

Chapter 11:

BEING HEALTHY

You can't do your best at school if you're in poor shape physically and psychologically. There is increasing evidence that the connections between the body and the mind are very real. If you're under stress mentally, physically, or emotionally, you won't be able to think and learn well.

In this chapter you'll look at these areas and find ways to keep yourself healthy. You'll learn relaxation exercises to reduce stress. And you'll find ways to improve your eating habits and identify a useful exercise plan.

Treating yourself with care also relates to how you handle sex – emotionally and otherwise. You'll think through health issues related to sexual activity. You'll also read about the dangers of addictions: Alcohol, drugs, and cigarettes can all ruin your health and end your dreams. Finally, you'll learn to identify signs of depression and suicidal tendencies in those around you—and find out what you can do to help.

These are all important issues. We want you to take care of yourself—to be healthy and strong for the challenges ahead.

REDUCING STRESS

Stress is a fact of life for college students. Almost every aspect of your life is new. You're being continually tested, both formally and informally; you may have multiple responsibilities—at school, home, and work; and you're making decisions which may affect the rest of your life.

You may not always recognize when you're under stress. Especially in situations where there are no dramatic changes in your life, stress can slowly become a normal-seeming part of your life. Here's a checklist to determine if there's too much stress in your life:

- ◆ Are you sleeping poorly?
- ◆ Do you eat irregularly without enjoying your food?
- ◆ Do you engage in "binge" eating?
- ◆ Are you often irritable?
- ◆ Do you feel that you never have enough time to do what you have to do?

If any of these problems occur frequently, there's too much stress in your life.

What can be done to reduce stress?

If your stress is school-related, the LTL methods will solve much of that problem for you. You'll do better in college and feel better about yourself as a student. In particular, the LTL Task Management and Exam Preparation skills will help you reduce stress in daily life.

If you can't identify the source of your stress, you can help yourself deal with whatever seems to be the problem by doing short, frequent, relaxation exercises and physical workouts. We've included a detailed relaxation exercise on the next page. This exercise will help you deal more calmly with any anxiety-producing situation.

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

A busy schedule can be very stressful—and the stress can make it harder for you to get things done. Here's a technique that will help you handle stress:

The 30-Second Stress Reduction Exercise

1. For practice at home and in public—while waiting for the instructor to pass out an exam, or just before making a presentation:
 - ◆ Sit comfortably, with both feet on the floor and your hands resting on your thighs. You should have no bodily tension resulting from sitting at an angle, holding on to a pen, etc.
 - ◆ Close your eyes and count backwards from 30 to 1. Breathe very deeply from the abdomen, and count only when you let your breath out.
 - ◆ Practice this skill at home until you can use it easily to relax.

- ◆ **Important:** During this practice, put your hands on your knees, each hand relaxed, but lightly touch the middle finger of each hand with the thumb. (Use one of the middle fingers, not the index finger which you use all the time whenever you pick up something. We're trying to establish a new response, so we need something—like touching a middle finger to your thumb—which is a little unusual. Your body will learn to pair this gesture with a relaxed state. Later, if you repeat this gesture in a stressed situation, you'll immediately feel more relaxed.)

If you do this exercise once a day, you'll feel more relaxed. You'll develop a conditioned response to relaxation, which you'll have access to during stressful times by touching your fingers together in the same way you do during your practice exercise.

The 15-Minute Stress Reduction Exercise

If you need more than a simple count to relax, take 10–15 minutes and practice the following method:

- ◆ Recall a pleasant time when you were feeling very relaxed, such as sunbathing on the beach, walking through the woods, petting your cat. Try to imagine how you felt then, hearing and “seeing” in your mind what you heard and saw. Relive the experience in full detail—color, sensations, smells.
- ◆ Take time with this, then carry the feeling into the future. Imagine yourself taking the exam the way you want to feel, feeling confident, using the LTL skills you practiced at home. Notice that your thoughts are clear, that you easily recall what you need to know. You can clearly “see” your Question Charts and Key Word Diagrams.
- ◆ Conclude with a slow count backwards from 5 to 1, gradually bringing the feeling to the present, feeling refreshed and ready.

Assignment

Practice these relaxation skills at home. Even ten minutes of daily practice will reduce your stress and help you move towards achieving your goals.

A STRESS MANAGEMENT EXERCISE

If you want to practice stress management on a regular basis, you may wish to record the following on an audio cassette:

Sit in a comfortable chair in a quiet, darkened room. Put both feet on the floor and rest your hands on your thighs. Close your eyes, and feel your body relax.

Take a slow, relaxed, deep breath for every count.

Imagine you are opening a door, and will descend a flight of stairs. As you walk down the stairs, your body gets heavier and heavier.

*You're walking down the stairs now.
10... 9... 8... 7... 6... 5... 4... 3... 2... 1*

At the bottom of the stairs is a small door. Open the door, and you will see a lovely garden. There is a small pond in the middle of the garden, and tall trees surround it. The air is light, the sky is blue. Flowers are everywhere, in all colors. You sit down in the garden and feel wonderful. Look around. Feel the sun on your shoulders. Feel the relaxation spread through your body.

