

People Are Born To Shine!

A newsletter rooted in the Christian faith created to inspire and support all people, irrespective of nationality, race, and religion.



ACTS OF KINDNESS

Lemonade? Or Lemon Aid???

Build a lemonade stand in your community to quench the thirst of someone in your neighborhood, as well as someone half-way around the world! Then, donate the profits to Lemon:Aid at Blood:Water Mission and provide your friends in Africa with clean, safe water.

It's likely that at 10 years of age, most of us were thinking about bicycles, swimming pools, and spelling tests. At that age, Lulu Cerone was single-handedly creating, organizing and executing a large-scale, school-wide fundraiser to help earthquake victims in Haiti. "After the [2010] earthquake in Haiti, I realized the world was so much bigger than I thought it was." Encouraged by her parents, Lulu rallied 24 classmates and created a lemonade stand to raise funds. The idea for a lemonade stand came easy. "It was the classic fundraiser I'd been doing since I was little." Lulu added

"After the earthquake in Haiti, I realized the world was so much bigger than I thought it was."



a twist: she told her classmates it was a competition and made it a boys against girls face-off to see who could raise the most money. "There were stands all over town with kids competing." The idea worked and Lulu's campaign raised over \$4,000 for two nonprofits, Hollywood Unites for Haiti and UNICEF.

Now 13-years-old, Lulu is tackling clean water in Sub-Saharan Africa through her cause, LemonAid Warriors. She is collaborating with Blood:Water Mission, a nonprofit organization building fresh water wells in Sub-Saharan Africa, to provide clean water to communities. Lulu came across the organization after Googling nonprofits and found their mission exciting. After watching a Blood:Water Mission video, she was hooked. Coincidentally, they had their own lemonade fundraiser and a partnership developed.

Today, Lulu is targeting a new generation of child organizers like herself by inspiring a sensational new idea: PhilanthroParties. "I want to change the way my generation parties, so I created a philanthroparty planning service. Instead of birthday presents, people donate money to whatever cause they choose." Lulu helps mentor young cause leaders in her community by drafting

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For Naji, walking with Jesus was much more than following religious traditions or trying to live up to a set of rules.

NUTRITION

Foods That Can Trigger a Stroke

Stroke can strike without warning. And fear of stroke—when a blood vessel in or leading to the brain bursts or is blocked by a blood clot, starving brain cells of oxygen and nutrients—is well founded. Here are five foods that cause the damage that can lead to stroke.

CRACKERS, CHIPS, AND STORE-BOUGHT PASTRIES AND BAKED GOODS

Muffins, doughnuts, chips, crackers and many other baked goods are high in trans fats, which are hydrogenated oils popular with commercial bakeries because they stay solid at room temperature, so the products don't require refrigeration. Also listed on labels as "partially hydrogenated" or hydrogenated oils, trans fats are found in all kinds of snack foods, frozen foods, and baked goods, including salad dressings, microwave popcorn, stuffing mixes, frozen tater tots and French fries, cake mixes, and whipped toppings. They're also what makes margarine stay in a solid cube. The worst offenders are fried fast foods such as onion rings, French fries, and fried chicken.

Aim to limit trans fats to no more than 1 or 2 grams a day—but preferably none. Avoid fast-food French fries and other fried menu items and study packaged food labels closely. Even better, bake your own cookies, cakes and other snacks.

SMOKED AND PROCESSED MEATS

Whether your weakness is pastrami, sausage, hot dogs, bacon, or a smoked turkey sandwich, the word from the experts is: Watch out.

Smoked and processed meats are nasty contributors to stroke risk in two ways: The preserving processes leave them packed with sodium, but even worse are



the preservatives used to keep processed meats from going bad. Sodium nitrate and nitrite have been shown by researchers to directly damage blood vessels, causing arteries to harden and narrow. And of course damaged, overly narrow blood vessels are exactly what you don't want if you fear stroke.

