

# Targeting Wellness Newsletter

## Good News for Good Health!

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"The only reason I can't jump in and engage life is that I've told myself I can't. Yet I can't help wondering what would happen if I told myself I could?" – **Craig D. Lounsborough**

*So often we set goals for ourselves that we struggle to achieve. We have good intentions. We know the benefits of why we "should" do these things but yet we can't seem to motivate ourselves to get it done.*

*Why? First off, you are not alone in your challenge to push past this road block. It could be fear of failure, lack of confidence, or not being true to what you want.*

*In this newsletter I wanted to address this thing called "sabotage" and how so often we hold ourselves back unintentionally from those things that could give us fulfillment and purpose.*

*The journey is not always easy or straight away. There are bends, set backs, U-turns and even dead-ends, but it's up to us to re-focus and keep pushing forward. Often when we look back in the rearview mirror we realize "hey, that really wasn't as difficult/scary as I thought".*

*You are capable of doing anything you put your mind to. Sometimes you just have to get out of your own way and take the first step.*

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*"We sabotage the great things in our lives because deep down we don't feel worthy of having the great things."*  
Taressa Riazzi

## What Is Self-Sabotage And Why Do We Do It?

When you read the word “*sabotage*”, what comes to mind? Various definitions exist that can give us a clue:

- to deliberately destroy or damage something so it doesn't work
- an underhand interference that prevents the achievement of something
- to deliberately prevent a plan or process from being successful

How about when we add the word “self” in front of this word? Could we deliberately be destroying or damaging our selves so that we don't work “correctly”? Would we actually stop our self from achieving something, such as a health-improving goal or intention, on finding our purpose? Unfortunately the response to all of these questions is a resounding YES!

### Why do people self-sabotage?

Many people struggle all their lives with powerful cravings for food, drink, tobacco, and other temptations that come at a painful cost to ones health and/or relationships. The forces behind these cravings can be dysfunctional accompanied by distorted beliefs of self-worth and underestimated capabilities that are deeply seated in our subconscious mind from past experiences.

There are many forms of self-sabotage; however, two common ones are *procrastination and perfectionism*.

#### Why do I always procrastinate?

Most of the time we put off tasks that cause some level of anxiety or distress. By putting them off we are trying to avoid those negative emotions even though it may prevent accomplishing a goal that would potentially bring happiness and fulfillment. Distractions, like social media, or setting timeless deadlines like “I'll get to that next week” also fuel procrastination.

#### Why am I focused on perfectionism?

Those of us who strive for perfectionism make life an on-going report card, evaluating every single task and giving ourselves a “grade” for results. When healthy, this can be a very self-motivating characteristic and can drive us to overcome adversity and achieve great things. However, when unhealthy, it can be a fast track to unhappiness.

What makes extreme perfectionism so toxic is that although success is the desire, the focus is on avoiding failure. We may set unrealistically high expectations for ourselves and others, are quick to find faults and are overly critical of mistakes. This can often go hand-in-hand with procrastination whereby we put off a project out of fear of making a mistake. It's never good enough, therefore, rarely can we accept compliments and neglect to see and celebrate any successes we achieve. Many times, outside validation is sought yet learning self-compassion is really the key.

Consider taking the online quiz offered by *Psychology Today* to help in determining your possible self-sabotaging behaviors.

Go to <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/in-practice/201805/30-types-self-sabotage-and-what-do-about-it>.

Here is a few examples of the scenarios they pose:

- You're a perfectionist who is dismissive of incremental improvements, and you're only satisfied when 100 percent of a problem is fixed.
- You ignore the warning signs that you need a break.
- Other people in your life defer all decision-making to you rather than taking up some of that burden. You allow this pattern rather than empowering them to make decisions.
- You stay stuck in patterns that are psychologically comfortable, but not working for you. For example, overworking is more comfortable and familiar than having more balance.

There are over 30 examples of ways you may be self-sabotaging in different areas of your life. **The first step in changing behavior is becoming aware of it.**



## Can You Overcome Procrastination?

Fortunately, **YES!** But it will take some work, practice and commitment on your part. Nothing worth doing comes easy. Here are a few different reasons we procrastinate along with some possible approaches to overcome it.

