



WORK WELL UPDATE

A Peek Inside

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An app that makes scheduling meetings simple

BODY

A how-to for your relaxing night in

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The perfect meal for the winter

RESEARCH

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December

An Open Fire

Winter is right around the corner which means colder weather and the perfect excuse to spend a few extra hours snuggled up at home. Luckily, you can do all of your gift shopping from bed. In the spirit of being cozy, this month we're diving into how to plan your perfect night in. We'll also cover why building traditions is important and why we feel invincible after watching a superhero movie. Finally, if holiday gifts are stressing you out, keep reading for some great ideas for everyone on your list this year.

On the Goga is a workplace wellness company guided by one, simple principle: Happy People Do Great Things.

Learn More About Mindful Wellness Programs
www.onthegoga.com



healthy tech

Doodle app

“It shouldn’t take 30 emails to schedule a 30 minute meeting.” At least that’s what the app Doodle declares. Doodle is your new ally in all things group scheduling. The app’s streamlined platform simplifies scheduling so that you can plan hassle free meetings and events.

With Doodle, you can arrange a time to meet one on one with a colleague, create a repeating time block, and use polls to gather groups of 3+ people. Plus, because Doodle syncs with Google Calendar, Outlook Calendar, Slack, and other productivity tools you already use, you leave the logistics up to them.

*Cost: Free Desktop/Web
Mobile App: \$4/Month*

office holidays

THE OFFICIAL DECEMBER LIST

4th: National Cookie Day

10th: National Human Rights Day

13th: National Gingerbread House Day

15th: International Tea Day

20th: National Ugly Sweater Day



wellness in 2

Make a Handmade Card

There’s fulfillment in creating things by hand. And research has shown it can boost mental health and happiness, too.

You likely already have the supplies required to make a holiday card: colorful pens and markers, scissors, tape, colored construction paper, glitter...you get the point.

Cut out shapes or symbols that are important to the holiday you celebrate, then paste them onto your canvas. Write a message around the image you design. You have artistic liberty in the size and folding of your card. And bonus points if you make your own envelope!

Source: Psychology Today



THIS MONTH'S health myth debunked

Myth:
Long Held Traditions
Must be Followed

FACTS:

We're all familiar with scenes of family stress during the holidays: heated political debates at the dinner table and adults upset by smartphone-obsessed teenagers. What can we do to smooth these tensions? Researchers from the Harvard Business School and the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management suggest family rituals, but not in the way you might think.

While the research demonstrates a connection between family rituals and holiday happiness, no one tradition is to credit. When you make a concerted effort, even mundane activities can become ritualistic and reinforce family bonds. The underlying factor is simply spending time together and making memories.

You don't need to engage in the exact activities you experienced growing up; you don't even need to do the same thing you did last year! Create something that is distinctly yours and feels right at the time. It should be enjoyable. After all, the goal is to feel close with your loved ones.

Source: UChicago Press



IT'S JUST THE WAY I YAM Sweet Potato Casserole

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 lbs sweet potato, peeled & cubed
- 1/2 cup reduced fat milk
- 5 tbsp butter, melted & divided
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp each of ground ginger, cinnamon, pepper
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1/4 cup pepitas
- 1/4 cup chopped dried fruit of your choice!

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Preheat your oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit
- Bring an inch of water to a boil in a large pot fitted with a steamer basket. Add your sweet potatoes. Cover and steam for about 18-20 minutes. Remove basket and discard water.
- Return the sweet potatoes to the pot. Add milk, 4 tbsp butter, salt, vanilla, ginger, cinnamon and pepper. Mash & then transfer to a 1 1/2 quart baking dish.
- Stir pecans, pepitas, dried fruit and remaining butter together in a small bowl. Sprinkle over the sweet potatoes.
- Bake casserole until the nuts are lightly toasted, 20-30 minutes.

Source: Eating Well





Andrew Campbell

PROGRAM MANAGER

“ WHY GOING OUT IS OUT AND STAYING IN IS IN

Apologies in advance to all of my fellow restaurant lovers, but let's be honest with ourselves, planning a night out can be stressful. Consider the stressors that go into going out: picking a place to go, changing the original choice because Steve "was just there" last week, repeating this process another two times, figuring out a time that works for everyone, and getting a final headcount. This is all before you even get to the restaurant - and not including that awkward moment when you have to explain to your friend why tipping 10% isn't, and never has been, ok.

