

The Wild Things in You

It may be possible to incorporate laughter into daily activities, just as is done with other heart-healthy activities, such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator. The recommendation for a healthy heart may one day be exercise, eat right and laugh a few times a day. -MICHAEL MILLER, MD, CENTER FOR PREVENTIVE CARDIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND MEDICAL CENTER

In Maurice Sendak's perennially popular children's book *Where the Wild Things Are*, Max, in his wolf suit, makes mischief of one kind and another until his mother, in exasperation, calls him a wild thing. "I'll eat you up!" Max says menacingly, and is sent to bed without his supper. In his dreams he travels to "the place where the wild things are," and they "roar their terrible roars and gnash their terrible teeth and roll their terrible eyes and show their terrible claws" until Max commands "Be still!" and tames them with the magic trick of staring into all their yellow eyes without blinking.

[Cultivating optimism] is about the wild things within each of us, the tumult of inner feelings that each of us must learn to tame. As Max's experience suggests, our emotions can get us into trouble in relationships. But they are also essential if we are to conjure the creatures that make life interesting. Ultimately, it is our ability to learn to control our feelings without quashing them that gives us the capacity for an optimistic view of ourselves and the world around us. Optimism depends upon our ability to become the king of all the wild things. As we shall see in this book, it requires mothers or others who will send us to bed without supper but who will keep it warm as well, ready for us when we return, lonely, from where the wild things are. Optimism arises from the inner controls that these early life experiences give us, controls that are etched in the circuitry of our brains. But as we'll see, if you're still struggling with inner monsters in adulthood and the pessimistic perspective on yourself and the world that they bring, there is hope. Because optimism and pessimism are the result of our inner processes, we can improve it with practice, learn the magic tricks we need to make us king. Let the wild rumpus begin!

BY SUSAN C. VAUGHAN, M.D.: FROM "HALF EMPTY, HALF FULL,"

CHOCOLATE CHERRY CAKE . . . Maybe it's not too late to make this for your valentine . . . or maybe you are one of those people who just like the chocolate-cherry combination.

2 c Flour	2 c Shortening
1-1/2 c Sugar	1/3 c Cocoa
1-1/4 t Sodium Free Baking Soda	1 can Cherry Pie Filling
1 t Sodium Free Baking Powder	1/2 c Egg Substitute
3 T Nonfat Dry Milk Powder	1 t Almond Extract

Combine all ingredients. Pour into greased and floured 13x9 pan. Bake at 350 until done, about 30 minutes. Yield: 16 Servings —

LOW SODIUM COOKING

What You Eat

May Help You Prevent a Heart Attack or Stroke

Healthy food habits can help you reduce three of the major risk factors for heart attack - high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure and excess body weight. They'll also help reduce your risk of stroke. This eating plan gives the latest advice of medical and nutrition experts.

- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables. Choose 5 or more servings per day.
- Eat a variety of grain products, including whole grains. Choose 6 or more servings per day.
- Include fat-free and low-fat mild products, fish legumes (beans), skinless poultry and lean meats.
- Choose fats with 2 grams or less saturated fat per serving.
- Maintain a level of physical activity that keeps you fit and matches the number of calories you eat. Try to get 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity on most or all days of the week.
- Limit your intake of foods high in calories or low in nutrition.
- Limit foods high in saturated fat, trans fat and/or cholesterol. —AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION (1-800-242-8721)



February 3rd National Wear Red Day

You can make easy everyday choices to live a heart healthier life:

- Get up off the couch. Step, march or jog in place for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.
- Quit smoking in four steps. Cut the number of cigarettes you smoke each day in half; then cut it in half again; finally, cut down to zero!
- Drop a pound or two. Cutting out just 200 to 300 calories a day— about one candy bars' worth— can help you lose up to two pounds a week and gradually bring you closer to a heart-healthy weight.
- Know your numbers— your blood pressure, cholesterol count, current weight and height. Make an appointment with your physician to have these checked.
- Register today to receive your free red dress pin and share the message of the fight against heart disease.

