

Power of choice can precipitate societal change

I've had it. I'm sick and tired of television programs that showcases bizarre and outrageous events. I'm talking about the Jerry Springer Show and similar tabloid talk shows. Allow me to enlighten the unfamiliar. The Springer program focuses on topics that incite both guests and audience members to a frenzy. From all-out brawls (punching and hitting one another) to throwing chairs, this program encourages antagonistic behavior. Sadly, it's one of the most watched shows on television.

This show has become so popular that WDIV-TV (Channel 4) reassigned its time slot to compete against The Oprah Winfrey Show. Guess who's becoming the ratings war?

That's right, Jerry Springer. This is a very sad commentary about society. The level of our entertainment is watching human behavior reduced to its lowest form. I wonder if there is a connection between the type of "entertainment" and the increase of violence in society.

Children murdering other children. Workplace violence. Drive-by shootings. Metal detectors in schools. Is there a relationship between societal violence and television-viewed violence? I am convinced there is. If you compare the level of TV violence in the 1950s with that of the 1990s, this becomes obvious.

The Lone Ranger, for example, shot the gun out of the outlaw's hand and Tom took him to jail. Today, bodies are blown to pieces and there's confusion as to who the good guys actually are. Can you guess what the number one show of high school teachers was about students in 1957? Chewing gum in the classroom! Times sure have changed.

Clearly, the amount of violence and negativity we are exposed to has desensitized, dehumanized and devalued society. Violence, like a toxin, erodes the system. In this case, the system is our mind, our values and our society. Our insatiable appetite for more has encouraged shows like Jerry Springer. More violence, more horror, more killings, more negativity.

Maybe some of you agree the level and intensity of violent behavior has reached epidemic proportions. What can we do about it? We need to make our own decisions individually.

Over the years I have appeared on many talk shows. Last month I received a call from a tabloid talk show, asking me to participate in a segment on childhood obesity. During the conversation the producer requested I bring my "fat test kids" on the show. I declined the invitation. You cannot imagine the debates I've had with some of these talk show producers. I refuse to participate in any program that sensationalizes or embarrasses people—especially children.

Does the simple act of not participating affect the show? Probably not. But when enough people stop watching these programs, ratings will decline and they'll be off the air. An example of this "viewer power" recently took place.

The rating power of the Jerry Springer Show caused WDIV to move the show from the 10 a.m. time slot to the 4 p.m. slot. School children, unfortunately, became a primary viewing audience. Parents were incensed and calls and letters poured into the station.

Mr. Allan Frank, the vice president of WDIV, was faced with a dilemma. He now had the highest-rated show in a primary spot, but certain segments of the public were protesting.

Reassigning the show to another time slot is analogous to a retailer closing its doors at peak hours. WDIV decided to close its door and return Jerry Springer to 10 a.m.

When I contacted Frank to discuss why the show was returned to the morning time slot, he explained how Channel 4 viewers made the decision a bit easier.

"Our viewers were angry and wanted the time changed," Frank said. "He continued, explaining how Channel 4 'listened to their viewers and hopes that people will continue to support it by watching the 5 o'clock news.'"

I commend Mr. Frank for his courageous decision. He has my full support. Reconditioning ourselves from the constant barrage of violence and negativity is not an easy task. It begins with awareness and ends with decision. All of us possess power—the power of choice. Choosing not to engage in the proliferation of these shows is the beginning. Our collective responsibility will become the liberating force that drives us back to civility.

(Dr. Keith Levick is a health psychologist and the director of The Center for Childhood Weight Management in Farmington Hills. You can reach him at 248-661-6625 or send him an e-mail at levick@earthlink.net.)

Debut run upcoming in May



The first annual Great Lakes State Games Regional Run/Walk is scheduled for Sunday, May 3, and hosted by Oakland County Parks and the Oakland Fitness Council, hasn't gone the way of the Lansing-based 1998 Great Lakes State Games, which were canceled last month. The GLSG Regional Run/Walk was originally conceived as a local prelude to the Great Lakes State Games.

Independence Oaks in Clarkston will be the site for a 5-mile run and 2.5-mile walk, both of which are slated to begin at 9 a.m. A 10-mile Kids Dash (10-under) will be held at 10 a.m. Woodchip trails make up most of the course with start/finish lines at the Twin Chimneys Shelter on Crooked Lake.