- ★ **The task isn't urgent.** We tend to pay attention to what is demanding our attention. A deadline on a calendar, a ping on your phone, or a crying baby. Yet when it comes to the big things, like starting a retirement plan, we may put it at the bottom of the to-do list for months, if not years. For that "big" goal, start by really committing to it. We forget to identify **WHY** we want it. It makes a big difference to come from a place of *should* rather than *want to*. Consider trying this: say out loud "I **should** \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank, i.e. lose weight, eat healthier, get more sleep, etc.)". Now replace "**should**" with "**want to**". Notice how different that feels inside you. *I want to* verses *I should* sets off a much more positive emotion/energy inside yourself. Don't you agree?
- ★ **We don't know how to get started or what comes next.** We may feel overwhelmed, confused, or disorganized. This type of procrastination is less than an avoidance to the actually task and more an avoidance of negative emotions. None of us want to feel incompetent or lost so we tend to turn our attention towards something else that is often less important. This is actually called productive procrastination. And anyone who has ever "checked" a Facebook post instead of doing the task in front of you knows what I mean. First acknowledge that its normal to feel overwhelmed or less than adequate when starting something new. Build in "figure it out" steps or build in "scream out loud" as your first task if that helps get you moving. Mess ups, do-over's, and changing directions is perfectly fine, as long as you give yourself permission to experience that and be okay with it.
- ★ **Set up accountability.** Often it is easier to keep a commitment made to someone else than it is to keep it for ourselves. That is why it is often helpful to have a coach\* who you need to check in with and who will give you that gentle nudge when needed. Perhaps it's a friend or colleague who you commit to walking with every day. You don't want to let them down so often times it's the motivation you need to keep going.

Note\*:

I am a National Board Health & Wellness Certified Coach.



Adapted from Psychology Today articles.



## Can You Overcome Perfectionism?

There is a difference between striving for excellence and demanding perfection! Setting high standards, working relentlessly hard for something you believe in are examples of adaptive or positive progression in self-improvement. This reflects a growth mindset. Always looking for opportunities to learn and improve while being challenged even if you don't succeed the first time. This is a strength not a weakness.

However, if nothing is ever good enough and you compare your success to others, you are setting yourself up for constant disappointment, feelings of being "less-than" and causing potentially harmful levels of stress within your body and mind.



- ★ **Practice mindfulness and being present in the moment.** By doing so, you start to become more aware of your thoughts and feelings which have become automatic for your subconscious mind. Bringing them forward to consciousness allows you to notice when you are ruminating over a mistake, allowing you the opportunity to look at it without judgment giving you the chance to reframe your thoughts towards ones that are more positive and forgiving. It allows for unloading the thoughts that weigh you down, even if for only a few moments.
- ★ **Using compassionate self-talk and challenging negative self-judgment.** Think about some of the harsh words you may currently be saying to yourself. Would you ever say them to your best friend when he/she needed you? Or your child when he/she gets a poor grade on a test? I think it's safe to say that often we would NOT continue being friends with the bully inside our own head! Luckily, self compassion is a learnable skill. Here are a few things you may want to consider:
  - ⇒ **List all your strengths.** What are you good at? What are your character strengths? This is your time to really look inside yourself and own your talents!
  - ⇒ **Ask someone** close to you what they perceive as three strengths you have. Sometimes it difficult to see our own goodness. Asking someone close to you can help you start to see your own strengths. Believe it!
  - ⇒ **Write yourself an empowering letter.** Think of a situation that may have caused you stress or negative self-talk. Imagine it is your friend who was coming to you for support and encouragement. What would you say? The next time you find yourself in such a situation, pull that letter out, and practice saying those kind words to yourself! It's going to feel strange at first but in time you will start to replace that negative response with one that gives you permission to keep going!

There's no need to be **perfect** to inspire others. Let others get inspired by how you deal with your **imperfections.**



## LIVING IN AWARENESS

1. Take a couple of minutes to notice your breathing. Sense the flow of the breath, the rise and fall of your belly without trying to change it. Just notice.
2. Notice what you are doing as you are doing it and tune into your senses. When you are eating, notice the colors, texture and taste of the food.
3. When you are walking, tune into how your weight shifts and the sensations in the bottom of your feet. Focus less on where you are headed and more on what's happening around you now. Listen.
4. Don't feel that you need to fill up all your time with doing. Take some time to simply be.
5. When your mind wanders to thinking, gently bring it back to your breath, or to what you are doing in this moment.
6. Recognize that thoughts are simply thoughts; you don't need to believe them, attach to them or react to them.
7. Practice listening without making judgments. Don't think about your next comment. Really listen.
8. Notice where you tend to zone out (e.g., driving, emailing or texting, web surfing, feeding the dog, doing dishes, brushing teeth, etc.). Practice bringing more awareness to that activity and try to slow down so you can be in the moment.
9. Spend time in nature and notice 5 things around you.
10. Notice how the mind likes to constantly judge. Don't take it seriously. It's not who you are.