Call 1-888-MY-HEART (888 694-3278) or visit www.goredforwomen.org to learn more.





Love the neural & chemical basis

"Anthropologist Helen Fisher...has devoted much of her career to studying the biochemical pathways of love in all its manifestations: lust, romance, attachment, the way they wax and wane...(In her studies) when each subject looked at his or her loved one, the parts of the brain linked to reward and pleasure,—the ventral tegmental area and the caudate nucleus—lit up...Love lights up the caudate nucleus because it is home to a dense spread of receptors for a neurotransmitter called dopamine...which creates intense energy, exhilaration, focused attention...(thus) love makes you bold, makes you bright, makes you run real risks, which you sometimes survive, and sometimes you don't..."

"Researchers have long hypothesized that people with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) have a serotonin 'imbalance.' Drugs like Prozac seem to alleviate OCD by increasing the amount of this neurotransmitter available at the juncture between neurons. (Researchers) compared the lover's serotonin levels with those from the OCD group and another group who were free from both passion and mental illness. Levels of serotonin in both the obsessives' blood and the lovers' blood were 40 percent lower than those in normal subjects...Translation: Love and mental illness may be difficult to tell apart..."

"Why doesn't passionate love last?...Biologically speaking, the reasons romantic love fades may be found in the way our brains respond to the surge and pulse of dopamine...cocaine users describe the phenomenon of tolerance: the brain adapts to the excessive input of the drug...From a physiological point of view, (couples move) from the dopamine- drenched state of romantic love to the relative quiet of the oxytocin-induced attachment. Oxytocin is a hormone that promotes a feeling of connection, bonding."

—LAUREN SLATER, LOVE: THE CHEMICAL REACTION, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, FEBRUARY 2006, PP. 35-45

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Recovery Issues in New Sobriety

- **Is it OK to eat food, desserts, candies, sauces, etc. that are made with liquor in them? Does alcohol cook out?** First of all, it is a false statement that alcohol cooks out of food. Although most of it still does cook out there is a percentage left when the process is done. This is another debatable topic in recovery. Some people don't want to take the chance of igniting their addictions, others don't find problems with this. There are many products that we use every day that have alcohol in them, including mouth-wash and perfumes. It is best to always be aware of the alcohol in these common products and stay away from them if necessary because it's NOT necessary to tempt our diseases even on such a small scale. Why risk it?

- **If you have to take medically prescribed drugs, what are safe ways to do it?** Stick to the prescribed dosages, have someone you trust administer the drug to you at the correct times of the day. Always eat proper meals to keep your stomach coated and alert other members of your support system that you are taking the drug. Stay accountable and always let your doctor know you are an addict so that they are cautious when prescribing refills.

This may seem like overkill to some, but it's alarming the amount of people, even with long term sobriety, that end up relapsing on pain medication starting with a prescribed dose.

- **Should you keep liquor or drugs in the house when you leave treatment?** Surprisingly this seems to always be a question. If your house is not a profit generating restaurant or bar then there is no reason why there should be alcohol in your house. And drugs? Not unless you plan on relapsing immediately. In the case of living with other individuals who do drink, I would strongly suggest talking to them about the dangers of keeping alcohol in the house and request that if they want to drink, to do it elsewhere. If you're living with someone who does drugs, if at all possible, move out.

- **What do you say to people when you go back to work?** How do you explain your absence? Simply stating that you have taken a medical leave of absence should be a sufficient explanation of your absence. It's up to you on how you want to handle your work environment. If it would help you to stay more accountable at company functions, then you may want to tell a few trustworthy co-workers. Keep your boundaries, don't expect everyone to understand. Remember to just be the best employee you can.

—LARA F. 12 STEP RECOVERY SITE @ BELLAONLINE