*Slowly raise your left hand: 1... 2... 3... 4... 5...
Now let your hand drop on your thigh.*

When you awake, whenever you're beginning to feel tense, lift your hand and let it drop on your thigh. You will immediately feel calm and relaxed.

For special situations, add the following:

When preparing for exams

You will clearly visualize your Question Charts and Key Word Diagrams during the exam.

If you're anxious about seeing an old boyfriend/girlfriend:

You will feel confident and relaxed when you see ____.

If you're preparing to give a talk

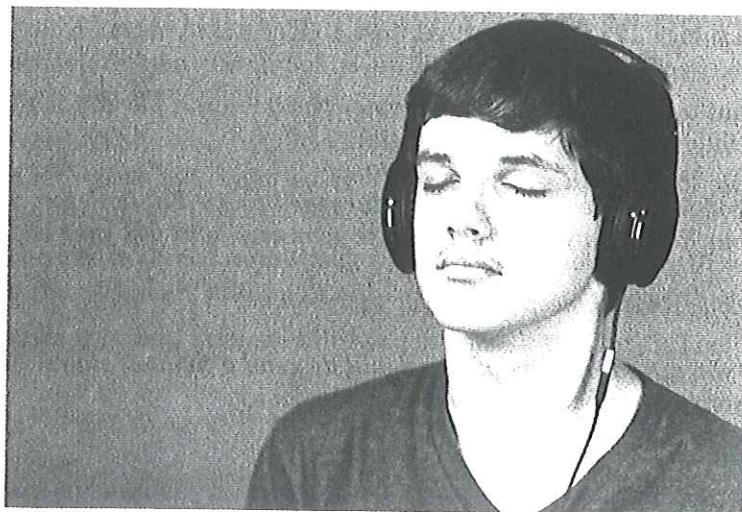
You will talk clearly and confidently, remembering everything in your Key Word Diagram as you talk.

Now you're going to leave the garden for awhile. Remember: You can come back to it whenever you want.

See yourself standing up and moving towards the door of the garden. The door is open, and you will walk up the stairs. As you walk up the stairs, you will feel lighter and lighter.

1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8... 9... 10

Now open your eyes. You feel calm and relaxed. Sit for a moment and relax.



Assignment

Use this tape once or twice a day to begin with. You may find that your increased calmness helps you sort out what's bothering you. If you're still feeling stressed—especially if you have answered “yes” to several of the signs of stress we noted above—make an appointment with a counselor at your school's Counseling Office.

Physical exercise is also a great way to get rid of stress. Do stretch exercises. Put on your sneakers and run around the block. Go to the gym and shoot baskets or slam a ball against the wall with a tennis racket. Take a bike ride, or swim a couple of laps in the local YMCA pool. Just a small amount of time engaging in vigorous activity does wonders for getting rid of tension.

Applying LTL Thinking Tools **Managing Stress**

Writing questions

Write some questions that the previous material raised for you—either questions directly reflecting the material (perhaps building on our questions), or questions which were not addressed, but are important to you.

Focusing on goals

After writing your questions, you should be ready to focus on your goals in this area. What changes would you like to make related to reducing stress in your daily life?

Dividing large tasks into smaller parts

What comes first? Write the order of changes that you think you can make in order of importance and/or how easily the changes might be made. Set some short-term goals.

Assessing your progress

How will you know if you're closer to meeting your short-term goals? Write down your short-term goals and take data on developments in this area.

Empower Yourself

Taking Control of Your Life

The problem: You may be very clear about your goal, but the process of getting there looks too hard. So you decide to give up your goal—and drift without a plan, seeing where things will lead you. For example, imagine you'd like to be an accountant, but you hate studying. Ask yourself: "What don't I like about studying?" Your answers might be, "I'd rather be out on the basketball court. And just studying is hard. I want to be out doing things with other people, period."

Solving problems with LTL. You'll break down a complex task—like studying for an accounting exam—into *smaller parts*—and play basketball as a reward during a *break*. You'll find other students with similar goals—and socialize by *testing each other* on exam questions you and the others predict. That is, you'll find ways to make the *means* to your goals both exciting and rewarding.

In Your Words:

Working with another student, examine a non-academic goal that you think might be very hard to reach.

Try this:

- ◆ Break up the goal into sub-goals: What comes first? Next?
- ◆ Find a way to have fun and reward yourself for achieving each sub-goal (either by promising yourself something you'd like when it's done, or by making it into an LTL "prediction" game, where the "game" part interests you).
- ◆ Don't try to achieve perfection, but when you've reached a sub-goal, try to figure out how you'd make the process of getting there more enjoyable next time.
- ◆ Don't forget to take breaks and reward yourself.
- ◆ Don't get stuck with one plan. Continue to look for what's working and take feedback on how to achieve what you're after—while having a sense of fun and progress.
- ◆ Remember that no pre-planned, prescription for action will last over time. No static structure is correct forever. You'll need a *dynamic* structure—one that can be changed when you have new information. The basic idea here is that you're more likely to stick to a long-range, hard-to-achieve goal if you not only break it up into parts, but also find ways to enjoy the *process* of getting there.