If a smoked turkey or ham sandwich is your lunch of choice, try to vary your diet, switching to tuna, peanut butter, or other choices several days a week. Or cook turkey and chicken yourself and slice it thin for sandwiches.

DIET SODA

Although replacing sugary drinks with diet soda seems like a smart solution for keeping weight down—a heart-healthy goal—it turns out diet soda is likely a major bad guy when it comes to stroke.

People who drink a diet soda a day may up their stroke risk by 48 percent. A Columbia University study

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Will You Further NCF's Work?

The Naji Cherfan Foundation was founded after the passing of the beloved Naji Cherfan. Our main goal is to praise the Lord through community work. The foundation works to improve the quality of life of the poorest of the poor of people, especially those affected by brain injury, while promoting Christian values.

If you like the work NCF is doing and wish to participate, we invite you to become a member of our Board. The goal is to share our inspiration and activities in your country. Please contact us for more information.

info@najicherfanfoundation.org

Quoteable!

Not all of us can do great things.
But we can do small
things with great love.

– Mother Teresa

12 Tips for Safer Driving

BELT UP

Secure all seatbelts and ensure children are correctly restrained.

SLOW UP

Abide by limits and only overtake if it's totally safe.

SOBER UP

Just say no to alcohol and drugs if driving.

SHUT UP

Don't answer the phone until it is safe to do so.

MOVE UP

Adjust head restraints so the top is level with the top of your head.

CHECK UP

Check brakes, tires, lights, mirrors and windows regularly.

BUCK UP

Calm yourself before driving if stressed, angry or excited.

LOOK UP

Look out for people on bikes, and walkers.

SHARPEN UP

Wear glasses or lenses if you need them.

WAKE UP

Take breaks every two hours on long journeys.

BACK UP

Leave 'crisis' braking space between you and the vehicle in front of you.

WISE UP

If it's night, bright or bad weather, slow down.

Kunhadi is a non-governmental organization founded after the passing away of the beloved Hadi as the result of a car accident. Kunhadi's mission is to introduce a new driving culture among youth to keep them safe on Lebanese roads. Their goal is to reach a better community understanding of road safety issues, and to find solutions for underlying problems and factors leading to road deaths and injuries. For more information, please visit Kunhadi's website at www.kunhadi.org.

Source: kunhadi.org

PRAYER CORNER

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.

Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.

Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy.

Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.

Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen.

—St. Augustine

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cool activities and calls to action for the parties, including brainstorming game ideas and raffles. She's also working with nonprofits to craft their own philanthroparties specific to their needs.

Lulu's efforts have raised more than \$20,000 in four years, including this year's Birthday Wish. More importantly, her mentoring is paving the way forward for more young, energetic warriors and philanthropists to call us to action. In the future, Lulu hopes to visit some of the places she's been trying to help. "Right now I want to spread the word about Philanthroparties. I've always wanted to visit countries in Africa as well...some time really soon." Follow the source link below to catch a glimpse of Lulu talking about her work with LemonAid Warriors.

Source: Alejandro De La Cruz,
bloodwatermission.com/take-action/lemonaid

OUR DAILY BREAD

God's Wheelchair



*With God behind you and
His arms beneath you,
you can face whatever lies
ahead of you. —Ward*

His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire.

—Daniel 7:9

BIBLE IN A YEAR: PSALMS 16-18

Jean Driscoll is a remarkable athlete. She has won the Boston Marathon eight times. She has also participated in four Paralympic Games and won five gold medals. Born with spina bifida, Jean competes in a wheelchair.

One of Driscoll's favorite Bible verses is Daniel 7:9, "The Ancient of Days was seated . . . His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire." Seeing a connection between Daniel's vision of God and her own situation, she is able to pass along words of encouragement to others. "Anytime I've had an opportunity to talk with people who use wheelchairs and feel bad about being in a chair, I tell them, 'Not only are you made in the image of God, but your wheelchair is made in the image of His throne!'"

