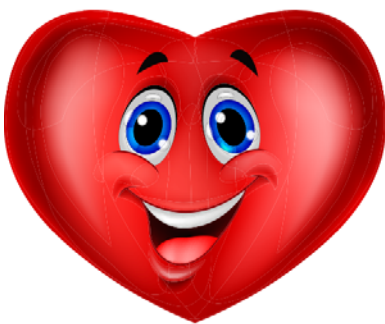




## The Happiness Factors

**T**he Heart Math Institute is a non-profit organization that provides tools that helps us connect to our hearts, to live more meaningful, and enriching lives. As a member, ardent follower and consumer of their books, DVD's and training tools for teaching, it was their wisdom and research that were part of my Wise Women Heart Health Program. From their website [www.heartmath.org](http://www.heartmath.org). come these questions: Do acts of kindness and generosity affect happiness? Does heart-directed altruism depend on the intention of the person? The research is showing that when we act on behalf of others, we tend to feel better, and absorb less stress. Anytime we can help reduce stress in daily life that is a win/win!

Heart Math's leading neuro-cardiologist, Dr. Armour, found here <https://www.heartmath.org/articles-of-the-heart/generous-others-youll-happy/> that the heart releases oxytocin, the feel good, or bonding hormone, and is surprising as these concentrations in the heart, may be as high as those in the brain. This hormone is also increased



when receiving a massage, benefitting the body while reducing cortisol.

**When we are altruistic, helping others,** this oxytocin levels goes up, which helps negate the effects of cortisol,

helps the brain's reward circuitry through the feel good hormones dopamine and endorphins. The adage "do random acts of kindness throughout the year" can take on a new meaning, when we see it through the lens of research, beyond knowing that it feels good to help another in need.

On the spending money and shopping side ~ can **spending money on others** have a more positive effect on happiness than spending it on yourself?



Dr. Dunn in his Science magazine article surmised that how we spend our money is just as important as how much money we earn in relation to happiness. In their research, those who were assigned to spend money on others felt greater happiness, than those who spent it on themselves. The Gallup World Poll revealed similar findings that globally, in 120 of 136 countries those who donated to charity in the past month were rewarded with a higher level of satisfaction with life.

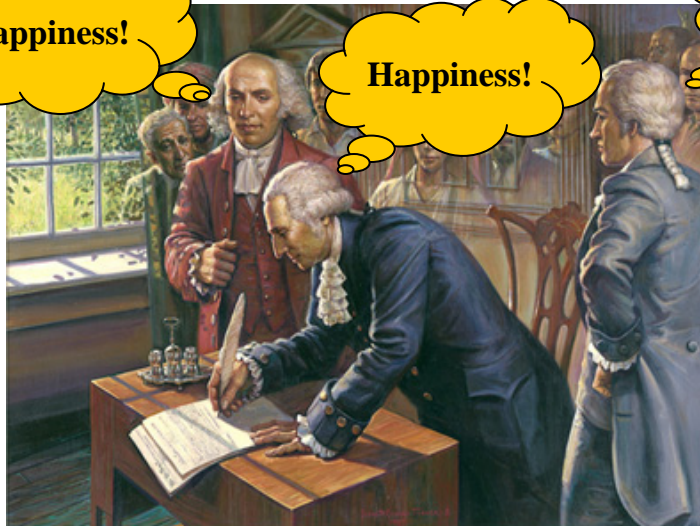
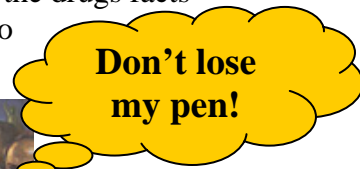
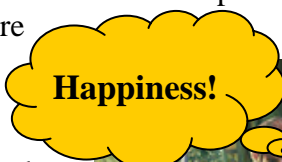
We never know when animals will be the source of enlightenment and research when it comes to employee health and wellness. <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2007/march7/sapolskysr-030707.html> Dr. Sapolsky has spent decades

doing his stress research with baboons in Africa, as he measures their adrenaline and epinephrine as it relates to their adrenals pumping these hormones out. What he has found is that unlike humans, they have a STOP response following stress, as their body returns to normal homeostasis. The difference is that humans under stress do not seem to easily find that STOP button, and in the end wallow in a bath of toxic hormones over time. This chemical shift results in the hormone cortisol coursing through our bodies that can cause us to have excess fat in the belly, the failure to have restorative sleep and now research that shows stress can shrink our brains.