THE FOOD YOU EAT

Nutritional research has shown that there's a relationship between diet and the risk of getting cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. Since at college you may be on your own for the first time, setting habits of a lifetime, we'd like you to know about some of our suggestions:

- ◆ Reduce total fat and calorie intake. For example, avoid lots of red meat, sugar rich foods, and fast foods.
- ◆ Eat more complex carbohydrates, both starch and fiber. (Beans, peas, carrots, broccoli, and bran foods are in these categories.)
- ◆ Eat plenty of fruits, greens, and yellow vegetables.
- ◆ Don't let your diet become monotonous. Experiment with different combinations of foods and different spices. Find ways to enjoy foods that are good for you. Recipes from exotic countries can make good food taste terrific. Try cooking up some of these at a friend's apartment or a dorm kitchen. If you're eating institutional food, develop a taste for fruits and interesting salad combinations. It will pay off in more energy now and a healthier, longer life.

An Easy, Fad-Free Diet

Americans are often obsessed by dieting. They're concerned with overeating, but they overeat. They gain too much weight and become worried enough to try crash or fad diets. However, an extreme reduction in calories will not result in maintained weight loss, and may undermine the metabolism, causing a more rapid weight gain when normal eating is resumed. *The key to a healthy weight-control plan is to develop an interest in foods that are fun to eat and that are good for you.* Lots of different spices and unusual combinations of tastes and textures will help you love healthy food.

We've suggested some of the foods that are good for you in the section above.

Here's a way of eating that will help you stay healthy:

- ◆ Don't eat too little. In fact, stuff yourself with soups, salads, protein (lean meat, chicken, fish), and vegetables. You'll be so full that you won't have room for dessert. And you'll never feel food-deprived, the feeling which leads to dramatic diet-breaking and resumed weight-gain.
- ◆ Reduce your consumption of breads, high fat-content fried foods, and sugar-laden foods.
- ◆ Try it. What do you have to lose?

In this society importance has been placed on getting and keeping slim. When this becomes an obsession, and for people who are perfectionists by nature, eating disorders can occur. The most common of these are anorexia and bulimia. Anorexia is a form of self-starvation characterized by the person's inability to recognize that unhealthy weight loss is taking place. Even a severely malnourished, 80-pound woman (most anorectics are women) will often deny that she has an eating problem. A bulimic person binges on foods, often high calorie foods, then purges herself (again, most are women) by vomiting. If you recognize these symptoms in yourself or in someone close to you, it's important for you to know the medical consequences of these behaviors. Tooth enamel loss, damaged esophagus and salivary glands can result from frequent vomiting. Even more seriously, both bulimia and anorexia can lead to interrupted menstrual cycles, muscle weakening, and damaged internal organs, including the liver, kidneys, and digestive organs. Death may result from irregular heart rhythms caused by the body's fluid imbalance.

If you or a friend of yours is a victim of an eating disorder, contact your school's counseling office. These disorders are serious but treatable.

EXERCISING FOR YOUR HEALTH

Do you have any regular exercise program? Do you swim, jog, play tennis, use whatever sports facilities your college has? Here are some of the benefits of such a program:

- ❖ You'll have more energy to do everything, and you'll feel more positive.
- ❖ You'll be more relaxed, less stressed. You'll sleep better, digest your food better, and feel irritable less often. So you'll have fewer fights with your roommate, boy/girlfriend, and parents.
- ❖ When you begin to feel angry or frustrated, you'll have an outlet for getting rid of the negative energy and be better able to sort through what's really bothering you.

In Your Words:

An Exercise Plan

In the space below, list exercise activities that you enjoy—and that you'd have time for, now that you're at college. How could you fit these activities into your life?

What's My Best Weight For Good Health and a Long Life?

Statistics compiled by life insurance companies show that the following weights are most likely to be associated with longevity. The weights shown are measured in pounds, and are for different heights and body frames, when dressed in indoor clothing.

Height	MEN		
	Small Frame	Medium Frame	Large Frame
5'2"	128-134	131-141	138-150
5'3"	130-136	133-143	140-153
5'4"	132-138	135-145	142-156
5'5"	134-140	137-148	144-160
5'6"	136-142	139-151	146-164
5'7"	138-145	142-154	149-168
5'8"	140-148	145-157	152-172
5'9"	142-151	148-160	155-176
5'10"	144-154	151-163	158-180
5'11"	146-157	154-166	161-184
6'0"	149-160	157-170	164-188
6'1"	152-164	160-174	168-192
6'2"	155-168	164-178	172-197
6'3"	158-172	167-182	176-202
6'4"	162-176	171-187	181-207

