



**It seems like everything sleeps in winter, but it's really a time of
renewal and reflection.**

-Elizabeth Camden

Renewal has several meanings, but I felt this one is pertinent to our topic. It is “the replacing or repair of something that is worn out, run-down or broken.” This quote is important because as there are several times a year that we go through a renewal process, but I think at this time of year it is particularly important. I have seen many stressors take their toll on people in their physical health as well as their mental and emotional health over the last 20 months. We are drained, our focus is waning and we need a break! It is time to focus our efforts on our own renewal, self-care and quieting the mind. There are many ways to “renew” ourselves, so you need to find what works for you.

Renewal can mean spending time with friends and family to have that energy to fill up our own cups. It can mean spending time by ourselves, reading, walking, sitting or just enjoying a cup of coffee. What if renewal means a change of scenery or a new path. When we are worn out, run-down or broken, finding the things that give us purpose to renew our own spirit is a must. There are things in my life that I consider “non-negotiables.” Mine are sleep, exercising, family, friends and eating right. When I do these things, they renew my body, my mind and my spirit. By definition “non-negotiables” are not open to discussion or modification. What are your non-negotiables? I want you to make a list of your own non-negotiables. Only then can you find the pieces of the puzzle that start your renewal process.

I have stated this before, I am not a New Years resolution person. I don't believe in it. What I believe is that if it is important to you, you shouldn't wait until January 1st to do it! Start now, start your renewal process by finding your non-negotiables in your life.

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Renewal and Reflection

As I get older, (I turned 50 this year) it is inevitable for me to think about all the things that have happened in my life, and those that have contributed to it, like my family, my friends, and coworkers. I like this theme of renewal and reflection because it truly gives us pause to think and even share our story. As you know I have dedicated this section to my own personal stories so what I share today is one of the hardest things I have been through.

This past September my husband and I lost a very close family friend to suicide. He and his family were the type of friends that we shared a great deal of time with and many events in our lives together-first communions, confirmations, graduations. He was the guy who helped coach sports with my husband. Our two boys are the same age and have been best friends since preschool. And even though he didn't have any girls, he treated my daughter as if she were his own. I had a terrible time processing what happened, I was a wreck. I couldn't sleep and I had trouble eating and trying to help my children process what had happened was especially difficult when I could barely process it myself. I cried with them and let them know it was perfectly fine to be angry and sad and to express that. I also told my kids that the hurt will never go away! It will lessen over time, but it will always be there. When you have a hole in your heart, its because you know you loved someone!

I share this story, not to gain sympathy, but to share that we are not alone. My reflection over the last several months have been of all the good that he and his family have done for us and their community. I also reflect on several people who were especially helpful to me. One of my dear friends, on a walk one day this fall, said to me, "you had your hand out, he just couldn't see it through his darkness." I will never forget her saying that, it has eased a lot of my pain. I hope she knows that!! The day I found out, I was at an early morning health screening and a couple of our employees just hugged me. I needed that! I know I told them how much that meant to me, but I feel it needs to be said again-they were amazing and they knew what I needed in the moment!

So reflect on the good and the bad times in life, remember who was there for you, remember the love and kindness shared by friends, family and even coworkers. When we are hurting it is important to share and tell the people around you. Reflection gives us not only a chance to remember, but to consider what is ahead of us when we move forward and who is standing beside us when we do.

For Mental Health Help,
Contact:

1. Your school's EAP (employee assistance program)
2. Your primary care physician's office
3. NAMI-National Alliance on Mental Illness at 1-800-950-6264
4. A family member or a friend
5. 2-1-1 (NEPA helpline for access to health and human services), hours 24/7.
6. Lycoming/Clinton Mental Health/Intellectual Disabilities Program at 570-326-7895, Hours 8-4:30pm



Platinum Forms due 12/1/21
(The form is attached to this email.)

Saturday Health Screenings, To Register click here:

<https://upmchealthypartners.as.me/LCIC>

Saturday, December 11th 8-9:30am

Saturday, January 15th, 8-9:30

Saturday, February 26th, 8-9:30

Saturday, March 26th, 8-9:30

LCIC Health Courses coming up-Click on the links below to register.

Tuesday, December 7th, 5:30-6:30pm Fitness and Flexibility (with Kristen-Fitness specialist, who will take us through some exercises surrounding flexibility so wear your comfortable clothes to get a little movement in. To register, click below.

<https://www.elnr.org/Register.aspx?ScheduleID=5269>

Women in Investing-Wednesday, December 15th, 6:00-7:00pm, This presentation is for women to understand the advantages women have when it comes to investing, the challenges that women face and real strategies for meeting those challenges. To register click below.

<https://www.elnr.org/Register.aspx?ScheduleID=5270>

Cooking with Carnie -Thursday, January 13th 6-7pm, Zoom course. Butternut Squash Risotto and Garlic Shrimp, To register, click below.

<https://www.elnr.org/Register.aspx?ScheduleID=5271>

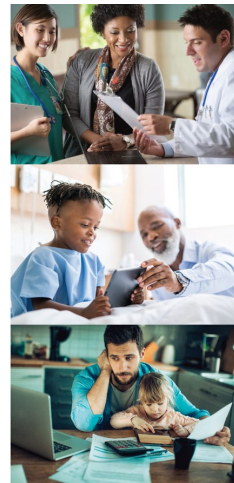
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Health Advocate

DID YOU KNOW? Health advocate not only helps with our wellness piece, they can do so much more. Health Advocate can provide help for your whole family: employees, spouses, dependents, parents and parents-in-law!

Your Personal Health Advocate can help in the following ways:

- ♦ Coordinate care with your providers
- ♦ Provide support for your medical condition
- ♦ Help you find the right doctors
- ♦ Research and arrange second opinions
- ♦ Help with confusing paperwork issues
- ♦ Provide special help for Mom & Dad



Who are the Personal Health Advocates?

