

The Balancing Act

Spring 2009



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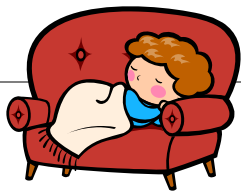
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HELP YOUR MARRIAGE SURVIVE THE ROUGH SPOTS

By Wayne Coachman, Early County

Every marriage has its ups & downs, its rough periods. Even in the best of circumstances, there are going to be difficult times. But if you survive these darkest times you may find you emerge with a stronger, more trusting relationship than you imagined possible.

Here are a few tips that might help you toward that goal ...

**** Have a clear understanding of your expectations.** Couples rarely take the time to discuss how the little things work. What does romance mean to you? How will the finances be handled? How will your children be raised? What role will religion play in your relationship? What makes you feel loved? What hurts you? How

will arguments be resolved? What do you need from your spouse, what does your spouse need from you?

**** Face the issues that are facing you.** Hiding from reality never leads to a happy ending. If you're experiencing financial problems, admit it, get it out in the open.

**** Be honest with yourself.** Take a step back and give yourself a good look in the mirror. If your behavior is undermining your relationship (whether it's the way you communicate, or how you treat your spouse, or your personal destructive behavior) own up to it.

**** Take the initiative.** Understand that waiting for your spouse to change first will likely result in no change at all.

Actions come first, thoughts

and feelings follow. Change your behaviors and watch your spouse's behavior change in response.

**** Keep your sense of humor.** Life is challenging enough without having to live with a brooding, angry spouse. Laugh out loud the way you did when you were a kid. Happiness is a choice. Exercise it.

Marriage is a sacred vow to love your partner for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, till ... well you know the rest. Unfortunately, for many couples, the pressures, challenges, and the monotony of married life have doubled and taken away all of the wonderful positive aspects of marriages.

Sleep for Good Health

by: Roxie Booker, Brooks County

Many people think that the body "shuts down" while we sleep, but in fact many important functions occur. Sleep helps us to think clearly, react quickly and create memories. It appears to be essential for learning challenging tasks and to solve problems creatively.

High blood pressure, heart disease and other medical conditions have all been linked to lack of sleep. Lack of sleep has been associated with obesity, diabetes and the preference for high

calorie, high carbohydrate food. Newborns usually sleep 16-18

hours a day while pre-school children need 10-12 hours. Both school-age children and teens need at least 9 hours a night. Most adults function best with at least 7 hours of sleep a night.

Here are 8 Tips for better sleep

- 1) Stick to a sleep schedule. Even on weekends try to go to bed and get up at the same time.
- 2) Exercise regularly, but do it 5-6 hours before bedtime. Getting enough daily

exercise helps sleep quality, but hormones released during exercise can keep you awake.

3) No caffeine or nicotine. Caffeine in coffee, tea, chocolate and some soft drinks like colas can last up to 8 hours. Nicotine is also a stimulant.

4) Avoid large meals and beverages late at night. Both can cause indigestion and too much fluid can wake you up to go to the bathroom during the night.

5) Don't nap after 3 pm. Also keep naps to under an hour.

6) Take a hot bath before bed. The drop in body temperature afterward may make you sleepy. Your muscles will relax and have less pain.

7) Get out in the sun. Thirty minutes outside in the daylight may help regulate your sleep patterns.

8) Don't lie in bed if you cannot sleep. If after 20 minutes you cannot sleep, get up and do something relaxing.

Source: National Heart, Blood and Lung Institute. In Brief: Your Guide to Healthy Sleep. NIH Publication No. 06-5800, April 2006.

10 Ways to a Greener Home *by: Rachel W. Hubbard, Lanier County*



Making a few small changes in your life can help you save money while conserving natural resources and reducing waste.

1. Take a bag to the store when you go grocery shopping. Plastics (including plastic bags) make up 8 percent or 14.4 million tons of our trash each year.
2. Downsize your life by donating things you no longer use. If you want to give away things you no longer need, donate to a local non-profit or check out the web-based Freecycle Network. This is a grassroots, non-profit movement of people who are giving away things they no longer need or want and getting new stuff for free from other people in their community. Local groups are moderated by a volunteer and membership is free. Visit www.freecycle.org to

- see if there is group near you.
3. Start recycling. To find recycling centers in your community go to Earth911.com.
4. Replace incandescent light bulbs with Energy Star qualified compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL). According to the EPA if every home in the U.S. replaced one light bulb with a CFL, we would save enough energy to light more than 3 million homes for a year.
5. Limit your use of paper cups, paper plates and paper napkins in favor of washable dinnerware and cloth napkins.
6. Select the appropriate load size on the washing machine and follow the detergent manufacturer's instructions for the proper measure.
7. Instead of washing one dish at a time under running water, fill up the sink or a dishpan with soap and water and wash several dishes at one time. You

- could save 5 gallons of water by changing just one habit.
8. Sweep off sidewalks, driveway and porches instead of wasting water by hosing them off.
9. Start a compost pile for food scraps, grass and other yard clippings, and dead plants. You will reduce your garbage while improving your garden. Visit the UGA Cooperative Extension web page (<http://pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/pubs/PDF/c816.pdf>) or go to your local Extension office for more information and compost recipes.
10. Replace old appliances and plumbing fixtures with new Energy Star and Water Sense labeled products. Replacing appliances can save you about 30 percent on your utility bills. For more information on products and local rebate programs go to www.epa.gov.



