

See if these items are on your calendar!

American Heart Month. Heart disease is a leading cause of death in the United States, but it doesn't have to be. American Heart Month seeks to increase public knowledge of cardiovascular diseases, raise funds for research, and prevent heart disease by encouraging heart-healthy habits.

Black History Month. Established by Dr. Carter G. Woodson in 1926 (as Negro History Week) to celebrate and honor the achievements and contributions of African-Americans.

International Expect Success Month. Karla Brandau, founder of International Expect Success Month and president of Life Power Dynamics, a firm specializing in personal empowerment, says: "A key factor in fighting depression is to change the view of life from pessimism to optimism. In other words, if you can learn to wake up every morning and 'Expect Success,' you will improve the quality of your life, improve your relationships, and be more innovative at work."

National School Counseling Week, Feb. 1-5. Focusing public attention on the important contribution of school counselors, this week highlights the impact these professionals can have in helping students succeed in school and in their future careers.

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Weatherman's Day, Feb. 5. The birthday of John Jeffries (1744), one of the nation's first weather observers, this day celebrates all the meteorologists (of both sexes) who advise us whether to carry umbrellas or apply sunscreen.

White Shirt Day, Feb. 11. The anniversary of the UAW-GM agreement ending a 44-day sit-down strike against General Motors in 1937. "Blue-collar" workers wear a white shirt on this day to honor their victory.

Susan B. Anthony Day, Feb. 15. One of the first women's rights advocates and leaders, Susan B. Anthony was born in 1820 in Adams, Mass.

Inspire yourself

Are you getting burned out on the job? Do you find yourself daydreaming about what could have been? There are ways to find yourself. There are ways to go back and remember what you once wanted to do before reality kicked in and you either had children to feed or student loans to pay back. The following are a few tips on how to rediscover what once made you tick. Create a "lifeline" of your life. Plot it out. Figure out when you came to that fork in the road.

- Pinpoint some of the underlying themes. What seems to be ever-present, no matter the situation?
- Now switch to the recent past: What has or has not changed at work and in life?
- Finally, write a page or two on the 27 different things you'd like to do before you die. You'll find that they aren't all work related or about career changes.

•After you've done this, you'll feel much better about yourself, and you will be closer to figuring out what your purpose is in the present situation.

Don't make yourself sick when getting in shape

Exercise is an important element of good health, but you've got to approach it with good judgment. Follow this basic advice for getting in shape safely:

- Start off slowly. If you haven't exercised in a while, don't jump into a strenuous routine. Consult with your doctor to find out what's safe. Start each workout with a warmup to ease your body into the session.
- Get the right equipment. Running in the wrong shoes or biking without a helmet can be dangerous. Don't take chances with old or used equipment. If you're not sure what you need, ask a trainer or someone with experience.
- Wear suitable clothing. Loose, comfortable clothing is essential. Wear fabrics that absorb sweat, so your body doesn't overheat. If you're exercising outdoors in cold weather, wear a warm hat and gloves; in hot weather, wear a cap to stay cool.
- Watch the weather. Don't go outside to work out in extreme temperatures. Wear sunscreen, winter or summer. In cold weather, dress in layers. During the summer months, exercise in the morning or late in the day to avoid excessive heat.
- Drink plenty of water. Keeping hydrated is important before, during, and after exercise. Take a drink every 20 minutes, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Pay attention to surroundings. When you're outdoors, don't "zone out." Watch out for traffic, other people, rough surfaces, and other dangers. Even in the gym, keep your eyes open and your mind engaged to prevent accidents with equipment or other exercisers.
- Listen to the warning signs. Don't try to "work through" pain. Slow down if you get short of breath. If you get dizzy or feel nauseated, or feel pain in your chest, neck, shoulders, or arms, stop exercising immediately. If the symptoms don't go away, call your doctor.