## Cholesterol and Heart Disease

Since February is American Heart Month, I wanted to focus on how our choice of food can directly impact our heart health. More than 7 percent of Americans have some type of cardiovascular disease, and one out of every six deaths in the U.S. is due to coronary heart disease alone. Nearly 2,200 Americans die **every day** from cardiovascular disease, that's an average of one death **every 40 seconds!** One of the key culprits in causing heart disease and blockages that can lead to heart attacks, is cholesterol. Our liver makes all the cholesterol needed for the production of hormones and cell membranes. Did you know that the ideal cholesterol level is

below 150 mg/dl? That is the point by which coronary artery disease is very unlikely. Yet nearly 107 million Americans have cholesterol levels more than 200 mg/dl, dangerously close to the average level of most coronary artery disease victims (225 mg/dl).

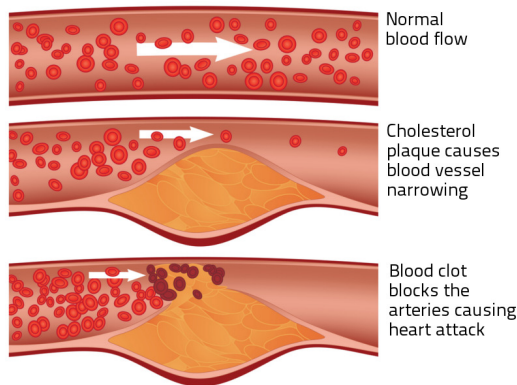
A quick refresher: Low-density lipoproteins (LDL) often called “bad cholesterol”, delivers cholesterol to various parts of the body. A high LDL level increases ones risk for a heart attack. The role of the high-density lipoproteins (HDL) also known as the “good cholesterol” is to “pick up” the cholesterol released from dead cells and take it back to the liver in an attempt to lower plaque build up in our blood vessels. Doctors look at the ratio of total cholesterol to HDL for a quick assessment of a person’s risk. The ratio should be less than 4 to 1. Unfortunately, the average American male’s ration is much higher, at 5 to 1. Those on a vegetarian diet average only about 2.8 to 1.3. Smoking and obesity lower HDL; however, vigorous exercise and foods rich in vitamin C increase it. (PCRM)

### How Do You Lower Your Cholesterol?

#### Decrease your intake of cholesterol.

Since we now know that our body makes all the cholesterol it needs, one way to lower your cholesterol is to decrease taking it in by way of food. Cholesterol is found in all foods that come from animals: red meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt, and other dairy products. Choosing lean cuts is not enough since the cholesterol is mainly found in the lean portion.

Many people are surprised to learn that chicken contains as much cholesterol as beef (25 mg/ounce). Shellfish is also very high in cholesterol. However, because plants do not have livers to produce cholesterol, no foods from plants will contain it! Therefore, by adding more plants to your diet and reducing the amount of animal products, you can greatly reduce your cholesterol levels. For every 1 percent you reduce your cholesterol level, you reduce your risk of heart disease by 2 percent!



#### Decrease fat intake, especially saturated fats.

Keeping total fat low is an important way to lower overall cholesterol and LDL’s, and reducing risk of other chronic diseases. Animal products, including meats and dairy products, as well as fried foods and vegetable oils are all loaded with fat. “The most important piece of information to look for is the percentage of calories from fat.” (PCRM)

- Lean cuts of beef = 30%
- Skinless chicken = as high as 23%
- Most cheeses = 60-80%
- Ice cream = 45-65%
- Butter and oils = 95-100%

#### Eat more plant based foods

Grains, beans, vegetables and fruits have no cholesterol, are low in fat and high in fiber. Vegetable proteins also help decrease the risk for heart disease. Studies show replacing animal protein with soy protein reduces blood cholesterol even when the total amount of fat and saturated fat in the diet remains the same.

