

SPRING 2017



Mind and Matter



A publication of the University of Miami Faculty and Staff Assistance Program

FACULTY AND STAFF ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Caliope Bootle
Secretary

Orlando Gonzalez
*MSEd, LMHC, CEAP
Director*

Pilar Tamburrino
*MS, LMHC, CEAP
Assistant Director*

Rosario Zavala
*MSW, LCSW
Consultant*

Contact us

 305-284-6604  miami.edu/fsap



IN THIS EDITION

A YEAR OF ABUNDANCE

*by Pilar Tamburrino, MS, LMHC, CEAP
in Featured Article*

BE YOUR BEST POSSIBLE SELF IN 2017

in Mental Health Corner

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

in Featured Seminar

A YEAR OF ABUNDANCE

by Pilar Tamburrino, MS, LMHC, CEAP

It's that time of year again. A time for reflection and New Year's resolutions. The Oxford dictionary defines abundance as, "a very large quantity of something." To read this, one might imagine all things material, but in this instance I'm not referring to material possessions or obligations.

Love, connection, community, trust, spirituality, and health are some of the intangible gifts that make for an abundant life filled with purpose, worth, and joy. If we are honest with ourselves, we would admit we are all searching for some form of abundance in life. But sometimes the day to day challenges can make it hard to see the good things. So, how does one achieve an abundant life?

Abundance can happen as a result of an internal paradigm shift at a conscious level; a sort of revolution, or complete radical change, in how we view reality. According to Dr. Gail Brenner, author of "The Happiness You Seek is Already Here," there are four essential paradigm shifts. The first shift goes from being unconscious to being conscious of what is actually happening around you and to you. Secondly, instead of always looking outward at what is being done or not being done to you, try looking inward at your reactions to events. Did that driver who just cut you off really mean it personally or was she a Mom late to pick up her kids? Thirdly, stop living in the future, or the past, and be truly present in each moment. "If only..." thoughts take you out of the moment. And, dwelling on past events may keep you stuck. Lastly, shifting your mindset away from criticism and judgment to appreciation and gratitude proves to be an effective strategy for increasing your sense of well-being.

Practice makes perfect

Practice happiness. Make conscious decisions every day to choose to be as joyful as you can. Pick positive things to say about yourself, choose positive thoughts, and eliminate old patterns of negative, pessimistic thoughts. Yes, you can practice being happy to become a happier person!

Meditate your way to joy

Meditation helps you learn to focus and boosts beneficial chemicals and hormones in the brain. It changes the patterns of brain waves from ones that have a negative effect to ones that have a

more positive effect on your state of mind. Meditation can also help you get better rest and improve overall energy levels, which in itself, is beneficial.

Learn to love yourself

Getting in touch with your inner self and practicing happiness can help lead you to know your core self, who you really are, what you really want in life, and what will bring you true fulfillment. Once you learn to love yourself, then loving others and having others love you will come much more naturally.

The human connection

Some of the basic needs of childhood are love and emotional connection with others. When you receive these, you learn to feel worthy and lovable. Relationships give you a sense of belonging, a sense of identity, an almost therapeutic-support system, and a reason not to feel lonely. You learn from people's experiences and insights and you begin to develop a shared history with others.

Give unto others

Altruism involves the unselfish concern for other people. It involves doing things simply out of a desire to help, not out of a sense of obligation. Everyday life is filled with small acts of altruism. It's the thoughtful person who waits patiently holding the door while you cross the parking lot, the kind individual who walks down the street smiling at every stranger, or the driver who stops to let you cross the street. Giving doesn't have to be complicated or grand. An added benefit of giving freely out of compassion and love is how it makes the giver feel. The more you give from a place of unconditional generosity, the more joy you feel.

As we begin this New Year, I encourage you to make this paradigm shift to welcome a life filled with abundance and joy.

"Not what we have but what we enjoy constitutes our abundance."

~Epicurus

BE YOUR BEST POSSIBLE SELF IN 2017

Take a moment to imagine your life in the future. What is the best possible life you can imagine? Consider all of the areas of your life, such as your career, academic work, relationships, interests and health. How would your life be in your best possible future? Take the next 15 minutes to write about what you imagine this to be. Follow the instructions below:

1. Avoid examining your current life, past failed attempts, financial/time/social barriers to being able to make these accomplishments happen. Instead, imagine a brighter future in which you are your best self and watch your circumstances change just enough to make this best possible life a reality.
2. Be very specific. The more specific you are, the more engaged you will be in the exercise and the more you will get out of it.
3. Be as creative and imaginative as you want. Don't worry about grammar or spelling.

Research by psychologists, Sonja Lyubomirsky and Kennon Sheldon in 2006, found that those who completed the Best Possible Self exercise daily for two weeks showed increases in positive emotions right after the two-week study ended. Those who kept up the exercise after the study ended continued to show increases in positive mood one month later. The research also suggested that building optimism about the future can motivate individuals to work toward that desired future and make it more likely to become a reality. This will not only increase your current happiness but also pave the way for sustained happiness down the line.

Source: Greater Good in Action - University of California, Berkeley

FEATURED SEMINAR WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Relationships are a necessary part of healthy living, but there is no such thing as a perfect relationship. Relationships, from acquaintances to romances, have the potential to enrich our lives and add to our enjoyment of life. Maintaining realistic expectations and effective communication are two very critical components.

Discussion will include exploration of the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships. Participants will review techniques used to establish respect, build trust, convey empathy and decrease emotional reactivity. FSAP Health and Wellness seminars are offered as part of the University of Miami's Well 'Canes Program.

This seminar will be facilitated by a UM FSAP consultant and held from noon to 1 p.m. as follows:

- **Coral Gables campus: Tuesday, February 21st, 12:00-1:00 pm, McKnight Building, room #201AB**
- **RSMAS campus: Wednesday, February 22nd, 12:00-1:00 pm, Library Media Room**
- **Miller Medical School campus: Thursday, February 23rd, 12:00-1:00 pm, Clinical Research Building, Room #692**

UPCOMING SEMINARS – Mindful Living, Life Strategies for Managing Stress, and Breaking Bad Habits



**"NOT ALL OF US
CAN DO GREAT THINGS.
BUT WE CAN DO
SMALL THINGS WITH
GREAT LOVE."
- MOTHER TERESA**

DID YOU KNOW?

The FSAP will arrange to deliver FSAP seminars to your workgroup. Please feel free to contact our office, or go to our website for a list of available offerings.

SUBSCRIBE

Mind and Matter is a quarterly publication from the UM Faculty and Staff Assistance Program that provides helpful tips and articles regarding work-life balance, health and well-being.

If you would like to receive this newsletter directly in your inbox each quarter, as well as announcements about upcoming FSAP seminars, please send an email to cbootle@miami.edu.