Food dangers lurk even when you eat right

Even healthy foods can be dangerous if they're not handled properly. Don't stop eating your vegetables, but do take note of this list of the 10 riskiest foods, compiled by the Center for Science in the Public Interest using data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- **Leafy greens**, 13,568 illnesses between 1990 and 2006
- **Eggs**, 11,163 illnesses
- **Tuna**, 2,341 illnesses
- **Oysters**, 3,409 illnesses
- **Potatoes**, 3,659 illnesses
- **Cheese**, 2,761 illnesses
- **Ice cream**, 2,594 illnesses
- **Tomatoes**, 3,292 illnesses
- **Sprouts**, 2,022 illnesses
- **Berries**, 3,397 illnesses

Chocolate Isn't All Bad for You

Don't feel guilty if you can't resist eating some chocolate this Valentine's Day. Nutritionists say that it does have some redeeming qualities.

- One ounce of baking chocolate or cocoa contains 10 percent of the U.S. Recommended Daily Allowance of iron; 17 percent of riboflavin; 28 percent of magnesium; and 6 percent of niacin.
- Milk chocolate contains five times more calcium (15 percent of the RDA) than dark chocolate.
- One and half ounces of chocolate or two tablespoons of cocoa powder have the same amount of antioxidant phenolic compounds (anti-aging enzymes) as a glass of red wine.
- The flavonoids in chocolate reduce the time it takes for blood to clot, which may lower the damage from heart attacks and strokes.

The most valued possessions lie within

A young boy sought enlightenment from a wise monk who practiced pottery making. One sunny afternoon after many years of study and meditation, the boy was admiring one of the monk's prized pots when it slipped from his hands and broke into many tiny pieces.

The boy apologized profusely. But the monk remained calm. "You need not be sad," he said with a gentle smile. "It is still within me."

The wise monk's true pleasure came through the process of creating and shaping the pot, not in owning it afterward. His joy was not in the destination, but in the journey.

Make optimism a cornerstone of your success

Positive thinking alone may not ensure success, but it's an important start. If you don't believe in yourself, you'll have a hard time persevering against the obstacles and setbacks you're likely to encounter.

Here are a few tips for maintaining the right attitude in the face of adversity:

- Tell yourself you can change. Think of how you've changed throughout your life—not physically, but emotionally. You're probably a different person today than you were five years ago, so don't assume you can't evolve further.
- Use positive language. Banish words and phrases like "impossible" and "I can't" from your vocabulary. Replace them with words that emphasize strength and success: "challenging" instead of "impossible," and "I must" for "I can't."
- Create the right environment. Listen to music that uplifts you. Watch inspirational movies and shows. You don't have to devote yourself to a life of "Tomorrow" and *Rocky*, but don't spend too much time on downbeat material. Mix it up, with a leaning toward the positive.
- Appreciate your life. Focusing on what you don't have can crowd out your appreciation for what you already possess. Take some time every so often to enjoy what you've already achieved with your life. Think about what you did to get where you are, and use that as reminder of your capabilities.

• Let go of mistakes. You're bound to fail at some things; don't obsess over them. Learn what you can and move on instead of beating yourself up over and over for them.

'Failures' who made their mark

Motivate yourself to move forward by looking at this list of "failures" who went on to succeed:

- Isaac Newton. Before discovering gravity and the laws of motion, Newton did so poorly at school that his mother withdrew him to work on the family farm. (He hated farming.)
- Walt Disney. The famous filmmaker was fired from a newspaper job because, his boss said, he lacked imagination and didn't have any original ideas. His first cartoon production company went bankrupt.
- John Grisham. The author of many legal bestsellers, John Grisham had a tough start. His first book was rejected by 16 agents and 12 publishers.

Help wanted

A neighborhood pet shop needed some office help, so the owner posted a sign in the window: "HELP WANTED: Must be able to sort mail and use the computer. Must be bilingual."

In the afternoon, a dog trotted into the store, wagging his tail, and barked at the sign repeatedly. The owner finally realized he wanted the job. Perplexed, he said, "Sorry, boy. You have to be able to sort mail."

The dog hopped up on the counter where the day's mail was stacked, and used his nose to sort the packages and envelopes into separate piles—junk mail, invoices, checks, and the like.

The owner didn't know what to do, so he took the dog in back to the office and showed him the computer. The dog hopped on the chair, logged on, and began surfing the Web for pet sites.

Stunned, the owner sat down and tried to think. The dog waited patiently. Then the owner said, "But you have to be bilingual."

The dog opened his mouth and replied, "Mooooooooo."