Fiber slows the absorption of some food components such as cholesterol and reduces how much cholesterol the liver produces.

Read the entire article on Cholesterol and Heart Disease at Physicians Committee For Responsible Medicine <https://pcrm.widencollective.com/portals/gr0kpkol/factsheets>



# 1-Pot Pumpkin Black Bean Soup



A fusion of Thai flavors and classic chili, this 1-pot pumpkin black bean soup is perfect for colder months. It's nutritious, easy to make, versatile, and incredibly satisfying.

Recipe from Minimalist Baker



## Ingredients:

### SOUP

- 2 tsp avocado oil (or sub water)
- 1 ½ cups diced white or yellow onion (or sub shallot or red onion)
- 3 cloves garlic (minced)
- 1 tsp fresh minced ginger
- 1 medium jalapeño, minced (seeds and stem removed)
- 1 small sweet potato, diced (skin on)
- 1 15-ounce can diced fire roasted tomatoes with green chilies
- 1-2 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 1 ½-2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp chili powder (or add more to taste)

### Nutrition (1 of 4 servings)

Serving: 1 servings Calories: 345 Carbohydrates: 56.2 g Protein: 12.2 g Fat: 8.9 g Saturated Fat: 4.3 g Polyunsaturated Fat: 0.99 g Monounsaturated Fat: 2.14 g Trans Fat: 0 g Cholesterol: 0 mg Sodium: 765 mg Potassium: 677 mg Fiber: 17.2 g Sugar: 12.1 g Vitamin A: 11050 IU Vitamin C: 24.8 mg Calcium: 170 mg Iron: 5 mg

*Nutrition information is calculated with 1 cup homemade broth, light coconut milk (vs. full fat), oil (vs. water), 1/4 tsp sea salt, and without optional ingredients.*

- 1/4 tsp ground coriander (*optional*)
- 1 14-oz can light coconut milk (or sub full fat for a creamier soup)
- 1 cup canned pumpkin puree (or add more for more pronounced pumpkin flavor)
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, drained (if not using chicken, double the beans for more protein and fiber!)
- 2-3 Tbsp lime juice
- Sea salt to taste
- 3 cups chopped greens (*optional* // such as kale or spinach)

### CHICKEN *optional*

1 8-ounce chicken breast (boneless, skinless, organic, and pasture-raised when possible). If vegan, omit and double up on beans!

## Instructions:

1. **Optional** (if adding chicken): Fill a large saucepan with 4-6 cups water and bring to a boil. Add boneless, skinless chicken breast, cover, and cook for 15-20 minutes or until cooked through. Drain water and let sit to cool slightly. Using two forks (or a hand mixer), shred chicken.
2. Heat a large pot (or Dutch oven) over medium heat. Once hot, add oil and onion and sauté until translucent — about 4-5 minutes — stirring occasionally.
3. Add minced garlic, ginger, and jalapeño and continue cooking for 1 minute or until fragrant. Add diced sweet potato and sauté for 2-3 minutes.
4. Add diced fire roasted tomatoes, broth (starting with lesser amount), cumin, chili powder, and coriander (optional) and bring to a low boil. Reduce heat to a simmer, cover, and cook until sweet potatoes are tender (about 5-10 minutes).
5. Add coconut milk, pumpkin purée, drained black beans (option to increase amount if not using chicken), and cooked chicken (if using). For a souper consistency, add more broth. Cover, return to a simmer, and cook for 5-10 minutes to allow flavors to develop.
6. Add lime juice (starting with lesser amount). Taste test and adjust as needed, adding more lime juice for acidity, chili powder for heat, cumin for smokiness, coriander for floral notes / depth of flavor, or salt to taste.
7. Stir in chopped greens (optional), cover, and cook on low until wilted (about 3-5 minutes).
8. Serve as is, or with your favorite grain of choice. **Optional:** Garnish with chopped cilantro. Store cooled leftovers covered in the refrigerator for 4-5 days or in the freezer up to 1 month. Reheat in the microwave or on the stovetop until hot, adding more broth, water, or coconut milk to thin as needed.

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***There is no need to be perfect to inspire others. Let others get inspired by how you deal with your imperfections***