Watch out for FRAUD!!

By: Sylvia V. Davis, Baker/Mitchell Counties



Be careful and don't get taken advantage of because you were a storm victim. If you were affected by the recent tornado or flood waters, watch out for consumer fraud, home repair fraud, telephone solicitation and financial fraud. Be very cautious when talking on the phone or if you are approached by anyone that you do not know wanting to do work for you for money.

CONSUMER FRAUD

Shoddy workmanship, price gouging and opportunistic contractor's scams are common occurrences associated with disaster situations. Storm victims should be cautious about possible fraud.

- Uninsured workers may have the right to sue if they are injured on your property (i.e. if a floor caves in or a wall collapses.)
- Unskilled workers doing electrical or structural work may pose a serious, even life threatening risks to the tenants of the structure.
- A fallen tree may cause damage to you or your neighbor's property and you may be liable.
- All electrical, plumbing and structural work and tree removal services should be performed by a licensed, insured and experienced worker

HOME REPAIR FRAUD:

- Be wary of door-to-door home repair solicitors
- Try to shop around for the best deal on repairs

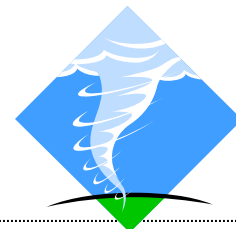
- Always get written contracts and don't let anyone rush you into a deal.
- Beware of contractors who take money up-front without a written contract - they may not follow through on their promises.
- Make your final payment when the work is completed to your satisfaction.

TELEPHONE SOLICITATION:

- Do not give out your Social Security number, credit card number or checking account number over the telephone unless you are positive it is a legitimate company.
- If in doubt, ask the solicitor if you can return the phone call. Meanwhile, you can check with your local Better Business Bureau Office.

FINANCIAL FRAUD:

- Be leery of offers of help to fill out loan or grant forms for an application fee.
- Use a reputable account, financial counselor/planner, bank credit union or con-profit organization to help you fill-out forms, if necessary.





ENJOY LOCAL STRAWBERRIES



Luscious red-ripe strawberries are now in-season and available locally. One of the highlights of spring is enjoying fresh strawberries. While they are at the peak for freshness it is also a good time to freeze berries for future use and to make jams, jelly, and preserves.

Strawberries are high in Vitamin C and low in calories. One cup of raw, uncapped strawberries contains about 88mg of Vitamin C and only 55 calories. Select fully-ripe bright red berries. Strawberries do not ripen after they are picked so a white or pale pink color indicates the strawberry will not be ripe. In addition to the nice red color, choose berries that are plump and well-rounded with bright fresh green caps.

To store strawberries for a short time at home, remove the berries from their containers and discard any spoiled berries. Then arrange them in a single layer in a

cookie sheet or other shallow container, cover with waxed paper and place in the refrigerator.

Never wash strawberries or remove their caps until just before use. The caps protect the strawberries and help preserve flavor, texture, and nutrients. Just before use, wash the berries by placing them in a colander and rinsing gently with cool water.

The caps are removed last to preserve nutrients and prevent water from soaking into the berries. There is no need to remove any of the berry itself with the cap. Use the point of a sharp paring knife to remove only the cap.

When buying and preparing strawberries the following amounts may be helpful: 1 cup of whole berries is equal to about 4 ounces. One pint of strawberries is equal to about 3 1/4 cups of whole berries or 2 1/4 cups of sliced berries.

Strawberries are easy to freeze. My older sister's first 4-H demonstration was on freezing strawberries so I learned the process by watching her when I was only seven years old. Strawberries may be frozen in unsweetened or sweetened packs. For unsweetened fruit pieces that remain loose and can be poured from the container, use the tray pack method. Simply spread a single layer of prepared fruit on shallow trays and freeze. When frozen, promptly package in freezer bags or containers and return to the freezer.

For a whole berry frozen sugar pack add 3/4 cup sugar to one quart (1 1/3 pounds) strawberries. Stir until most of the sugar is dissolved or let stand for 15 minutes. Put into containers leaving a headspace. Seal and freeze.



Strawberry Preserves Deluxe

(about 4 half pint jars)

Strawberry Blender Smoothie

12 oz Orange Juice or Pineapple Juice
1 banana
3/4 cup sliced strawberries
2 Tablespoons powdered sugar

Blend with or without using ice

1 1/2 quarts stemmed, firm,
Red, ripe strawberries

5 cups sugar
1/3 cup lemon juice

Berries with hollow cores should not be used. Combine strawberries and sugar: let stand 3-4 hours refrigerated. Sterilize canning jars. Bring slowly to boiling, stirring occasionally until sugar dissolves. Add lemon juice. Cook rapidly until berries are clear and syrup thick, about 10-12 minutes. Pour into a shallow pan. Let stand uncovered 12 to 24 hours in refrigerator. Shake pan occasionally to distribute berries through syrup. Heat mixture and pour hot preserves into hot jars, leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Wipe jar rims and adjust lids. Process 5 minutes in a Boiling Hot Bath.

Source: *So Easy to Preserve*

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Dear Friends,

The Balancing Act is a quarterly publication sent to you by Family and Consumer Sciences Agents serving all South-west Georgia. All information in this newsletter is written by Specialists at the University of Georgia and FACS agents, and is backed by research from the University of Georgia and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

This newsletter brings you the latest information, please contact the agent in your county.

Thank you,

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