Height	WOMEN		
	Small Frame	Medium Frame	Large Frame
4'10"	102-111	109-121	118-131
4'11"	103-113	111-123	120-134
5'0"	104-115	113-126	122-137
5'1"	106-118	115-129	125-140
5'2"	108-121	118-132	128-143
5'3"	111-124	121-135	131-147
5'4"	114-127	124-138	134-151
5'5"	117-130	127-141	137-155
5'6"	120-133	130-144	140-159
5'7"	123-136	133-147	143-163
5'8"	126-139	136-150	146-167
5'9"	129-142	139-153	149-170
5'10"	132-145	142-156	152-173
5'11"	135-148	145-159	155-176
6'0"	138-151	148-162	158-179

Applying LTL Thinking Tools
Food and Fitness

Writing questions

Write some questions which the previous material raised for you—either questions directly reflecting the material (perhaps building on our questions), or questions which were not addressed, but are important to you.

Focusing on goals

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Dividing large tasks into smaller parts

What comes first? Write the order of changes that you think you can make in order of importance and/or how easily the changes might be made. Set some short-term goals in this area.

Assessing your progress

How will you know if you're closer to meeting your short-term goals?

THE QUESTION OF SEX

Should you or shouldn't you? It seems from all the media hype that everyone over the age of seventeen is sexually active. But this is not so, and should only be so for you at the *time* and in the *way* you want it to be. Here are some things to consider:

Sex is more than two bodies meeting. It's all the good things you've read and heard about only when it's an expression of shared intimacy and caring. Otherwise, it's a pretty lonely business.

- ◆ Do you feel close enough to your partner to share your deepest feelings? Does he/she share equally with you?
- ◆ Can you talk about anything with that person—especially including birth control methods?
- ◆ Would you—do you—feel close to and happy with that person in non-sexual settings?
- ◆ Do you feel pressured into physical situations? Do you feel that, as a “macho” guy, you ought to place pressure on your partner? Or that as a woman, you have to prove your “sophistication?”
- ◆ Do you use sex to “punish” yourself? Many young people feel insecure about their social place, and express their insecurity through “sleeping around.” That's really a call for help. If you're in that situation, make an appointment with someone from your campus Counseling Center to help you feel more comfortable with yourself and others.

A Special Caution

If you're at a residential school, it's probably the first time you've lived away from home. As we've said, people in that situation often feel they have to “prove” something to themselves and others about their new status. Be aware. Don't let yourself get pressed into something you don't want to do.

If you've taken these issues into account, and shared them in open discussion with your partner, there are some additional matters to consider on the following pages: birth control, sexually transmitted diseases, what you should know about AIDS, and how to protect yourself from sexual assault.

Did you know that:

- 20% of all children born in this country are raised by teenagers.
- Most teen marriages don't survive more than five years.
- Pregnancy is the most frequently given reason for women dropping out of school.
- Prematurity and low birth rate are substantially increased when the mothers are teenagers.
- College-aged young women are approaching their most fertile period in life. Since the time of ovulation is not easy to pin-point accurately, and sperm can live for up to three days, unprotected sex is a recipe for pregnancy.

If you're close enough to be sexually intimate, then you should be close enough to talk about the possible consequences of your intimacy.

Birth control is the responsibility of both men and women—neither should assume that the issue is “taken care of.” If you decide to be sexually active, and have a partner you feel close to, you might consider visiting a birth control center together. Here are some of the most commonly used birth control methods:

- *Condoms and foam* can be purchased at any drug store, and are 98% effective when used together every time you have intercourse. They are significantly less effective when used separately. For maximal effectiveness, carefully follow the written instructions on their use.
- *I.U.D.s or Intrauterine Devices* must be fitted by a doctor. They are 95–97% effective in preventing pregnancy. They're not for everyone. Your doctor will be able to tell you if you're a good candidate for this form of birth control.
- *Diaphragms* must be fitted by a physician or nurse practitioner, and carefully placed each time they are used. Also, diaphragms must be used with spermicidal jelly. If a diaphragm is not used every time, a woman runs a 10-fold risk of becoming pregnant.
- *Birth control pills* are synthetic hormones. Taken as prescribed by a physician, they are 99% effective. However, the pill is only effective if it is taken every day of a 21-day cycle. If one or two days are missed, you should consider the pill ineffective for the remainder of that cycle, and use other birth control methods.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Serious sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) range from the potentially devastating but usually treatable—like chlamydia, gonorrhea or syphilis, to the incurable—like herpes, or fatal—like AIDS. It's important to realize that although you may be a "nice" person, no one is immune to these diseases. *One exposure is all that's needed.*

Here are some things you need to know about the most common treatable STDs, chlamydia, syphilis, and gonorrhea. At present, chlamydia is the nation's most common venereal disease: Several surveys indicate that one in six sexually active teenage girls has the disease. Moreover, teenage girls are most at risk for developing serious complications from the disease. A single untreated bout with chlamydia can lead to infertility in women. The symptoms of syphilis and gonorrhea will disappear over time. But untreated syphilis can irreversibly damage your brain, internal organs, and nervous system; untreated gonorrhea can result in permanent sterility.

