

# Nicer



Being pleasant doesn't mean you have to be a pushover. What it does mean is that every time you interact with other people, you keep *their* feelings in mind and conduct yourself with empathy and grace.

Here are a few ideas worth consideration...

★ Try to make everyone you meet laugh at least once. You won't believe how being less serious can improve your interpersonal relationships, even with those people who generally frustrate you!

★ Be especially considerate of people who are obviously having a horrible day, and to horrible people in general.

★ Learn the names of the people you regularly interact with at the gas station, dry cleaners, coffee shop etc. Calling someone by name is a great way to connect and be both friendly, and neighbourly.

★ Decide to refrain from using your favourite not-so-nice word for a week (it may become a habit!). Here's a few everyone could cut from their vocabulary; idiot, jerk, stupid, dummy, moron.

★ Be as polite and considerate to members of your family as you are to co-workers and strangers.

★ Smile for no reason. It can help turn the day around for the smiler and the smilee!

★ Instead of signing notes, letters, emails with sincerely or yours truly, choose something more uplifting like, have a good day, cheers, or something seasonal like; happy holidays, the best of the season.

★ Make someone's day and lift their spirits...give them a compliment.

★ When someone has given you good service, or gone out of their way to extend a little extra - take the time to say *thank you*, I appreciate your service, (or care, effort, assistance etc.).

★ Really focus when someone is speaking to you. Attention is most appreciated by the young and the old. And, it has a payoff - we learn wisdom when we listen to the very young and the elderly.

## CRANBERRY Facts

- Cranberries have no cholesterol.
- virtually zero fat.
- They're loaded with vitamins A and C and potassium.

## Spicy Cranberry Chutney

Prep time 5 minutes...Makes 3 cups

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups fresh cranberries
- 1/4 cup dried apricots, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1 granny smith apple - peeled, cored and finely chopped
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1 tsp grated lemon rind
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 cup chopped crystallized ginger
- 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes

### DIRECTIONS

- ✓ In a saucepan combine apricots, sugar, raisins and water, bring to a boil.
  - ✓ Reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes while stirring.
  - ✓ Add cranberries, apple and grated lemon rind, simmer for 10 minutes.
  - ✓ Before taking mix off heat mix in lemon juice, ginger and pepper flakes.
- Serve chilled or at room temperature.

## Dog

Choosing the right  
Many people choose a dog for their family based on how it looks or acts. However, there is a lot more to choosing a pet than those two factors alone.



### Making the decision

First you must determine whether your family has the time, money and living arrangements to accommodate a dog. If yes, your next concern is choosing the type of dog that will most suit your family's lifestyle.

### Choosing the breed

All puppies are cute, heartwarming - and yes, small. Researching various breeds will set you in the right direction. Are you looking for an energetic breed or one that is less demanding? A busy work schedule or other personal constraints can get in the way of providing sufficient exercise or even proper training. The more intelligent breeds, like German Shepherds and Sheepdogs, need a lot of stimulation. Consider...

- Which best suits our lifestyle; a large, medium or small dog?
- Are we looking for a dog with an independent nature or one that is generally obedient?
- Do we want to be constantly grooming or would a short-haired breed be preferable?

Another reason to research and fine tune your choice...a particular breeds' behaviour and temperament could clash with your lifestyle and personality, causing problems such as property destruction, biting or aggression.

### Finding a breeder

Finding a respected breeder can be as simple as visiting a vet or other respected member of the canine community (ie dog groomers, obedience instructors, shelters, breed clubs).

Try to visit several breeders in your area.

A good breeder will be concerned that his/her animal is going to the right home. Talk to the breeder about this particular breed, here's the ideal opportunity for a second opinion about the choice of dog for your family and situation!

### Animal Shelters

You may also consider adopting a dog from a local shelter. Most animals in shelters are there for a reason; try to find out what that reason was. Try to find out as much as possible about the animal's past, including any history of behavioural problems. Shelters can be heartbreaking places and you may want to rescue the saddest looking animal. Please try to keep in mind; the *reason* many of these animals are at the shelter *is because* they did not fit into someone else's lifestyle!