Daniel's vision, of course, doesn't portray God as being impaired in motion. In fact, some see God's "wheelchair" as a symbol of a just God sovereignly moving within human affairs. Other passages speak of God's providence providing help to those who believe (Prov. 3:25-26; Matt. 20:29-34; Eph. 1:11).

Jean Driscoll's faith in God has helped her triumph over personal challenges. We too can be confident that the high and holy One is near and ready to help us if only we ask (Ps. 46).

*He cannot fail, your faithful God;
He'll guard you with His mighty power;
Then fear no ill though troubles rise,
His help is sure from hour to hour. —Bosch*

Source: rbc.org

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presented at the American Stroke Association's 2011 International Stroke Conference followed 2,500 people ages 40 and older and found that daily diet soda drinkers had 60 percent more strokes, heart attacks, and coronary artery disease than those who didn't drink diet soda.

Substitute more water for soda in your daily diet. It's the healthiest thirst-quencher by far, researchers say. If you don't like water, try lemonade, iced tea or juice.

RED MEAT

Researchers have long known that the saturated fat in red meat raises the risk of stroke and heart disease by gradually clogging arteries with

a buildup of protein plaques. Now it turns out that hemoglobin, the ingredient that gives red meat its high iron content, may pose a specific danger when it comes to stroke. Researchers are investigating whether blood becomes thicker and more viscous as a result of the consumption of so-called heme iron, specifically upping the chance of strokes.

Aim to substitute more poultry—particularly white meat—and fish, which are low in heme iron, for red meat. Also, choose the heart-healthiest sources of protein whenever you can, especially beans, legumes, nuts, tofu and nonfat dairy.

CANNED SOUP AND PREPARED FOODS

Whether it's canned soup, canned

spaghetti, or healthy-sounding frozen dinners, prepared foods and mixes rely on sodium to increase flavor and make processed foods taste fresher. Canned soup is cited by nutritionists as the worst offender; one can of canned chicken noodle soup contains more than 1,100 mg of sodium, while many other varieties, from clam chowder to simple tomato, have between 450 and 800 mg per serving. Salt, or sodium as it's called on food labels, directly affects stroke risk.

Make your own homemade soups and entrees, then freeze individual serving-sized portions. Buy low-sodium varieties, but read labels carefully, since not all products marked "low sodium" live up to that promise.

Source : Melanie Haiken, Caring.com



Dealing with TEEN DEPRESSION

Tips and Tools for Helping Yourself or a Friend

The teenage years can be tough, and it's normal to feel sad or irritable every now and then. But if these feelings don't go away or become overwhelming, you may be suffering from depression.

Help is available and there are many things you can do to start feeling better.

WHAT DEPRESSION FEELS LIKE

When you're depressed, it can feel like no one understands. But depression is far more common in teens than you may think. You are not alone and your depression is not a hopeless case. Even though it can feel like depression will never lift, it eventually will—and with proper treatment and healthy choices, that day can

come even sooner.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF TEEN DEPRESSION

It's hard to put into words how depression feels, and people experience it differently. There are, however, some common problems and symptoms that teens with depression experience.

- You constantly feel irritable, sad, or angry.
- Nothing seems fun anymore, and you just don't see the point of trying.
- You feel bad about yourself—worthless, guilty or just “wrong” in some way
- You sleep too much or not enough.

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- You have frequent, unexplained headaches or other physical problems.
- Anything and everything makes you cry.
- You've gained or lost weight without consciously trying to.
- You just can't concentrate. Your grades may be plummeting because of it.
- You feel helpless and hopeless.
- You're thinking about death or suicide. (If this is true, talk to someone right away!)

Is your friend depressed?

LOOK FOR COMMON WARNING SIGNS OF TEEN DEPRESSION:

- Your friend doesn't want to do the things you guys used to love to do.
- Your friend starts using alcohol or drugs or hanging with a bad crowd.
- Your friend stops going to classes and afterschool activities.
- Your friend talks about being bad, ugly, stupid or worthless.
- Your friend starts talking about death or suicide.