At the present time, there is no cure for genital herpes, which is related to cancer of the cervix. Genital herpes may also be transmitted through oral sex with a person having an outbreak of oral herpes.

The most effective ways of protecting yourself against any form of venereal disease are:

- ◆ Using condoms during sex, even during foreplay.
- ◆ Reducing the number of your sexual partners. Monogamous relationships are helpful for both emotional and physical well-being.

While there are often genital symptoms for STDs, you may be infected but symptom-free. So if you've been sexually active with people who are active with others, get yourself checked out at your campus or local health center.

In Your Words:

A Healthy Approach

Imagine that you're about to talk with a young person you care about—a younger brother, sister, or cousin—about having a responsible approach to sexual activity. In your own words, what would you say to this young person to help him or her be appropriately careful in this area?

What Every College Student Should Know About AIDS

"Unless it is possible to know with absolute certainty that your sex partner is not infected with AIDS, through sex or through drug use, you're taking a chance of becoming infected."

Former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop

"Everyone, particularly sexually active youngsters, should know that having sex without a condom and/or spermicidal jelly (which can help prevent a woman from being infected) is risking your life."

Robert Bazell, NBC Science Correspondent

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a breakdown of the body's immune system which appears to be invariably fatal and which is presently incurable. The panic created in the press about AIDS has led many people to disregard the most important fact about the disease: It is not casually contracted. *Not a single case of AIDS has been attributed to non-intimate contact with an infected person.* You can't contract the disease by going to dinner with, sitting next to, or sharing a swimming pool with an AIDS victim.

AIDS is transmitted through exchanges of bodily fluids—through dirty needles used by intravenous drug users, and through sexual intercourse. AIDS may be transmitted through sex with both men and women. If you have unprotected sex with someone who has had other unprotected sexual contacts, you may be at risk.

You can decrease your risk of getting AIDS by

- ◆ Reducing your number of different sexual partners.
- ◆ Using condoms during sex, including foreplay.
- ◆ Knowing about the lifestyle of your partner and avoiding sexual contact with people who place themselves at risk (intravenous drug users, and people who have had contact with prostitutes, are bisexual or are otherwise promiscuous).
- ◆ Asking about the health status of your partners.
- ◆ Eliminating your use of illegal drugs and reducing your alcohol intake—both of these can weaken your body's resistance to infection. Especially eliminate use of inhalants and intravenous drugs.
- ◆ Not sharing toothbrushes, razors, or other objects that might be contaminated with infected blood.

If you think you might have contracted an STD, get tested immediately at your college or local health center. Early treatment can provide a complete cure for most STDs—and there are new, increasingly effective, treatments for AIDS. For the latest information on STDs and AIDS, call

- ◆ National STD Hotline (800) 227-8922
- ◆ National AIDS Hotline (800) 342-2437

Or visit the website of the Center for Disease Control at <http://www.cdc.gov/>

Protecting Yourself From Sexual Assault

Here are some things you should keep in mind to help reduce your chances of becoming the victim of a sexual attack:

Attacks by Strangers

- ◆ Avoid dark secluded places.
- ◆ If you must go out late at night, be sure you are accompanied by a friend.
- ◆ Keep your car door locked when driving at night, and always park in a well-lit area.
- ◆ Always stay alert when you're alone. Walk purposefully and with direction. People who look like they're daydreaming appear more vulnerable to a potential attacker.
- ◆ Report suspicious activities to your campus police.

Date Rape

In most sexual attacks, the victim knows the attacker. Some people justify "date rape" to themselves in a variety of ways—"She was asking for it," "She should have known what to expect," "She's a big girl now." This is wrong. Forcing another person to engage in sexual behavior is a crime, punishable by jail. *There is no excuse for attacking another person.*

Take "No" for an answer. Do not give yourself an excuse for violating another human being.

To minimize the chance of being a victim of date rape:

- ◆ Avoid being alone with a person who is intoxicated by liquor or drugs. People in these situations cannot be reasoned with.
- ◆ If you do not want to have sex with a date, (one who is not drunk or stoned, whom you can talk with), let him know firmly. Tell him that this is something you do not want, that you will report him to campus authorities and the police. Say "No"—and also give clear non-verbal cues. You'll rarely be attacked by a friend whose mind is clear of liquor and drugs and who knows that you mean no.
- ◆ Practice saying "no" in your head before a date, if that is what you want. Rehearse what you'd say or do if pressured to have unwanted sex.

A person who places you under strong pressure to have sex is disregarding your interests—and you. And a person who you know relatively casually may have had numerous sexual partners. Unprotected sex with that person can place you at risk for an STD—including AIDS.

