prepared. Now that you've got your home properly sealed and ready for winter, don't forget to change the batteries and check that all smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are working. Embrace the season and the beauty of winter!

Nicole Forrester is a local Durham & GTA Real Estate Broker with over 17+ years of experience in the financial industry. Trained on Bay Street as an Investment Executive & Professional Financial Planner for one of Canada's largest financial institutions, she has extensive experience negotiating large financial transactions. Nicole's goal is to be a blessing to every person she meets and recognizes that every trade in Real Estate is not just a house. ... it's a Home. For more information, search Nicole Forrester Real Estate Broker on Social Media.

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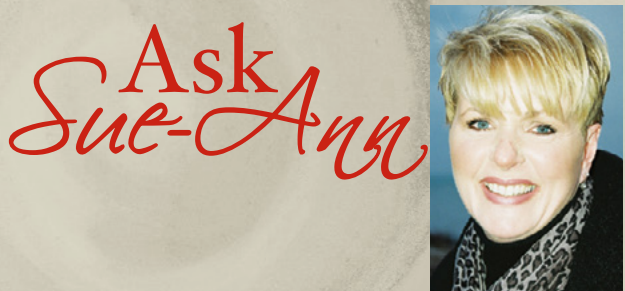
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by Sue-Ann Bavlnka



Dear Sue-Ann:

I have been struggling with my emotions for some time now. I wake up sad. I spend the day sad. I go to bed sad. I smile to the world but that's not how I feel inside. Can you help?

Signed: Sad

A. First, I would suggest seeing a doctor to have a thorough review of your health. If all comes back good, then consider this.

Sometimes, with all that's going on in the world, we get caught up in the emotions being pushed at us every day. Overtime we learn to identify with these emotions and become them. We inadvertently worship the sadness. It could be many things other than sadness, like chaos, frustration, anger, hate etc. You choose the emotion and then it is your first thought in the morning and overtime, it stays with you for the day, the week, the month and so on.

Most people will then spend their day looking for things to justify those feelings. It's a rut and quite often a choice. I realize that this is an over simplification of a very deep topic and because of space my response is limited. So, let's get to one example of how to break this pattern. Choose another emotion. Yes, it is as simple as that. Focus on this new emotion with the same intensity as you did the old emotion. Let's use peace as an example. Look for peace in your thoughts, in your words, in your body. Focus on that and only that. Then you will begin to see the peace that exists around you and you can truly become peaceful in your body, mind and spirit. I hope this helps.

Affirmation: *With each breath that I take I become peaceful. I am Peace.*

Sue-Ann Bavlnka resides in Quinte West. She is a psychic medium with an international clientele..

The COACH Corner

by Malachi Brown



What's With all the Junk?

Driving past garage sales during the summer, I thought to myself, "Wow - what's with all the junk?" Then I would hear a voice in my head saying, "One man's junk is another man's treasure."

Now, there are cases when this is true. For example, for antiques or when the seller doesn't know the value of an item. Or when a valuable artifact is found. There are many other situations as well where this statement can be true.

However, these are not the situations that I am referring to. I recently helped an older gentleman move from a basement apartment to a condominium. What we were not planning on was how much stuff he had accumulated over the years. Stuff he didn't even remember he had! Is he alone in this? Absolutely not! You might be one of those people, or, I'm sure you know someone who has too much stuff.

This is becoming a bigger problem with each passing year. One of the fastest growing business over the last fifteen years is storage units. Storage units have gone from back ally status to modern, and in some cases, fancy upscale spaces. Why are they popping up everywhere? We have way too much stuff!

An article from the United States stated that the average house had over 30,000 items. The average house has nearly tripled in size over the last fifty years. Two in ten Americans rent offsite storage. Twenty-five percent of houses with two car garages are not able to park a car inside. With all the extra storage the average person still throws away approximately sixty-five pounds of clothes a year. The Canadian numbers I would venture to guess are not too far behind.

So, why this phenomenon?

For some people, it could be rooted in some psychological part of past situations. It could be the fear of not having enough, or having to go without in the past. For others, it's the story of, I might need this in the future, or it might come back into style. For some, it's not having the time to sort through and get rid of stuff. Others have become comfortable in the clutter and no longer see the clutter. Remember when you first moved into your new house or apartment? You had fewer things and you put things in their proper places. As time went on however, it became easier to leave things all over the place.

So, what to do?

If you are a serious hoarder, seek the help of a professional de-clutterer. Give stuff away. There are so many organizations that will happily take your stuff. If you are not a fan of giving stuff to for profit places, find organizations that give items to the less fortunate at no charge.

Make it a habit to purge your space every spring. When you declutter your space, you will be amazed how freeing it feels. You will be happier and enjoy your home so much more. Ahh... to breathe again. Why not contribute to someone else's treasure?

Malachi Brown, life coach, applies his passion in helping others unlock their full potential, enabling them to live the abundant lives they were created to have.

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The Golden Years

by Linda Calder



Abuse is such a short word but there is so much meaning behind it. When I was a teacher, we had to be aware of signs of abuse in children. We were obligated by law to report any suspected child abuse. Now I'm at the other end of the spectrum and realize that senior or elder abuse, is sadly also a problem.

According to *Durham Elder Abuse Network*, elder abuse is any action or inaction which causes harm to an older person by a person in a position of trust. Elder abuse can take many forms such as financial, emotional physical or sexual.

I don't know anyone who has been abused. But if you think about it, abused people aren't going to be walking around wearing a T shirt saying, "I am being abused". Looking around our church and seeing elderly couples working together to help where needed, I think how great it is to see them looking so wonderful together. But what I'm seeing isn't the story for many elderly people. Domestic violence (or intimate partner violence) can also affect seniors. Spouses and other family members can be abusive physically. Some spouses have been abusive for many years. Some abusiveness can come with age. Perhaps a spouse or another family member becomes impatient as the elderly person slows down. I think we think that people aren't going to change as they get older. It was hard as my sister and I watched our once vibrant mother slow down and become more dependent. This could be a trigger for some people and the start of abuse. The abusive spouse is aging as well. Who knows what is going on in people's minds?

The children of elderly people can also be abusive. The abuse may not be physical, it could be financial. For example, the child of an elderly parent can offer to help handle finances. But instead, they may drain their bank account or take over the ownership of a family home. The parent could suddenly become penniless and homeless.

Sometimes abuse happens in the form of neglect. An older person is not provided the proper food and care they need to live. I remember hearing stories in the news of the police finding an elderly person living under terrible conditions in the home of a family member who was supposed to be taking care of them. Sometimes if the elderly person wasn't found in time, they might have died already.

Abuse and violence in any form is abhorrent. It is bad if inflicted by a stranger, but much, much, worse if inflicted by someone you know and love. It's up to each of us to become more aware of what could be going on around us when it concerns older friends and family.

Linda Calder is a retired teacher. She likes to write and enjoys spending time with her family. She also enjoys going on cruises, taking pictures and scrapbooking.

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