### Interesting! CALCULATE DOG AGE IN HUMAN YEARS

Equivalent ages of Human and dog (approx) 6 months to 4 years old in dogs	
Dog's age	Human's age
6 months	10 years
8 months	13 years
10 months	14 years
12 months	15 years
18 months	20 years
2 years	24 years
4 years	32 years

As this chart illustrates, the adage...1 dog year = 7 human years is incorrect! In fact, after 4 years of age, a dogs age relative to human age, begins to vary with the size/weight of the dog.



November ~  
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# HOME FIRE DRILLS

Suppose you've just heard a smoke alarm...*what would you do? What would your children do?* From the time the smoke alarm sounds until the fire is out of control you may have only minutes, or seconds, to get out. Many people make poor decisions when fire breaks out. They may be affected by smoke, disoriented by being awakened abruptly, and frightened. But, more often, poor decisions occur because people have not planned or practised what to do in the case a fire. **Be Safe...be prepared.**

### You can survive a Fire if you...

- have working smoke alarms
- make and practise an escape plan
- stay out when you get out

### Create an Escape Plan - and Practise

□ review two possible exits - and how to use them - from each room in the house. Walk through the primary and alternative escape routes, making sure all exits are accessible to all members of your household. Keep these exits in mind as you decorate your home for the holiday season. □ In the case of a fire, everyone must be prepared to move quickly, carefully and calmly. Don't let your drills

become a race; make sure everyone knows exactly what to do. Don't run.

- figure out how to use each window as an exit (is there a garage roof or other surface below? A tree nearby? Do you need an escape ladder?).
- determine which family members might need help escaping.
- ensure that everyone knows to use the second exits when the first ones cannot be used. During your 'practise' fire drills, vary your route, pretend that some escape routes are blocked - which could very well be the case during the holiday season.
- Since many fatal home fires start when people are asleep, practise your escape plan having each member of your family wait in his or her sleeping area for the sound of the alarm. Start by coaching your children, but remember, your goal is to teach them to escape *without* your help.

□ practise your escape plan with everyone in the house; in daylight and after dark. Practise your escape plan at least twice a year. And, its a good idea to have an extra practise once you've decorated for the holiday season - perhaps furniture has been repositioned, or an exit blocked?

- As things change in your home, ensure that they are factored into your escape plan.
- establish an outside meeting place - is it the same place winter and summer?
- Call 911 from a neighbours. During a fire, *do not* go back into your home to attempt to rescue people or pets.



### Smoke Alarms

Most fatal fires occur at night. A smoke alarm might be the only thing to rouse your family in time to escape. An alarm is needed on every storey of your home as well as outside bedroom areas. Establish a regular monthly routine for testing smoke alarms. Remember, smoke alarms do wear out, plan to replace them after 10 years. ■

# Mudrooms

or, more commonly referred to as the back door!

**The biggest challenges in this area of the house...**

- ✓ General clutter, from mail to mismatched mittens
- ✓ Wet jackets, shoes and boots that need a place to dry
- ✓ Tracked-in mud, leaves, slush, sand and salt

**Control the mess.** Easier said than done you're thinking...and yes, ultimately you may want, or need to, reorganize the room. But, start with - removing all shoes that don't really need to be in the entranceway... ask yourself... 'at this time of year does anything other than winter boots and indoor shoes or slippers to change into need to be here?'. Use the same rule for all outerwear, sports gear and other out-of-season items currently stored in this area of your home.

**Use hooks** mounted on the walls so coats, backpacks, keys, purses, dog leashes etc., all have an official place to hang....and, best of all, outerwear can air dry while it hangs!

**A bench** is ideal. It can serve as a spot to sit while putting on and taking off footwear, a landing spot for what you have in hand as you come thru the door (mail, grocery bags, purse), and boots and shoes can be stored underneath.

**Use baskets, plastic totes or bins.** 1 for each family member, to store their

gloves, mitts, scarves etc. If you have the space, a wall-mounted shelf above the hooks can be an ideal way to keep floor space clear. Or you could try hanging pocket-type organizers. Smaller bins/baskets can be used to sort and organize incoming and outgoing mail, keys, cell phones etc. Larger containers for umbrellas, walking sticks, sports gear, pet toys... whatever suits your family's needs.

**Doormats.** At this time of year, don't go with the usual small, pretty doormat. Put down a carpet runner the length of the room or a small area rug (preferably washable). A larger landing pad means muddy feet (and paws), dripping coats and umbrellas won't muck up the floor. A larger rug will also serve you well because Fido will have a spot to lay down and dry off a bit before proceeding into the house.