ADDICTIONS 1: ALCOHOL

A Dozen Myths About Drinking

- Myth 1* *Drugs are the real substance abuse problem in this country.*
Truth True. And the biggest drug problem is alcohol abuse. Alcohol is a drug that acts as a depressant on the central nervous system. About 300,000 Americans are addicted to heroin. But 9,000,000 are addicted to alcohol.
- Myth 2* *People get sick or drunk from switching drinks.*
Truth Switching drinks doesn't matter too much. The usual cause of these problems is drinking too much.
- Myth 3* *You can't get drunk or become alcoholic if you stick to beer.*
Truth The effect may be a little slower, and you may need to drink more beer or wine than hard liquor, but the effect is the same. If you drink the same amount of alcohol, whatever the source, the level of alcohol in your blood will be the same.
- Myth 4* *Only 25% of fatal highway accidents are related to alcohol consumption.*
Truth 50% of all fatal highway accidents are alcohol-related. And an even greater percentage of non-fatal accidents are linked to alcohol.
- Myth 5* *Women usually do not become alcoholic.*
Truth Today almost 30% of alcoholics are women.
- Myth 6* *Alcohol will keep you warm. It's good insulation at football games.*
Truth No. Alcohol makes your blood vessels expand and your body loses its natural heat.
- Myth 7* *"Social" drinkers don't become alcoholic.*
Truth Not true. You can become just as drunk and just as dependent on drink whether you drink alone or with others.
- Myth 8* *People are more enjoyable when they've had something to drink.*
Truth Drunkenness is not any funnier than any other illness or disability. And people who are drunk are often more hostile and dangerous than they are sober: Half of all murders and one-third of all suicides are alcohol-related.
- Myth 9* *A few drinks won't damage an unborn child.*
Truth Wrong. Research shows that as few as 2–4 drinks on any one day in a 9-month pregnancy carries a 10% risk of fetal abnormality. Ten drinks on any day of a pregnancy results in a 75% risk of delivering an abnormal child. Fetal alcohol syndrome is the third leading cause of mental retardation.

- Myth 10** *Drinking coffee or taking a cold shower will sober you up quickly.*
Truth: Your body oxidizes alcohol at a constant rate; the liver burns alcohol at a rate of 1/2 ounce of alcohol (one can of beer or one mixed drink) an hour. Time is the only thing that matters in getting sober.
- Myth 11** *People are more relaxed and drive better after a few drinks.*
Truth: Alcohol affects judgment. Studies have shown that even professional drivers' abilities diminish after 2–4 drinks.
- Myth 12** *A Bloody Mary in the morning is a great cure for a hangover.*
Truth: There is no “cure” for a hangover. And drinking in the morning is more likely to produce intoxication later in the day, since there's less food in the stomach to slow down absorption.

Questions and Answers About Drinking

How can you tell if you're a problem drinker?

- ◆ Do you drink often to the point of getting drunk?
- ◆ Do you drink more than your friends?
- ◆ Do you feel that you “need a drink” whenever you're under pressure?
- ◆ Do you drink alone?
- ◆ Do you skip classes because of drinking?
- ◆ Have you ever had a problem with the police related to your drinking?
- ◆ Do you often feel embarrassed by what you did when you were drinking?
- ◆ Do you have drinking-related blackouts?
- ◆ Do you have difficulty putting a limit on your drinking or find that you get drunk even when you try to stay sober?
- ◆ Do your friends tell you that you drink too much?

What about drinking and driving?

If you're drunk, don't drive. Someone in your group should be the “designated driver”—someone who has *not* been drinking. If you have no designated driver, spend the night on a friend's couch. Or call someone you know or a taxi to get home if you're drunk.

- ◆ 50% of all fatal highway accidents are alcohol-related.
- ◆ 75% of all all-terrain vehicle fatalities are alcohol-related.
- ◆ 20–37% of all emergency-room trauma victims involve alcohol.

You'll even have difficulty with sports activities. For example:

- ◆ 40% of all drowning accidents involve alcohol.
- ◆ 40%–50% of youth diving injuries involve alcohol.

How can you help a friend who drinks too much?

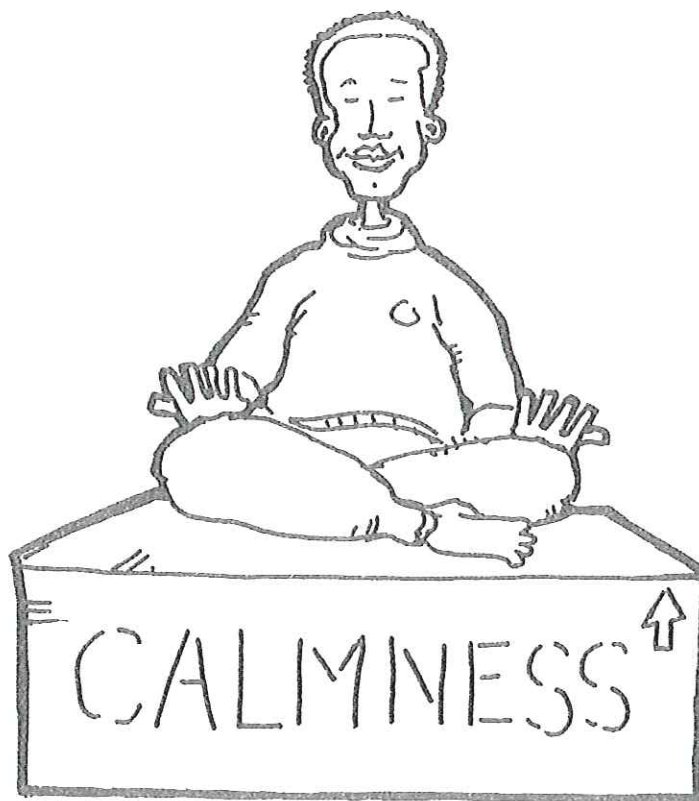
- ◆ Don't be judgmental. Show that you care, expect resistance and denial, and offer specific suggestions about where to go for help.
- ◆ Before mentioning this topic with your friend, find out who can help. (e.g., Call your local Alcoholics Anonymous chapter.)

