

**February is heart month**  
Mark your calendars!



**Healthy heart  
Lunch and learn  
session**  
**February 4, 2010**  
12:00 in Prior /Sutherland  
with **Natasha Prodan-Bhalla**,  
Nurse Practitioner from the  
BC Women's Heart Program  
for Women

Although the BC Women's Heart Program is designed for women, Natasha's talk will be applicable for both men and women. All staff are invited to attend.

## Personal wellness inventory

### Take a hearty look at yourself

By James Chamberlain

So sleepy heads, did you find the personal health inventory on your sleep patterns in last month's issue useful? We hope so! In this edition you'll find questions that focus on personal relationships, work life balance and your emotions. We all know that having a balance of quality time with family and friends is important, but if you are like me I seem to be always in a rush from one commitment to another with little downtime to relax and decompress.

Your emotions and all the "stuff" that is going on in your life can have a major impact on your interpersonal relationships at home and at work. As a parent or grandparent you might be juggling work, childcare and/or eldercare commitments. They say our lives have been simplified by email, but I beg to differ. It seems that everyone wants our attention 24/7, now. So breathe, relax and take a few moments to do some self-reflection by evaluating where you are in terms of your emotions and relationships.

With Valentine's Day on the horizon this might be a great time to reflect on where you are at with family and friends. Who knows? You might discover something interesting about yourself... so read on and enjoy!

### The Heart (emotions & relationships)

- 1) I feel tense, anxious or stressed. *(Note the scale is reversed for #1-3)*  

<i>often</i>										<i>rarely</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
- 2) I experience moods of depression, loss of interest or energy for my life.  

<i>often</i>										<i>rarely</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
- 3) I have moods of annoyance, irritability, or anger,  

<i>often</i>										<i>rarely</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
- 4) I am in touch with my feelings, and recognize how they affect me, my relationships and my performance.  

<i>almost never</i>										<i>almost always</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
- 5) I understand my emotional needs and know how to appropriately meet them.  

<i>almost never</i>										<i>almost always</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	



## Snapshot from the edge

By Dawna Dodds

A little over a year ago I weighed just less than 200 pounds. I was in the worst physical shape any one person can be in. I started having chronic lower back pain and even walking up a flight of stairs was a challenge. I had tried every trick in the book to lose weight, and was successful

at first, however within a very short time the weight would creep back on. Exercise was not an option because I didn't have the time... so I thought. Feeling insecure and unhappy I decided to make a change.

A Weight Watcher at Work program was introduced to me and I decided to participate. Anyone who has done Weight Watchers knows it's not a diet but a healthy lifestyle change. I was able to lose 31 pounds taking part in the program and have since lost another 20 pounds on my own. Total weight lost 51 pounds; I still however follow the Weight Watchers concept regarding the food I eat.

Although healthy food choices are key, our bodies also need consistent exercise to function. I started working out 3 days a week 20 minutes a day. After 2 months I increased my work outs to 1 hour a day 5 days a week. Now I work out 6 days a week an hour a day. I make time for at least 1 hour a day of exercise and have come to realize that laundry can wait.

Every individual is different and whether you are interested in losing 5 or 75 pounds you need to start by making a commitment to yourself. This can be one of the best lifestyle changes you make for yourself. You will have great weeks and bad weeks, there will be days you don't want to go to the gym or walk during your lunch break, some days you will try to talk yourself out of making healthy choices and that's ok. Take a day at a time and remember that you have made this commitment to yourself for yourself and know tomorrow is a new day. ■

### (Continued from page 1)

- 6) I skillfully manage potentially disturbing emotions so that they do not adversely affect others or my leadership.  
*almost never* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *almost always*
- 7) I feel satisfied with the quantity and quality of time I share with family and friends.  
*almost never* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *almost always*
- 8) My friends and family are satisfied with the quantity and quality of time we share.  
*almost never* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *almost always*
- 9) I ask (appropriately) for support and help from others.  
*almost never* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *almost always*
- 10) I get positive feedback from the people in my life (work and home) that they experience me as being present, attentive and empathic with them.  
*almost never* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *almost always*
- 11) I feel satisfied with the amount and quality of love in my life.  
*almost never* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *almost always*

It is hard to over-estimate the impact of our emotional life on our personal relationships and our performance as leaders. Low scores in this section should become the basis for thoughtful and committed personal development work.

### What do you see as you review this section?

Copyright ©Robert Gass 2007

[www.sacredunion.com](http://www.sacredunion.com)

Reprinted with permission of Robert Gass



# How is blood pressure measured?

By Donna Coulombe

In your doctor's office blood pressure is usually measured by wrapping an inflatable cuff around the upper arm. Air is pumped into the cuff until circulation is cut off; a stethoscope is then placed over the inside of the arm (typically in the bend of the elbow), there is silence. The air is then slowly let out of the cuff, as the cuff deflates blood begins to flow again and can be heard through the stethoscope. This is the point of greatest pressure (called systolic), and is usually read as how high it forces a column of mercury to rise in a tube. At some point, as the cuff continues to deflate, the pressure exerted by the cuff is so reduced that the sound of the blood pulsing against the artery walls subsides and there is silence again. This is the point of lowest pressure (called diastolic).