The remarkable findings he has written about in four books is that the unhealthy baboon, like unhealthy humans, may have elevated resting levels of stress hormones. Their blood pressure is higher, wounds heal slower, and their reproductive systems are not at optimal levels. But what offers protection says Dr. Sapolsky from all this stress is the social connectedness in baboons and humans which has taken over a decade to decipher. Humans have far more options to connect to like a friend or family member to be grounded, centered and heard along with behavioural flexibilities.

When our country was founded on the **pursuit of happiness** to be an inalienable right, health probably was not in the forefront of their minds, because now, scientists know that to have a true



stress-free life, happiness and self-esteem are key factors. Surveys show that in Greece, one of Western Europe's poorest countries, people are way happier than in the U.S. ~ the richest nation in the world. "The U.S. has the biggest discrepancy in health and longevity between our wealthiest and our poorest of any country on earth," Dr. Sapolsky noted, as we ranked high in stress related diseases. Japan on the other side, is #1 in life expectancy, mostly due to its extremely supportive social network, along with their willingness to live with their elders. He found similar findings in the U.S. with Utah and Vermont being the healthiest states, while two of the unhealthiest are Nevada and New Hampshire. The Mormon church and its extended social support is just the opposite of Nevada's behavioral excesses.

This past July, the FDA put out an advisory on the top 3 NSAID's (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) that are used in this country – Advil, Motrin and Aleve. <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm453610.htm>. They are strengthening their current warnings on the drugs facts label, linking them to



heart attack and strokes. The FDA is also reminding those that take these, to only take one of the drugs, not several. "There is no period of use shown to be without risk" says Judy Racoosin, M.D. M.P.H. deputy director of FDA's Division of Anesthesia, Analgesia and Addiction Products.



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With pain being one of the top 3 reasons for employee absences, it makes sense to turn to another source of relief – to plants and the healing power of essential oils, that have been used as medicines for centuries. Having used these daily with clients during massages for 11 years, aiding discomfort, joint and head injury, they do not come with disastrous side effects, only

benefits as they add value to ones' life. Here is the breakdown of the cost of key Young Living essential oils with peppermint, pain away, stress away and lemon all topically safe to use for soft tissue or joint dysfunction.

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As I continue to write my book **Relax Now Ladies** and teach about heart health with my **Wise Women Heart Health program**, my goal is that many will realize that heart disease is our #1 life stealer. My **9 Pillars of Heart Disease Prevention** is a simple guide and reminder to pay attention to lifestyle choices that daily impact the heart. This only can come from experience on my end, and the awareness that stress plays a huge role in these statistics. Cardiovascular disease takes more lives than all the cancers combined, and I am empowered and passionate about sharing this message in companies, communities, and any gathering of women willing to listen.

May you have the opportunity to hold a baby, laugh deeply and be in nature as much as possible the coming year. Holding one of my 4 grandkids is like medicine for my soul and so grateful that they in turn teach me so much, especially about slowing down!

I thank you for your desire and dedication to employee health and wellness, whether through seated massages, Wellness 101 classes, Aromatherapy 101 or my signature Wise Heart Health program I teach. Please visit us on FB through the year to stay abreast of where we may be in the community and outreaches we are part of. May you have a robust year of health and financial blessings, and may God Bless you! Happy New Year!

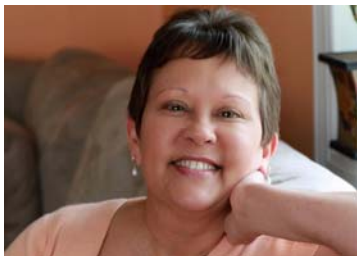
To Your Radiant Health!

Yours in Abundant Health,

*Linda*

Linda Penkala, LMT

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**Merry Christmas**



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