What if there's an alcohol-related medical emergency?

- ◆ Keep calm. Being too anxious can make the problem worse.
- ◆ Don't give your friend food, drink, or medication that might induce vomiting, which could result in choking.
- ◆ Keep the person still, and get immediate medical help.
- ◆ Call your school's infirmary, police, or a local hospital.
- ◆ Monitor your friend's breathing; don't put the person in a cold shower. The shock might cause him/her to pass out.
- ◆ Do not provoke the person. Keep your distance and act calmly. Intoxicated people are often dangerous to themselves and others.

What if you're giving a party but don't want people to get drunk?

- ◆ Perrier with a twist of lime looks just as sophisticated as an alcoholic drink and causes a lot less damage. Try serving non-alcoholic beverages, and don't stock hard liquor. Most people really don't want to get drunk.
- ◆ Have lots of small things to eat—trays of cheese and peanuts are especially good, since they're high in protein. For some people, food can be a substitute for drinking.
- ◆ Clear the floor for dancing. It's hard to get drunk when you're busy doing something else. And, if people dance at your party, it will be more important to dance well—and to keep dancing—than to stand around fading out into an alcoholic haze.



ADDICTIONS 2: DRUGS

The most widely used drugs today are marijuana ("pot," "grass") and cocaine ("coke"). You know that the use of drugs is illegal. If you know about these drugs' physical and psychological effects, you'll understand how they can affect your health.

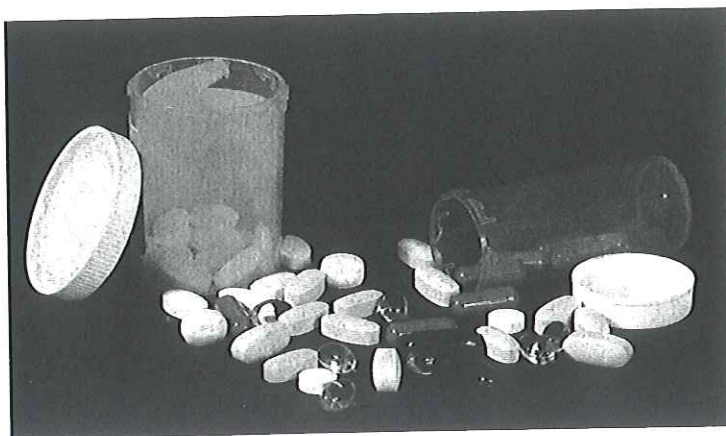
Marijuana appears to slow down the world around the user. It slows down the user's reactions and coordination, so it's really dangerous to use when driving. Unfortunately, the effects of the drug can last 10-12 hours after the initial "high," so the user remains at risk as a driver long after the drug's effects seem to have disappeared. Studies show that marijuana damages lungs. Marijuana tars contain 50% more carcinogens than do high-tar cigarettes.

Marijuana affects sex hormone levels, which is especially dangerous for adolescents. It can strain the heart, since the drug results in an increase in heart rate up to 160 beats per minute.

Cocaine results in a high which is quickly followed by severe depression. There's a danger of overdose when coke is injected or smoked (in the form of rock cocaine, or "crack").

Cocaine can short-circuit the body's electrical system, resulting in sudden death. There is no antidote to the direct stimulation to the brain produced by this effect of cocaine. For example, if the basketball player Len Bias had suffered this effect of cocaine in a hospital emergency room, nothing could have been done to save him.

"Designer drugs" are chemical alterations of illegal drugs. They're tailor-made to have effects similar to those of illegal drugs. Making designer drugs is a way that people in the underground drug trade have of staying one step ahead of the law: If a particular drug is illegal, they make a similar one, different enough chemically so that there's a time lapse between the drug's manufacture and its classification as illegal. But legal or not, one dose of a drug with the "wrong" manageable parts can cause irreparable damage to the brain.



Myth: If you've taken cocaine without ill effects, you won't have a problem with it.

Truth: For a first-time or a 100th time cocaine user, the sudden-death syndrome may occur.

Myth: Cocaine is not addictive.