Allow me to offer a solution: staying in. Benefits include: avoiding pretty much all of the negatives I just mentioned, saving some money, flexible start/end time, and you're actually allowed to connect with your friends. Everyone can contribute and feel part of the experience - no exclusionary seating chart, which brings everyone together for a more deep and meaningful evening. And at a time of the year when everyone is traveling and/or buying gifts, this is a great opportunity to save money.

Look, I'm not saying this is going to be a cure-all for the holiday stressors but next time you are trying to figure out where you and a few of your friends are going to be able to get a last-second table ("without a reservation!"), how late their kitchen is open, and whether so-and-so's partner is coming or not, considering taking a deep breath, opening up that board game you got at last year's office white elephant, and just having your friends over for some snacks, drinks, great conversation and even better memories.

why your brain loves good storytelling

Source: Harvard Business Review

INTRODUCTION

Do you ever feel invincible after watching a superhero movie? Turns out, our neurobiology loves a plot line. Our brains even influence us to mimic the emotions of characters in compelling stories. Interestingly, in the same way superhero stories compel us, telling a story about your brand can have an incredible impact on your customers and employees. When we can deliver a well constructed narrative we develop a sincere, cooperative connection with our audience.

THE RESEARCH

Paul J. Zak, the founding director of the Center for Neuroeconomics Studies at Claremont Graduate University, has conducted over two decades of research on the neuroscience of human connection, happiness, and teamwork. Multiple studies on the neurobiology of storytelling demonstrated that a person's oxytocin levels - a neurochemical that motivates trust and cooperation - increased with exposure to character driven stories. This had some interesting effects on study participants. For example, people donated to the cause associated with the narrative or signed a contract that allowed them to further support and engage with the person or organization who presented the narrative.

HAVE BETTER MEETINGS

Forget everything you know about the classic PowerPoint presentation. Dr. Zak recommends starting every meeting or presentation with a compelling, human scale story. To deliver eloquent and memorable information, hone in on an anecdote that explains why the audience should care about your message.

DEFINE YOUR PURPOSE

Your organization's origin story is as important as a superhero's. What Dr. Zak refers to as your founding myth should be a tale of human struggle and ultimate triumph. What problem did the founder see in the world and what passions led them to start the company to affect change? This story is your best tool to captivate audiences and communicate transcendent purpose.

BUILD CULTURE

An organization's transcendent purpose (how it improves lives) motivates employees far more than its transactional purpose (how it sells goods and services). Use storytelling with employees to describe how your efforts helped a specific client overcome their adversity. Use real examples and be specific. The brain is attracted to specificity.



3 Budget Friendly Ways to Give Gifts

GIVE MEMORIES

We take pictures on our phones all day long. This holiday season, use those pictures to create a photo album or picture frame to create a gift that's both meaningful and inexpensive.

START FROM SCRATCH

A quick Pinterest search will lead you to an array of DIY gift ideas. These gifts range from crafts to creative ways to wrap a wine bottle...depending on your level of artistic skill.

SPEND TIME

Know a loved one who cares about an important cause? Offer to spend time volunteering with them at a cause location and time of their choosing. This is a great way to show someone how well you know them, build strong relationships and help the community.



How To: PLAN A COZY NIGHT IN

- 1 Plan a Menu**
You can't have a cozy night without comfort food. Whether the plan is to cook or order in, spend some time planning your menu to get yourself excited for the night ahead.
- 2 Set the Scene**
Create a relaxing ambiance with your favorite scented candle, fluffy pillows and warm blankets. Dim the lights, put away your phone and immerse yourself in your relaxing space.
- 3 Pick Your Cozy Activity**
Do you have a favorite holiday movie? Or a playlist that helps you relax? Whatever your favorite at-home relaxation method may be, plan out your evening in advance.



THIS MONTH'S Your Question, Answered.

Have a health-or wellness-related question you want answered?

Email us at info@onthegoga.com use the subject line
MY QUESTION ANSWERED

"Any advice for inexpensive winter activities?"

Michelle Carlan, Philadelphia, PA

Thanks for the great question, Michelle! There are so many amazing ways to enjoy the winter months without breaking the bank. Our favorite activity is strolling through the city to see all of the beautiful lights. And it's free!! While you're walking around, you can stop by Dilworth Park for ice skating and pop up booths with small gifts and food vendors. You can also do a quick Google search to find local events that are happening near you.