**Walls.** If you're considering repainting, be sure to choose a durable, scrubbable paint finish (like a semi-gloss or even a high-gloss) for this high-traffic area.



# 'Tis the Season

## Ceiling Fans in Winter.

Have you remembered to reverse the blade direction on your ceiling fans? Reversed blades in winter help circulate air by drawing cooled air from walls and floors, 'up', and 'pushing' heated air trapped near the ceiling down into the room. Remember to set your fan at the slowest speed.



## Now is a good time to...

Think about what is important to you about the holiday season. It could be...get-togethers with family and friends, or decorating the Christmas tree, or cookies, or sending Christmas cards. Have a family discussion about the holiday season and what matters to each member of your household. Decide to focus on those aspects of the holiday season that have meaning to you and your family. Focusing on what matters makes it easier to say 'No' to many of the stresses caused by trying to do it all!

## Quick tips for a few of winters woes...

- Place a shallow pan of baking soda in the fireplace (for a couple of hours or overnight) after you've cleaned out the ashes. That unpleasant soot odour will vanish.
- If your sidewalk or walkway is covered with a light sprinkling of snow, sweep it using a stiff broom instead of lifting it with a shovel. Your back will thank you for the break!
- Before freezing weather strikes, dab a little petroleum jelly on your keys and slide them in and out of the keyholes of your house and vehicle. This will prevent the locks from freezing up this winter.

## Frozen Pipes

Enduring winter is hard enough - we shouldn't have to contend with frozen pipes, too! When it comes to frozen pipes, the best defense is a good offense.

**Here's some advice along the prevention line so you can relax knowing that in the event of an extreme deep freeze or a prolonged power failure, frozen pipes are less likely to occur.**

- When planning a renovation to your home (or cottage), avoid placing any plumbing against an outside wall, especially one that isn't (or may not be) well insulated.
- Insulate pipes that might be susceptible to freezing. This is easier than you think, foam pipe insulation, sized to the diameter of your plumbing, is readily available. It is slit along one side and simply snaps into place. Seams should be sealed using duct tape.

■ If your house will be empty for weeks at a time over the winter, consider shutting off the main water supply. Keep under-sink cabinets open to take advantage of warmer household air. Don't let the indoor temperature drop below 10°F (50°F). And, it's always a good idea to have a neighbour, or a family member who lives close by, check your home if you plan to be away for any extended period of time, in fact, check with your insurance company - many have now set guidelines.



# This 'n THAT

## Picking perfect paint colours...

When most of us think of redecorating a room, one of the first things we consider is paint colour. Changing the colour of your walls, trim and/or ceiling is an inexpensive, and quick, way to give a room a totally new look! If you're thinking you'd like to give a room (or two) a new look, here's a tip from the experts.

## Using fabrics as inspiration for paint colours.

The key to coordinating paint with fabrics is to complement, not copy. You don't want to create a *matchy-matchy* look. Fabrics should provide a spark of colour that becomes even more expressive against the right colour backdrop.

The full contents of a room - furniture, carpet and other flooring, as well as curtain and drapery, will sway your colour choices. Bring a sampling of paint chips home. Walk around the room with each and use them to guide you in your colour selection!



## The shortest day of the year.

The day that has the shortest amount of daylight is the day of the winter solstice. For mid-northern latitudes, the sun in is the sky of only about 9 hours. Depending on the year, this date can vary. It comes on either December 21st or 22nd. This year, the winter solstice falls on December 21st.

## Snow shovelling



Practice smart (meaning injury free) snow shovelling techniques. Here are some simple tips, from the experts, to help avoid injury, and establish some good habits, as you embark on another year of clearing snow from your walkways, patios, driveway, porch steps, decks, sidewalk....

- \* If you have heart problems or high blood pressure, or if you're not accustomed to exercise, talk to your doctor first.
- \* Stretch for 5 minutes to warm up back, leg, shoulder and arm muscles before you start shovelling.
- \* A shovel with a curved handle will help keep your back straight. Plastic shovels are lighter than metal, easing lower-back strain.
- \* Push snow rather than lift it. If lifting is unavoidable, shovel small amounts, and bend your knees with legs apart, keeping your back straight and lift with your legs. Don't twist when tossing snow - turn your body with your feet.
- \* Be cautious in slippery, icy conditions - take precautions to avoid slipping on ice, spread sand or cat litter to provide traction.