A normal blood pressure reading is usually 120/80 or less. The first (higher) number represents the pressure while the heart is beating. The second (lower) number represents the pressure when the heart is at rest between beats.

Depending on your general health most health care professionals deem anything over 130 for systolic or anything over 85 for diastolic to be a condition to be monitored carefully. Any reading over 140 (systolic) and/or over 90 (diastolic) is considered elevated or high and your doctor may prescribe medication to lower your blood pressure.

It is important to know your numbers as life threatening complications can develop over time when hypertension (also known as high blood pressure) exists.

Some factors that may contribute to high blood pressure are beyond our control. They include such things as heredity and race. The happy news is that you can do many things to help control blood pressure and ensure that your arteries and heart stay healthy.

Maintaining a healthy weight, ensuring you have a healthy diet and exercise are, of course, key components of all aspects of good health

One of the other important aspects of maintaining a healthy blood pressure is monitoring your sodium intake. Sodium is an essential nutrient and the body does require a small amount. As sodium intake rises in susceptible individuals, blood pressure tends to increase.

I have high blood pressure that is controlled by medication and I find limiting my sodium intake the most challenging of all aspects of controlling my blood pressure. Sodium is present in almost all of the whole (unprepared) foods we eat. It is certainly present in most prepared foods. Many restaurants liberally salt their dishes to enhance flavor. And adding salt to your food at the table can make your daily sodium intake soar well past a recommended healthy level.

Recommended sodium intake  
The Institute of Medicine (IOM)<sup>1</sup> recommends the following "adequate intakes," or AIs, per day:

Sodium (milligrams)	Years of age
1,000 mg	1 to 3
1,200 mg	4 to 8
1,500 mg	9 to 50
1,300 mg	51 to 70
1,200 mg	over 70

Sodium content can be found on the nutrition label on most prepared/packaged foods.

Next time you are shopping notice not only the calorie, fibre and fat content of the prepared foods you are buying but the sodium content as well. You will be unpleasantly surprised at the high numbers.

Weaning ourselves from excessive salt can take a bit of time and getting used to. Salt just makes things taste better. However, speaking from my experience your palate will adjust to less saltier foods. You may even find that foods you used to love now taste too salty. ■



# Book review

By James Chamberlain

## How to Disagree Without Being Disagreeable— Getting your Point Across with the Gentle Art of Verbal Self Defense

By Suzette Haden Elgin

In a perfect world we'd never have disagreements with anyone. Sometimes I dream about that state of Utopia. Then along comes reality and it bites! Guess what? It doesn't have to. We can always learn some common sense tips to improve the way we relate to others. That's why I'm reading this book.

Contrary to the lengthy title, it is not a book about verbal jousting or Tae Kwan Do. This practical book was recommended to us in December during the Respectful Workplace training given by Roy Johnson. I'm about three quarters of the way through reading it now and am finding it very insightful and helpful. Haden Elgin does a great job of guiding readers to come to their own conclusions about how people relate to one another. She begins by clearly outlining what hostile language is and its impact on our lives. Now if you are thinking this is a preachy "how to" book that admonishes us for bad behaviour, think again. The book is nothing like that.

It uses examples of dialogue and interactions between two people using real life scenarios that could happen to anyone. She plays and replays these scenarios using different examples of how one person might respond to an uncomfortable conversation. You can read what each person might actually say that would effectively de-escalate a home or workplace confrontation. It

teaches you how to say what you need to say in a respectful way, that saves face for all parties, but also allows people to stick to their core values.

The book helps you learn strategies like detachment, active listening and use of metaphors to help you gain better insights into understanding other people's point of view. The section I'm reading now is about the typical types of responses people have to confrontations and how they react in the moment. These include blaming or placating others, computing and levelling. The last two terms might sound a bit complex, but Haden Elgin deconstructs them into an easy to read dialogue or dance if you like between real life people.

As I read the book, I often could visualize myself in some of the conversations. Sometimes I was thinking.... "Oh no, I've said or done that!" but at the same time I was asking myself "What can I do differently next time?" This book is practical, humorous and engaging. It is not a fluffy read on a Friday night though. It gives you insights into yourself and how you respond to others in different situations. I'm finding myself highlighting parts of my personal copy, writing in the margins and using post-its to mark sections relevant to me. I rarely do that to a book, so it is a sign to me that I can use it as a tool for lifelong learning.

No matter how much we try, conflicts in life and love are sometimes unavoidable. They pop up when we least expect them. We cannot change other people, only the way we respond to them. Reading this book might help you to build your skills and respond to conflicts in a way where you walk away happy. Imagine that! ■

### Pilates at the BCTF

Pilates will begin again on Wednesday January 27, 2010 during the 12:00-1:00 lunch hour.

The first two sessions will be demo only to learn some of the key pilates moves. You do not need to be experienced in pilates to participate in these workouts.

If you are interested or have any questions please contact Dawna Dodds at 2191.

### BCTF Wellness Committee Members

Donna Coulombe	(BCTF)
Chris Arcari	(CEP)
James Chamberlain	(CEP)
Una Walsh	(HR)
Margaret White	(TFEU)
Karen Steel	(TFEU)

*The contents of this newsletter are intended to encourage better health decisions, not to provide medical advice. Please consult a qualified health professional before embarking on any new diet or exercise regime.*

TFEU