✓ **Registered Nurses**

with experience in clinical care, case management, nursing education, supervision and administration

✓ **Benefits experts**

with experience in claims management and provider group administration

✓ **Full-time medical directors**

✓ **Trained clinical professionals**

including social workers, behavior change counselors, nutritionists, dieticians, dental care and pharmacy

1-866-695-8622

Listen to your Gut!



When I received an email from Penn College employee, Carly Herman, it was in response to some information I had sent out regarding the Embrace Your Path wellness program. The last thing she said in her email "if there's ever a scenario or event that my chronic illness would be useful, I'm glad to share my story. It has been a life changing event that I continue to navigate, with hopes of improvement." Naturally I emailed her right back asking for a time for us to meet in person.

When I met Carly in person you would never know that she has a chronic illness, she is a strong, vibrant young woman who on the day we met, had a great amount of energy. She explained that on her good days, she can be pretty good, but on her bad days, it's a lottery on whether she can get out of bed.

In June of 2020 Carly started to experience serious pain in her abdomen. She sought care immediately from a physician who diagnosed her with gastroenteritis. (Gastroenteritis is a short-term illness triggered by an infection and inflammation of the digestive system. Symptoms can include abdominal cramps, diarrhea and vomiting.) She was treated with antibiotics. After that treatment didn't work she sought several specialists (they were looking at a C.Difficile infection which can be life threatening and can occur after long term antibiotic use) as she still couldn't eat and was experiencing severe pain. She received many tests including an endoscopy and a colonoscopy with all tests coming back as normal. They diagnosed her with gastroparesis (which means partial paralysis of the stomach, a disease in which the stomach cannot empty itself of food in a normal way. If you have this condition, damaged nerves and muscles don't function with their normal strength and coordination — slowing the movement of contents through your digestive system). With no relief, she was referred to a specialist in nutrition who gave her a hydrogen/methane gas test since she still had pain/bloating in her abdomen. That test came back positive (which means there is an overgrowth of small intestine bacteria (SIBO) and was put on 3 different antibiotics that also didn't work. She also sought the help of a dietician who checked her for Vitamin and Mineral deficiencies. Along with her abdomen and bowel symptoms, Carly was experiencing brain fog/lethargy. She has had a host of other tests done such as CT scans and ultrasounds which also came back as normal. I asked the question about her mental health too as chronic illnesses/physical pain can also take a toll on your mental health. She said she became anxious and depressed as she couldn't get back to doing the things she loved to do. She wanted to sleep all the time due to her illness. She said she still needs to sleep at least 9-10 hours to feel somewhat normal. (I did ask if she was tested for Covid at that point.)

Carly as of right now has been diagnosed with IBS or Irritable bowel syndrome. (Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a common disorder that affects the large intestine. Signs and symptoms include cramping, abdominal pain, bloating, gas, and diarrhea or constipation, or both. IBS is a chronic condition that you'll need to manage long term.) Carly has a very restrictive diet to control her physical symptoms, which includes no gluten, dairy, fruit, eggs, caffeine or sweeteners. She sticks to a low Fodmap (sugars that cause gastrointestinal distress) diet and has found certain foods that she can eat with very little trouble. For breakfast it's gluten free oats and a banana, for lunch she sticks to baked chicken, red potatoes and sauteed kale. Dinner is very similar. Every now and then she tries a new food, but usually on a Thursday or Friday in case that food causes major symptoms and pain. Carly also sought the help of her primary care physician to help her navigate her way through the medical system. Her primary care also made sure they tested for Lyme disease as well as any endocrine disorders. She also had a sleep apnea test which also came back negative.

Carly's future testing includes food allergy testing. She has spent much of the last 13 months researching on the internet about her symptoms and to find other people with similar issues who have found treatments that have worked for them. She is taking some over the counter medications along with some digestive enzymes to help her gut feel better. She is also considering acupuncture and other types of Eastern medicine that could help.

I will be following up with Carly over the course of this year to provide updates to our newsletter on how she is doing. I truly thank Carly for sharing her story as I know there are many more people out there who deal with gut/bowel issues, distress and pain. Gut health is so important to your overall health and immunity and when something isn't right, it can cause a whole host of problems. The last thing Carly said is that she is teaching First Year Experience at Penn College and "being here for the students is very motivating to not eat "bad" foods! I am focusing on being well and living life!"

Carly is happy to discuss with anyone her story in hopes of helping others going through something similar. Email Carmen at cterry@iu17.org for Carly's information



Next 8 Week Weight Loss/Wellness Class

Wednesday, January 12 – March 2, 2022

4:45 – 5:45

BLaST IU 17, 2400 Reach Rd, Williamsport

Reach your Wellness Goals in 2022!

- *Lose weight without feeling hungry, yes you can eat carbs!*
- *Healthy fats (mufa) target belly fat and speed weight loss*
- *May improve blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol*
- *Participants have lost up to 120+ pounds, reversed pre-diabetes and fatty liver, significantly improved A1C and reduced or eliminated need for medications*
- *Weekly topics include: Lowering risk of chronic disease, Reversing insulin resistance, Gut Health, Blue Zones, DASH guidelines and more!*
- *Rose's easy to follow plan: **Lose Weight with 8** received a trademark with the US Patent Office in December 2020. With this easy to follow meal plan and lifestyle approach you will see results immediately!*

Information Session

Wednesday, January 5th at 4:45 pm

Overview of class, receive class materials and sign up

Cost: 180.00 cash or check payable to: Live It Nutrition

To register: Email Carmen Terry at cterry@iu17.org