Rochester-based R & D Race Directors will conduct the event, with the checker of bikes and router of two miles, 12 miles, 26 miles, 50 miles or 100 kilometers while helping support the ALMA's fight against asthma. The event is scheduled to last from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Registration forms and fees must be received by Friday, May 15 or there will be an additional charge of \$3. The registration fee—\$10 per team member, \$15 per individual or \$30 per family—is not included with a required minimum pledge of \$25.

Those under 18 years of age must be accompanied by an adult, and each rider must wear a helmet. In addition, the top three pledge collectors will receive great prizes. For a detailed brochure/registration form or to volunteer your services, call (248) 659-5100 or 1 (800) LUNG-USA.

Participants will have the choice of biking a route of two miles, 12 miles, 26 miles, 50 miles or 100 kilometers while helping support the ALMA's fight against asthma. The event is scheduled to last from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

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Early registration (before Sunday, April 26) is \$12 for the run, \$12 for the walk and \$7 for the Kids Dash. Members of The 3R Running Club and participants 55 years of age and older can receive a \$2 discount on the two featured events. A T-shirt is included with the entry fee. Early registration can be done by mail or at Running Gear stores in Rochester or Waterford.

Late registration will be conducted on race day only from 7:45 a.m.-8:45 a.m. at a cost of \$16 (run/walk) or \$14 (3R members/runners 55-up). T-shirts are not guaranteed for late registrants. The top three male and female finishers in each age group will receive special awards.

There were plenty of opportunities to run late last month.

In addition to the Spring Forward Sprint 5K at Oakland University on March 29 where two records were set, local athletes turned in noteworthy performances at other races around the state. Bloomfield Hills resident Donna Olson was the female masters winner at the 1998 Flushing Township Half-Marathon on March 29. Olson, who clocked a time of

1 hour, 39 minutes, 17 seconds, was one of four area runners to win their age groups at the event: Karl Meyers of Farmington Hills captured the female 20-24 age group title (2:16:27); Southfield's Susan Szczepniak placed first in the female 45-49 group (1:45:02); and Gerard Malaczynski of Bloomfield Hills was first among male runners ages 55-59 (1:22:56).

Elsewhere, the 1998 Spring Gallup 5K Run/Walk went off March 29 in Ann Arbor. Beverly Hills resident Jan Gatoski was The Eccecentric-area's highest finisher (32nd overall) in a time of 19:51.

Finally, Dave Peterson of Farmington Hills and Alan Van Meter of Southfield placed second and third, respectively, at the 1998 Hanson's Running Shop 5K Run March 29 in Utica. Peterson clocked a 16:35, 26 seconds behind winner Rich Stark, and Van Meter followed in 15:48. Additional area finishers included Brett Sanborn of Rochester Hills (7th, 16:23); Butch McWilliams of Rochester (15th, 17:11); Kathy Rink of Bloomfield Hills (18th, 17:41); and Michael Stone of Southfield (21st, 17:51).

GLSG REGIONAL RUN/WALK

■ WHEN: Sunday, May 3
■ WHERE: Independence Oaks in Clarkston. Located on Sashabaw Road, 2.5 miles north of I-75 off exit 69.

■ WHAT: A 5-mile run, 2.5-mile walk and 10-mile Kids Dash.
■ COURSE: The event will start and finish at Twin Chimneys Shelter on Crooked Lake. The course is made up primarily of woodchip trails.

■ SCHEDULE OF EVENTS: Race day registration will last from 7:45 a.m.-8:45 a.m. Female participants in the 5-mile begin at 9 a.m., followed by the male runners at 9:06. The 2.5-mile walk starts at 9 a.m. and the Kids Dash at 10 a.m. Awards will be presented at approximately 10:15 a.m.

■ KIDS ACTIVITIES: There will be a moonwalk and other activities for kids to enjoy. This will be available to all children present at the event.

■ MORE INFO: Call R & D Race Directors at 1-800-753-9820 for an entry form or go on-line at www.runnichigan.com/GLSGrun.

OBSERVER-ECCENTRIC HEALTHY LIVING

Clean Air Challenge

Rain or shine, the Clean Air Challenge bike trek to benefit the American Lung Association of Michigan will take place Sunday, June 7 at Island Lake Recreation Area in Brighton.

