

SECRETS FOR A **LONGER, HAPPIER LIFE**

Shhh ... these experts are ready to let you in on their secrets for how to live a longer, happier life.

The first secret? There are no secrets! Laura Grovogel, wellness manager at Aurora BayCare Medical Center, explains, "It's really about well-rounded health and wellbeing."

While that may mean longevity looks a little different for each of us, we can all enhance our lives by developing meaningful connections with others — and ourselves.

GET CONNECTED

Grovogel advises people to look for balance and to avoid any products or people that promise quick fixes. "Eat healthy, move often and sleep between seven and nine hours each night," she says.

In addition to these physical fixes, Grovogel also advocates resiliency, which can be found through social connection.

"Some experts call loneliness the new tobacco," Grovogel says. "Social connection takes work, but its effects are worth it. Research has found that the number of friends a person has correlates with a meaningful life."

VOLUNTEER

Why not find social connection by giving back to the community as a volunteer?

"Volunteering can provide opportunities to explore interests, learn new skills, meet people from different backgrounds and become part of a larger community," says Colleen Holz, volunteer coordinator at the Appleton Public Library.

"As you give to others, you'll find the joy and satisfaction that come from completing tasks and actively supporting a cause," explains Holz.

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH POSITIVE PEOPLE

Community leader Sarah Schneider knows firsthand about the impact volunteering has on health and happiness. As the founder of Thrive lunch and an advocate for



the Fox Cities Exhibition Center, she gives back to the community. At the same time, she looks to her friends and mentors for strength.

“Surround yourself with people better than you,” recommends Schneider. “They’ll teach you, they’ll mentor you, they’ll keep you grounded, they’ll believe in you when you don’t believe in yourself.”

“Even in my professional circles, I choose to be around strong leaders, good mothers — people who possess talents and gifts that take me out of my comfort zone,” says Schneider. “Those strong women don’t participate or engage in negative behaviors.”

KNOW WHEN TO BE SILENT AND STILL

“Social connection is valuable,

of course, but so is taking time to be still,” explains Schneider. “There’s never a shortage of things being asked of us. I do my best thinking when I’m still.”

She adds, “Be intentional about letting your thoughts go around a problem you’re trying to solve, something you might be missing, a system or process that might be improved or identify an unmet need.”

CREATE SPACE FOR YOURSELF

Yoga teacher, writer and Reiki master Justine Beck of Breathing Tree Yoga in Neenah helps people find stillness through breathing, yoga and journaling.

“By mindfully breathing, we can pause and catch up on processing our life,” says Beck. “Journaling is another simple, accessible and creative way to cope with external and internal stressors and assists in staying grounded. The hand to pen to paper documentation of experiences, feelings, thoughts, lists, ideas and so forth creates a connection between brain and body that develops awareness, intention, creativity, gratitude and processing of one’s own life.”

She reveals, “There is a commitment that develops over time with need to create a safe and loving space for the self.”

As 2017 unfolds, take the time to give yourself that space while also rooting yourself into communities that deliver the support and positive feedback you need to access your own resiliency. **W**

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