

Natural Path to Health: Season of Compassion

By Dr. Carol McIntyre

This is the season when we tend to reflect on the past year and all of its happenings. It is a time when the compassionate nature in people spreads to others unconditionally. Compassion is defined by the Webster dictionary as: "sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it." As a physician, having compassion is a very important part of practice.

Recently I have been attending continuing education forums as part of my yearly licensure renewal process. One of the lectures I have attended discussed therapeutic alliance and what that means. Much of it was dealing with compassion. By having compassion and increasing its application in daily life one can help with self-healing as well as the healing of others. This is an important concept because unless we heal ourselves it is more difficult to help others.

Many of us go through difficult times in our lives. Some of us have post-traumatic stress (PTSD) from certain incidences. We build resilience, because without it, we feel we cannot survive. Maybe we don't trust like we use to, or at all. Depression, anxiety, and even social phobia set in. Why do I bring this dismal subject up now you ask? For the same reason we reflect during this season of joy; to alleviate despair, guide ourselves and others to gather together, and find compassion and support and inspire someone, or even yourself, to always stay optimistic.

Being optimistic and having compassion actually decreases your mortality rate! People who are positive rather than negative live longer. Compassion increases the levels of all kinds of neurotransmitters in our brains including dopamine, endogenous cannabinoids, and many others. Showing compassion makes you feel good - literally! Resilience can also be a positive attribute because it helps one to become more socially interactive as one seeks support. People who have greater social support have decreased incidence of depression, anxiety and PTSD.

Think about others in our community this season and reach out. Even a smile can brighten someone's day. Laughing with someone is even better! Enjoy community events and reach out if you are feeling that you need support. The elderly especially need companionship to combat loneliness. It was conveyed to me just recently that my ability to just be present for my patients can sometimes have the greatest impact. The fact that my patients can contact me with concerns helps them to feel supported and that the compassion I give is sometimes the most therapeutic medicine I can offer. This is what it's truly about. We can all do this every day. Helping others and supporting their wellbeing is not just a seasonal job; it's everyone's job and when we work hard we feel better and when we feel better we do better and the circle of life shines brighter.

Give someone a smile today. Remember those who are special to us and reach out to them whether they are close or far. It is so important to keep our connections to people. Staying connected helps us to become more compassionate, optimistic and resilient. I plan to stay more connected to my loved ones who are far away this coming year and I hope that in doing so I will grow even more; having more confidence, love and compassion to share. Please have a wonderful holiday and do your best to promote healing all year round. Thanks for joining me. Be Well~

Bridge Street Bits

By Karen Miller

HI EVERYONE!

HOPE you all have gotten all of that delicious chocolate out of your system since the Spirit of Christmas Chocolate Walk here in town on December 9. I'm always up for chocolate, how about you? Hope they do it again next year. I took two granddaughters on Rick Hobart's carriage ride, that was their favorite. Plus I had a huge bowl of Lorna Poetter's winning chili at the chili cook-off; where ALL the chili looked devine. Hit up the bazaars, too. An enjoyable day with the girls. Good job to all you organizers.

ON Friday, December 9 the VERNONIA SENIOR BOARD met one final time for this year. Our Board members were re-elected and are as follows:

Larry Bernardi, Janelle Cedergreen, Tobie Finzel, Ilene Grady, Sally Harrison, Jack Harvey, Carl Holsey, Wayne Marr, Karen Miller, Sykes Mitchell, Pat Ray, and Sandy Welch

ONCE AGAIN, we want to remind everyone of the three local restaurants participating in our senior lunch program. For a reduced price you can get a great meal at these locations: Mariolino's, Black Iron Grill, and Subway. Order from their senior menus for the specials. Thank you to all three of these restaurants for helping us out until our Senior Center is built!

MEALS ON WHEELS drivers are always needed and very much appreciated. Please call coordinator Jack Agee at (503) 429-2005.

A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU FROM ALL OF US ON THE VERNONIA SENIOR CENTER BOARD. Come join us for only \$15 for the year. Be a part of the Exciting Days ahead!

See ya' around town...

Vernonia Senior Center • 939 Bridge Street • (503) 429-3912



Make sure your holidays are wrapped in safety.

One of the best gifts you can give your family for the holidays is a safe home. While you're decking the halls, check that you've done all you can to prevent fires.

- Make sure that all light strings, electrical cords and power strips are in good condition and suited to the job.
- Don't overload your outlets.
- Inspect and clean the chimney and fireplace before you ever light a match. Always use a fireplace screen.
- Keep your live tree well watered.

Warm wishes for safe celebrations from Columbia 9-1-1.



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