

TRANSITIONS NEWSLETTER: "A BETTER YOU FOR A BRIGHTER TOMORROW"

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Meeting Your Goals for the New Year

By Sheryl Nichols and Nicole Harris

As you embark upon the New Year, think about what goals you would like to accomplish. Some areas to give thought to include: physical health and fitness, financial well-being, spiritual growth, mental health, career, and relationships. Before you sit down to write your 2008 goals, you may first want to reflect on 2007. Ask yourself, "Did I accomplish everything I could last year?" "Where can I use some improvement?" "What positive actions can I take to improve in 2008?"

After you have reflected on 2007, it's time to set your goals for the New Year. Setting worthwhile goals requires you to let go of your past setbacks and see the world through new lenses. Believe in your unlimited abilities to achieve greatness in any area of your life.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Meeting your Goals	1
Couples Group	1
Get Up and Get Out	2
Positive Relationships	2
Policy Updates	3
Fighting Fair	4
Office Hours	6

Tips for setting and accomplishing goals:

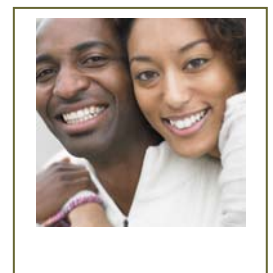
1. **Set the mood:** Create a calm, quiet atmosphere with limited distraction.
2. **Make sure you are passionate about your goals.** In order to truly embrace and desire change, you must believe in the change you are about to make.
3. **Set goals for yourself and not others.** Avoid making goals that involve a change in someone else's behavior. Remember we

Continued on p. 3

Couples Transition Workshop Series

Beginning in February 2008, Transitions Therapeutic Services will begin a workshop series for couples. Couples who are considering marriage and those who are currently married are encouraged to attend. Space will be limited so please be sure to register early. More information on time, dates, and location will be available soon. You can also call the office at 301.341.2020 to sign up to receive more information.

Some of the workshop topics include: Spirituality in Relationships, Family Ties, Communication, Resolving Conflicts, Forgiveness, Money Matters, Intimacy and Sexual Relationship, Family Planning, Children & Blended Families, and Everlasting Love.



Get Up and Get Out!

There are plenty of exciting things to do in this area. You need to get up, get out and do something! Spending time with yourself, your friends, your spouse, and your family are critical to maintaining positive relationships. Pick-up the Friday edition of the Washington Post and take a look at the "Weekend" magazine. This magazine highlights all the activities happening around the metropolitan area. For computer lovers, search on the website www.thingstododc.com.

Dr. Nichols' Picks:

Restaurant: La Tasca (Spanish Restaurant), 722 7th Street, NW, Washington, DC 202.347.9190

Happy Hour: Stonefish Grill, 880 Capital Center Blvd, Largo, MD, 301.333.1600

Movie: The Great Debaters (PG-13)



Get Up Get Out and Do Something!

Family Event: Color Me Mine, 823 Ellworth Drive, Silver Spring, MD, 301-565-5105, www.silverspringcolormemine.com, Paint your own pottery studio.

Church: Zion Church, 1450 Mercantile Lane, Largo, MD, www.zionchurchonline.com

For the ladies: Belly Dancing, Body Talk II, Sam's Plaza, 12761 Laurel Bowie Road, Laurel, MD, 301.317.8255, Every 4th Saturday

For the men: My Place Sports Bar and Grill, Mitchellville Plaza, 12150 Central Ave, Mitchellville, MD, 301.249.5477

Building Positive Relationships

By Sheryl Nichols

Because people change over time so do their relationships. Building and maintaining positive relationships is critical to positive self development. The people we choose to surround ourselves with can have a huge impact on how we think and behave. We all need friends who respect us, who care about how we feel, who will give us good advice, and who will help us during a crisis. We also need friends we can relax and have fun with.

Developing healthy relationships is something we all want. We form bonds with all types of

different people from our boss and colleagues, to our friends and family. Many people don't have a close circle of friends or supporters. They may isolate themselves or are afraid to make friends or talk to other people. The good news is that we can change our behavior and break our bad relationship habits. Here are some suggestions to building positive relationships.

1. **Evaluate you current circle of friends.**
There may be some friends in your

Continued on p. 5

Goals continued from p. 1

can't change other people. We can choose to make changes in ourselves and as changes occur in ourselves, people around us usually adjust their responses and choices according to our new behavior.



"Success is within your reach"

4. **Write your goals in the positive and in full detail.** Think positive for the New Year. You can begin by writing your goals positively. For example, instead of saying "I will not get angry so fast" you can say, "I will learn new ways to settle differences peacefully". Also, try to be as specific as possible when writing goals.
5. **Give yourself a deadline.** Avoid procrastination by giving yourself a deadline.
6. **Make sure your goals are realistic and measurable.** Too often we set goals that are too broad. Don't set yourself up for failure by making unrealistic goals. Also ask yourself, "How will I know if my goal has been accomplished?"

