



# Master the Art of Living

Elim Park Place Newsletter  
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## A Sense of Purpose in Life Reduces the Risk of Alzheimer's Dementia



The United States is currently experiencing the early stages of what is expected to be an epidemic of Alzheimer's Dementia. It is predicted that the current number of cases of Alzheimer's Dementia will double by 2020, and double again by 2040. Some unfortunate individuals are born with genes that strongly predispose them to developing Alzheimer's Dementia. However, this is true for only a minority of people. There is compelling evidence that the rest of us can escape, or at least postpone or diminish the severity of Alzheimer's, by improving our diets, maintaining our health and generally living healthier lifestyles. In most cases, it appears Alzheimer's Dementia can be avoided. An underappreciated but scientifically substantiated fact is that getting a good education, challenging your mind, maintaining friendships and staying socially active can also help reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's Dementia in later life.



A study was performed by Patricia Boyle, Ph.D. and her group at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. The participants in the study were 951 men and women with an average age of 80.4 years, who had normal cognitive function at the start of the study. That is, none had yet shown signs of developing Alzheimer's Dementia. They measured the sense of purpose in life by tallying up scores from a 10 item questionnaire that was given to the subjects in the test. The questionnaire included questions such as: "I have a sense of direction and purpose in life", and "I sometimes feel as if I have done all there is to do in life." Participants answered questions on a scale of one to five, and agreement with optimistic, positive questions such as the first, added points while disagreement with the more pessimistic questions, such as the second one, also added points. They found that individuals with a sense of purpose at the start of the study were less likely to develop Alzheimer's Dementia over the following seven years.

In fact, it was shown that people with the lowest sense of purpose in life were more than twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's Dementia as those with the highest sense of purpose. The authors of the study recognized that factors such as depression, education, number of friends and family, gender, and race

*See Sense on pg. 2*



**No Exercise Classes**  
Monday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Due to the holiday



**Hurray for Hollywood**  
Tuesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup> at 2pm  
Nelson Hall  
Join us for a presentation on  
Song and Dance in the 1930s and 1940s.

## Movement with Music Resumes

Movement with Music class will resume on Monday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, but the time and location have changed. Class will take place from 1:00pm – 1:30pm in the Multipurpose Room (old Christ Chapel). Eliza Murray of the Wellness Department will continue the class that Emily the intern began in the fall. Newcomers are welcome. No sign-up necessary. This is a seated exercise class which focuses on gentle movement and range of motion. If your New Year's resolution is to move more, this is a great way to begin!



## Trading Treasures Give a Little, Gain a Lot!

Join Wellness and the Master the Art of Living team for hot cocoa and a fireside chat! Attend one of the sessions listed below, no sign-up necessary. Meet us in the Oasis Lounge.



Tues., Jan. 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am  
Wed., Jan. 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am & 1:30pm  
Thurs., Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> at 1:30pm



*Sense cont. from pg. 1*

can and do affect ones risk for developing Alzheimer's Dementia. These factors were measured and analyzed in the study. They determined that even when all of these other important social and psychological factors were considered, a simple sense of purpose in life made its own unique, and statistically significant contribution to reducing the risk of Alzheimer's Dementia.

Healthy diet, good sleep and exercise are often seen as the "natural way" to keep the mind healthy and avoid dementia. This is rightfully so. It is certainly the case that diabetes, heart disease, obesity, sleep apnea, and vitamin deficiencies are risk factors for Alzheimer's that can be prevented or treated. However, we often neglect the fact that having healthy attitudes and emotions, stimulating our minds with education and challenging work, and maintaining social interactions with other people are also important in reducing the risk of Alzheimer's dementia.

Scott Mendelson M.D. for Huffington Post

### Little Interest in Exercise to Prevent Falls

If you knew exercise could reduce your risk of falling, would you do it? Two groups were formed among older people who had fallen or reported a mobility limitation that increased the risk of falling. When presented with the option to participate in an exercise program that might reduce their risk of falling to zero, 82% of 220 people in one group and 50% of 66 people in the second group did not feel that exercising in the program would be worth it, with many citing cost and inconvenience.

Note from the Wellness staff. The numbers mentioned in the study above are unsettling. Research has proven that participation in a regular exercise program improves balance. We suggest exercising regularly to prevent falling and build self-confidence. There is no cost to exercise at Elim Park and the Fitness Center is conveniently located on campus! Forty percent of residents surveyed indicated they are concerned and/or worried about falling. Make a New Year's resolution to do something about that concern.

### Ten Helpful Steps for Breaking a Bad Habit

1. **Reality check.** Every person has habits, some good and some bad. Determine what behavior you would like to change and then develop and implement a strategy for changing that behavior.
2. **All in.** Breaking a bad habit requires a resolute commitment to change and a rigorous investment of time, energy and perseverance. If not fully committed, you are doomed to fail.
3. **One size does not fit all.** There is no one single way to break a bad habit. Identify triggers that lead to the habit and then eliminate as many of those as possible.
4. **Targeted Plan.** Developing a plan that includes small steps toward a larger goal is best for attaining that goal or breaking that habit.
5. **Change the scenery.** One of the most effective ways to change behavior is to avoid the people and places that encourage the bad behavior or act as triggers.
6. **Constructive thinking.** Breaking a habit is easier if you can create and ingrain a positive behavior as opposed to *not doing*. Instead of not eating a bowl of ice cream at night, replace it with a bowl of strawberries.
7. **Celebrate success.** Reward yourself for positive accomplishments no matter how small.
8. **Mental matters.** Visualizing a new, positive habit can reinforce positive actions. Mentally preparing and practicing, in advance, how you will handle tempting situations can help you handle it more easily when the time comes.
9. **Ride it out.** We are all human, and because of that we all slip back into bad habits. Don't beat yourself up and return as soon as possible to the steps that have worked.
10. **No rush.** Breaking a habit can take time because habits are often unconscious actions. The process of change can range from as little as 18 days to as long as 8 months. Patience is required, but ultimately worth it!