Truth: Because of the drug's direct effect on the pleasure center of the brain, it is the most highly addictive drug known to man. In an experiment with monkeys given the choice between cocaine and food, the monkeys chose to starve to death rather than give up cocaine.

IF YOU NEED HELP TO BEAT ALCOHOL OR DRUGS...

Go to your school's counseling office or call your local telephone information for the number of one of the following treatment centers in your area. We've listed the national number where available:

Alcohol 24-hour Hot Line: (800) 252-6465

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services: (212) 870-3400

Local chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous: See internet for local listing

Narcotics Anonymous: See internet for local listing



ADDICTIONS 3: CIGARETTES

-You're dying for a smoke

Millions of Americans have quit smoking for some very good reasons:

- ◆ Men who smoke less than 1/2 pack a day have a death rate 60% higher than non-smokers. The rate increases with the number of cigarettes smoked: 2 or more packs a day means a death rate 120% above normal.
- ◆ The lung cancer rate of women has doubled in ten years due to increases in women smoking cigarettes over the last 20 years.
- ◆ The major health risks for smokers are heart disease (cigarette smokers have 70% more heart attacks than nonsmokers) and lung cancer (which is almost entirely caused by cigarette smoking).

If you're impressed by these facts, and want to stop smoking, here are some tips on quitting from the American Cancer Society:

- ◆ 50% of successful quitters did it cold turkey; the other 50% quit gradually. The first 48 hours are critical for most people. Once you pass them, it will be easier each day. So pick the tips that suit you.
- ◆ Smoke one less cigarette each day.
- ◆ Make each cigarette a special decision—and put off making the decision.
- ◆ Don't give up cigarettes completely. Carry one with you in case of need. You'll find you're saving it permanently.
- ◆ Don't tell yourself you're quitting "forever." Stop for a day. Then try quitting for another day—and the next day, and the next day.
- ◆ Tell your friends and family you're quitting. A public commitment bolsters will-power.
- ◆ Pick Q (Quit) Day and quit.
- ◆ When you stop smoking, get rid of all cigarettes, ashtrays, matches, etc.
- ◆ Keep a supply of chewing gum, cough drops, carrot sticks, etc.
- ◆ Nervousness, hunger, etc. are signs of the body's readjustment. If you find these side effects hard to manage, ask your doctor or your college's health service for help.

Join the 33,000,000 Americans who have quit. You can too!

Applying LTL Thinking Tools

Controlling Addictions

Writing questions

Write some questions which the previous material raised for you—either questions directly reflecting the material (perhaps building on our questions), or questions which were not addressed, but are important to you.

Focusing on goals

After writing your questions, you should be ready to focus on your goals in this area. What changes would you like to make related to controlling addictions in your daily life?

Breaking large tasks into manageable parts

What comes first? Write the order of changes that you think you can make in order of importance and/or how easily the changes might be made. Set some short-term goals in this area.

Assessing your progress

How will you know if you're closer to meeting your short-term goals?

Internet Exercise

Explore the Internet for websites related to "health."

1. Go to Yahoo! and click on a search engine like Webcrawler or Infoseek.
2. When you get to that search engine, click on "health."

LENDING A HELPING HAND

Good mental health also means helping others. In this section, we'll talk about some methods you can use to help others who are in trouble.

What Are the Signs of Depression or Suicidal Tendencies?

If a friend is showing some of these symptoms, he or she may be going through a major depression. Since suicide is the third leading cause of death among teenagers, it's important to be aware of these signs in others:

- ◆ Noticeable change in eating and sleeping habits
- ◆ Withdrawal from friends and family
- ◆ Persistent boredom
- ◆ Decline in quality of school work
- ◆ Violent or rebellious behavior
- ◆ Running away
- ◆ Drug and alcohol abuse
- ◆ Sudden shifts in mood from euphoric to depressed
- ◆ Unusual neglect of personal appearance
- ◆ Difficulty concentrating in conversation and work
- ◆ Radical personality change
- ◆ Psychosomatic complaints
- ◆ Conversation about suicide, either personal or in the abstract
- ◆ Evidence of mental confusion—disoriented in time or place, delusional, bewildered, responding inappropriately to conversation or events.

Depression is both a physical and psychological state. It may be caused by purely physical factors, such as anemia, or psychological factors, such as personal loss (the death of a friend, the end of a romance or marriage), feelings of failure (poor academic or athletic performance), or a combination of these. Depression is almost always curable and suicide is usually preventable. But you are not a professional, and cannot improve the situation by yourself. If you notice the signs of depression we have noted above, seek out someone at your school's Counseling Office and make a referral for your friend. Your friend may not be willing to seek help on his/her own, but the Counseling Office people will have good ideas about how to "reach" him or her. Finally, be aware of warning signals: You're starting to avoid your friend (perhaps because his/her depression is beginning to "get to you"), or you're trying too hard to help your friend. In these cases, the situation is getting risky. Seek professional help as soon as you recognize this pattern.

The LTL Journal

Continue your journal of your thoughts and feelings. How can the information in this chapter help you have more control over your life?