*What you can do to feel better:
Tips for depressed teens*

BEATING DEPRESSION, ONE DAY AT A TIME

You can't beat depression through sheer willpower, but you do have some control—even if your depression is severe and stubbornly persistent. The key to depression recovery is to start with a few small goals and slowly build from there. Feeling better takes time, but you can get there if you make positive choices for yourself each day and draw on the support of others.

Depression is not your fault, and you didn't do anything to cause it. However, you do have some control over feeling better. Staying connected to friends and family, making healthy lifestyle decisions, and keeping stress under control can all have a hugely positive impact on your mood.

In the meantime, you might need therapy or medication to help you while you sort out your feelings. Look into your treatment options with your parents. If medication is being considered, do your research before making a decision, as some antidepressants used for adults can actually make teens feel worse.

TRY NOT TO ISOLATE YOURSELF

When you're depressed, you may not feel like seeing anybody or doing anything. Just getting out of bed in the morning can be difficult, but isolating yourself only makes depression worse. Make it a point to stay social, even if that's the last thing you want to do. As you get out into the world, you may find yourself feeling better.

Spend time with friends, especially those who are



active, upbeat and make you feel good about yourself. Avoid hanging out with those who abuse drugs or alcohol, get you into trouble or who make you feel insecure. It's also a good idea to limit the time you spend playing video games or surfing online.

KEEP YOUR BODY HEALTHY

Making healthy lifestyle choices can do wonders for your mood. Things like diet and exercise have been shown to help depression. Ever heard of a "runners high?" You actually get a rush of endorphins from exercising, which makes you feel instantly happier. Physical activity can be as effective as medications or therapy for depression, so get involved in sports, ride your bike or take a dance class. Any activity helps! Even a short walk can be beneficial.

As for food, it's true that you are what you eat. An improper diet can make you feel sluggish and tired, which worsens depression symptoms. Your body needs vitamins and minerals such as iron and the B-vitamins. Make sure you're feeding your mind with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Talk to your parents, doctor or school nurse about how to ensure your diet is adequately nutritious.

AVOID ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

You may be tempted to drink or use drugs in an effort



to escape from your feelings and get a “mood boost,” even if just for a short time. However, substance use can not only make depression worse, but can cause you to become depressed in the first place. Alcohol and drug use can also increase suicidal feelings. In short, drinking and taking drugs will make you feel worse—not better—in the long run.

If you’re addicted to alcohol or drugs, seek help. You will need special treatment for your substance problem on top of whatever treatment you’re receiving for your depression.

ASK FOR HELP IF YOU’RE STRESSED

Stress and worry can take a big toll, even leading to depression. Talk to a teacher or school counselor if exams or classes seem overwhelming. Likewise, if you have a health concern you feel you can’t talk to your parents about—such as a pregnancy scare or drug problem—seek medical attention at a clinic or see a doctor. A health professional can help you approach your parents (if that is required) and guide you toward appropriate treatment.

If you’re dealing with relationship, friendship or family problems, talk to an adult you trust. Your school may have a counselor you can go to for help, or you may want to ask your parents to make an appointment for you to see a therapist.

HELPING A DEPRESSED FRIEND

Depressed teens typically rely on their friends more than their parents or other adults in their lives, so you may find yourself in the position of being the first—or only—person that they talk to about their feelings. While this might seem like a huge responsibility, there are many

things you can do to help.

Get your friend to talk to you. Starting a conversation about depression can be daunting, but you can say something simple: “You seem like you are really down, and not yourself. I really want to help you. Is there anything I can do?”

Know that your friend doesn’t expect you to have the answers. Your friend probably just needs someone to listen and be supportive. By listening and responding in a non-judgmental and reassuring manner, you are helping in a major way.

Encourage your friend to get help. Urge your depressed friend to talk to a parent, teacher, or counselor. It might be scary for your friend to admit to an authority figure that there is a problem. Having you there might help, so offer to go along for support.