**De-icing sidewalks & walkways.** Spreading salt over icy walks in winter may save your neck, but it's often lethal to grass, shrubs and even trees. Consider using sand instead.

- \* Drink lots of liquids to stay hydrated.
- \* Take frequent breaks; stop shovelling if you feel pain or fatigue.
- \* If you experience back pain, lie down or sit with a back support; apply a cold pack to the affected area for 10 minutes every hour or two. Repeat for a couple of days. For severe or persistent symptoms, consult a health professional.

# Ever wonder where all the animals go in winter?



In our northern latitudes, hibernation is what the majority of animals do. Some hibernators are better known than others: bears in dens, squirrels in hollow trees, groundhogs in burrows. Yet these are just a few of the countless thousands of other species that survive the cold by hibernating! Hibernation is a complex biological process that is still not fully understood - and, the process itself differs between warm-blooded and cold-blooded animals.

**Frogs** are an interesting example. A frog's metabolic mechanism is very complex, they can generate their own, internal antifreeze! It's glucose. When a frog's body temperature drops a couple of degrees below freezing - the water in its system actually begins to form ice crystals, at this point glycogen in its liver is rapidly converted to glucose and dumped at a very high rate into the frog's bloodstream. These tiny creatures can double their heartbeat rate within minutes of a dangerous drop in temperature.

The **Bear** is almost certainly the best known of winter sleepers. Like most hibernating mammals, bears stoke up on food before they hibernate. Foraging far outside their normal range during early autumn, they harvest and devour as much as they can find. For a black bear fat is not only good, it is essential for its survival. During hibernation, using internal systems, still not completely understood, bears live off their fat, converting the waste into nontoxic, useful compounds.

*This fascinating and complex process has far reaching implications for the future, one of which is travelling in space. Today, research continues into hibernation; one of nature's marvels.*

## They said...

While driving our youngest boy to an early season hockey practise he announced that someone in his first grade class had told him there was no Santa Claus. "What do you think of that?" I asked him. "Pffft!" he replied. "What does he think? The reindeer deliver all those toys by themselves?"

Our 5-year-old hadn't been feeling well for a few days. When spots appeared on her skin, I told her I thought she had chicken pox. "But", she wailed, "I haven't even been near a chicken!"

After my wife and I had spent 15 minutes trying to navigate a website, numerous times returning to the main menu, a talking image of a woman popped up and offered to help. "At last," my wife exclaimed, "a real person."

During our daughter's first winter at school, she returned home many times without her mittens. After replacing several pairs, she realized that I was not pleased. Soon after supplying her with yet another pair, she burst through the door after school and announced "Good news, Mom. I only lost one mitt today!"

# Amaryllis

If you'd like to decorate your home this holiday season with a few of these stunning flowers it's time to get them potted!

These giants start to grow as soon as they're planted. Good quality bulbs may produce as many as 6 blooms on a single stalk and can bloom for up to 6 weeks! Choose a weighty pot about one size larger than the bulb - amaryllis bloom better when pot-bound but are top-heavy when in flower so be sure to choose a heavy pot. It's easy, and the many Amaryllis kits now widely available make it even easier - the only item you'll need is a pot.

- Pre-soak the roots in lukewarm water (overnight).
- Plant in a sandy soil mix, leaving approximately one-third of the bulb about soil level. Water to moisten soil.
- Place the pot in direct sunlight.
- Limit watering at this point to encourage blooms.
- Flowers should appear in about 6 to 8 weeks.
- Water and fertilize on a regular basis once flowers bud.

Amaryllis bulbs come in large, miniature and double-blooming varieties, and in a wide range of colours including, white, pink, peach, red, and even red & white striped.



# Hope

Hope is a waking dream. Aristotle

Friends cherish each other's hopes. They are kind to each other's dreams.

Henry David Thoreau

Hope is a strange invention - A Patent of the Heart - In unremitting action - Yet never wearing out.

Emily Dickinson

Giving, whether it be of time, labour, affection, gifts, or whatever, is one of life's greatest pleasures.

Believe that your net worth is measured by the number of lives you've touched.

We cannot hold a torch to light another's path without brightening our own.