7. **Visualize what it will be like to achieve your goal and see yourself as it is already done.** Then, go about your day "acting as if" your goal is absolutely achieved. You will be amazed at the incredible feeling that will come about in this process.
8. **If setbacks occur, which they often do, get back on track immediately. NEVER QUIT!** Try to be flexible. It's ok if you adjust your goals along the way. Just remember that "in order to succeed you must fail, so that you know what not to do the next time." *Anthony D'Angelo, The College Blue Book.*

"Some people dream of success...while others wake up and work hard at it."

Policy Updates

As Transitions Therapeutic Services continues to expand, we need to ensure that our policies reflect our growth. Please be aware of the updated policies:

1. All payments for services must be submitted at the beginning of each session.
2. If you are not able to keep your appointment, please call within 24 hours to cancel and/or reschedule. Failure to do so will result in a full charge for services.
3. Beginning July 1, 2008, Transitions Therapeutic Services will no longer accept insurance from **new clients**. Payments will be made by cash, check, money order, or credit card. Our offices will assist clients with any necessary paperwork to get reimbursement from their health insurance. **(This policy will not affect current clients until January 1, 2009).** We will continue to accept employee assistance (EAP) referrals as usual.

Fighting Fair

By Sheryl Nichols



No matter what we call it – conflict, fighting, arguing, quarreling, or disagreeing – most people need a better way of settling differences. When we are not fighting fair, we forget how to listen, we become defensive and angry, or we may just suppress our feelings to avoid further confrontation. You can learn to fight fair by following these simple guidelines:

1. **Be Respectful.** Don't call names, use sarcasm or belittle your mate. Never put each other down. If you use forget and use harsh words, immediately apologize.
2. **Keep the problem the problem.** Do not personalize it. Attack the problem not the person.
3. **Use "I" statements.** Try to use "I" or "We" statements instead of "you" statements. For example say, "I felt hurt when you yelled at me" instead of "You made me feel stupid when you yelled at me". This helps you to maintain ownership of your part of the disagreement.
4. **Stay on one subject.** If the fight is about a mother-in-law, then stay on that subject until there is some kind of a resolution. Don't bring other problems like money, children, etc. Handle one problem at a time.
5. **Use time-outs as needed.** If tempers are flaring and you find yourself losing control, put the argument on "hold" or call a "time-out" and agree to talk about it when things have calmed down. It may help to do some physical activity like walking around the block or taking a shower to calm tempers. Don't wait more than 24 hours to address the problem.
6. **Listen for understanding.** Make a real effort to try and understand each other. It's hard to listen when you are still talking.
7. **Don't read your partner's mind.** Don't assume you know what they are thinking or feeling. Always ask.
8. **Try to see things from your partner's point of view.** This doesn't mean you have to agree with your partner. Validate your partner's feelings and acknowledge his/her viewpoint.
9. **Seek to solve the problem.** Try not to bring in others to gang up on your partner. Ask, "What can **we** do together to solve this problem? I am willing to do the following..."
10. **Forgive and accept each other.** Learn how to forgive one another and let go of grudges.

Cited from, "The Positive Way", www.positive-way.com

Positive Relationships from page 2

circle that may be creating negative energy in your life. If this person seems to zap all of your energy when you associate with them, you may want to limit your friendship.

2. **Don't depend on only one person.** You want to create a circle of friends who can offer you different types of support. For example, you may have a friend who is a good listener, another who gives good advice, another who will help you accomplish a task, and another who will give you information.
3. **Be a good listener.** Friendship is a two-way street. It is important to be able to give support as well as to get support.
4. **Take good care of yourself.** Pay attention to your personal hygiene. If you don't feel good about yourself, others may not feel good about you.
5. **Avoid criticizing & complaining.** Try to be positive around others. People like to be around those who make them feel good.
6. **Avoid turning your relationships into a therapy session.** Your friends want to help and listen to you. Be careful not to burden

them with only problems in your life. Share some of the positive things also.

7. **Avoid gossip.** Those who are quick to talk about someone else will also be quick to talk about you.
8. **Be yourself.** You want your friends to like and accept you for who you are. If someone wants you to change who you are, they may not be worth your time.
9. **Give people their space.** Don't be pushy or overly dependent. Try to make a circle of friends. That way, you don't have to depend on just one person.
10. **Be fun to be around.** Learn to have fun.
11. **Find good mentors.** Surround yourself with people who can act as role models for you.

Cited from *Colorado Health Networks, "Tools for Recovery"*.

*"A friend is one who
strengthens you with
prayers, blesses you
with love, and
encourages you with
hope"*

OFFICE HOURS

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**"A better you for a brighter
tomorrow**

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.transitionstherapy.com

Transitions Therapeutic Services wants to provide convenient services to our clients. We have flexible office hours to fit the client's needs. When we are not seeing clients, we are available via the phone, 301.341.2020, or email, snichols@transitionstherapy.com, to schedule an appointment. Our clinical hours are:

Monday: 2pm - 9pm

Tuesday: 2pm - 9pm

Wednesday: 9am-8pm

Thursday: 2pm - 9pm

Friday: 8am - 4pm

Every other Saturday: 8am - 1pm

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