Stick with your friend through the hard times. Depression can make people do and say things that are hurtful or strange. But your friend is going through a very difficult time, so try not to take it personally. Once your friend gets help, he or she will go back to being the person you know and love. In the meantime, make sure you have other friends or family taking care of you. Your feelings are important and need to be respected, too.

Speak up if your friend is suicidal. If your friend is joking or talking about suicide, giving possessions away, or saying goodbye, tell a trusted adult immediately. Your only responsibility at this point is to get your friend help, and get it fast. Even if you promised not to tell, your friend needs your help. It’s better to have a friend who is temporarily angry at you than one who is no longer alive.

Source: helpguide.org

HOW I REMEMBER NAJI...

I first remember meeting Naji at the rollicking ping pong evenings hosted by our mutual friends, the Indonesian and Thai Ambassadors. Naji always had fun: laughing and joking with friends and challenging everyone in the room to a good-natured game of table tennis. Having inherited his father's optimism, Naji was confident that with a little more practice and a few trick shots, he could beat anyone—including the "old pro," Ambassador Lopez!

No matter where he went, Naji was always surrounded by a circle of friends—swapping stories and practicing the latest magic trick that he had just learned. Naji personified the word, "gregarious:" . . . one who is "fond of the company of others." If he wasn't talking face-to-face with a group of friends, he was busy sending text messages on one mobile phone while talking with a far away friend on another phone. I think if Naji had been born with three ears and three hands, he would have figured out how to communicate with three friends at the same time!!!

Of the many words that I think of when I remember Naji, the one that really stands out is "joy;" a quality that he possessed in great measure. Joy runs much deeper than happiness. Happiness is a temporary feeling that we experience, when, like Uncle

Remus, "everything's going my way." Joy, on the other hand, is the inner state of mind and spirit that enabled Naji to remain optimistic and cheerful—even when things in his life didn't go the way he had planned. He consistently followed the admonition that the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in a town called Philippi, in northern Greece, nearly 2,000 years ago: "Delight yourselves in God, yes, find your joy in him at all times."

Naji loved God and was convinced that God loved him. For Naji, walking with Jesus was much more than following religious traditions or trying to live up to a set of rules. For him, Christianity was not a religion, but a vibrant, personal relationship with God that radiated through his entire being! During the long, arduous weeks and months after his motorcycle accident, Naji came to know God in a new and profound way that changed his life forever. Not one to "hide his lamp under a basket," Naji loved talking to anyone who would listen about how Jesus had changed his life. His faith was effervescent and contagious.

Last summer, the wife of a colleague of mine died of cancer. When people told him that they were sorry that he had lost his wife, John responded with a gentle smile:



"my wife isn't lost. I know where she is right now—Mary is in heaven with Jesus. How can you say that I've lost my wife when I know exactly where she is?"

In the same way, when I was talking with Naji's sister-in-law, Patricia, after the memorial service for Naji in Greece, we drew great comfort from the assurance that he was with Jesus. I am confident that Naji is enjoying eternal life in God's presence today—not because he was baptized as an infant or because he attended church on Sunday or because of the good deeds he did—but because Naji put his faith in Jesus' death on the cross. And because Jesus was raised from the dead, I can have the assurance that I will see Naji again. I know that when I see Naji, I'll recognize him immediately by the radiant smile on his face and the twinkle in his eye. . . . Just thinking about seeing Naji again makes me smile!

Dr. Dwight Ekholm

People Are Born To Shine!

People are Born To Shine is a bi-monthly, electronic newsletter owned by The Naji Cherfan Foundation focusing on spirituality and health. The objective of *People are Born to Shine* is to raise awareness among our readers on health challenges and disease prevention, while inspiring them to live a fuller, more abundant life guided by Christian values. This newsletter is dedicated to those affected by brain injuries including the injured as well as their family members, caregivers and friends.

The content has been carefully selected from internet sources considered reliable and accurate to bring you good news of health and spiritual well being, however The Naji Cherfan Foundation assumes no responsibility for inaccurate information.

For subscriptions and comments, please contact us: info@najicherfanfoundation.org

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