Participants will have the choice of biking a route of two miles, 12 miles, 26 miles, 50 miles or 100 kilometers while helping support the ALMA's fight against asthma. The event is scheduled to last from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

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Women Today Support Group

The Women Today Support Group, a free self-help support group established at Rochester-Crittenton Hospital in 1990, will focus on two special topics in the upcoming weeks.

"Women and Improving Personal Appearance" is scheduled for Saturday, April 18. A guest make-up artist/hair stylist from Whispers Salon in Troy will be in attendance to offer the latest tips.

On Saturday, May 16 the topic will be "Women and Menopause." Gerald Hautman, M.D., a board certified obstetrician/gynecologist, will be the guest speaker and discuss the latest treatment options.

The Women Today Support Group meets from 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. on the third Saturday of the month except during June, July and August. Seating is limited for the above programs and registration is required.

To register, call Crittenton's Community Health Education Department at (248) 652-5269, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Crittenton Hospital is located at 1101 W. University Drive.

(Healthy Living spotlights Oakland County-related health and medical news and information. To submit information, write: Healthy Living, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham MI, 48009. Or fax: (248) 644-1314.)

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Protect against injuries while perfecting skills

With the high school spring sports season under way, many athletes are performing 50-yard dashes, the long jump and leaping over high bars. Athletes are spending long hours of training in their enthusiastic desire to excel.

It is important for parents and children to understand the potential sports injuries that could result from excessive training.

Track and field sports require repetitions of powerful, explosive movements to fine-tune athletic techniques. As athletes attempt to perfect those skills, they must guard against injuries.

Injuries can often be attributed to the quality of the surface, excessive training loads, muscular deformities and inadequate footwear.

■ **Surface Quality:** Athletes in training should always search for a smooth, even road for running. Continuous running on a poor road prompts excessive force on the leg, resulting in injuries to the Achilles tendon, ankle or knee.

■ **Excessive Training Loads:** In attempting to excel, athletes may "overtrain," leading to overuse injuries such as stress fractures, shin splints, bursitis and tendinitis.

■ **Musculoskeletal deformities:** Participation in athletics can bring to light musculoskeletal deformities or abnormalities. For example, a biochemical abnormality of muscle imbalance of the knee might not be identified in normal activity, but can present a problem during sports activity.

■ **Footwear:** Without proper shoes, blisters can occur. It is important for track and field participants to select a shoe with a flexible sole, which is rigid enough to support the foot, but yet offers softness for cushioning.

Physical therapists and certified athletic trainers often use the term shin splint to describe conditions of pain and disability in the tibia and fibula. Poor conditioning, overtraining, irregular surfaces and biochemical

abnormalities are the culprits of shin splints. The technical name for shin splints is medial tibial syndrome, which accounts for 10-15 percent of all running injuries and up to 60 percent of all conditions that cause pain in athletes' legs.

Medial tibial syndrome is an inflammation of the tibialis posterior muscle and inflammation of the lining around the tibia (periosteum). This condition is often caused by excessive loads placed on that muscle.

To take care of this condition, athletes must apply ice to their shins at least four times a day to reduce the inflammation. In addition, the athlete may take an over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medication.

Also a physician may advise the patient to undergo physical therapy treatment to strengthen the intrinsic muscles of the foot and create a strong arch muscle. In addition, a sufferer can stretch the calf muscles in an effort to eliminate muscle imbalance.

Through this physical therapy regimen, the patient can increase his or her ability to absorb shock and reduce the likelihood of recurring shin splints. Finally, athletes may purchase custom-made orthotics to support the foot in a proper biomechanical fashion, once again reducing the risks of shin splints.

While shin splints represent a prevalent problem for athletes, stress fractures are a more serious problem associated with track and field events.

These fractures occur because of the continuous pounding of the tibia and fibula (bones in the lower leg). Since stress fractures are a break in the bone, treatment may include at least 14 days of rest to allow the healing of the bone to begin.

Considering the fact that a diagnosis of a stress fracture is often difficult, a bone scan is sometimes necessary. It is important, as with other medical conditions, to immediately visit a family physician.

(Subhash Kapur is a physical therapist and owner of Metro Rehab. Kapur is happy to answer any questions readers may have regarding physical therapy and/or physical training. Readers should send their questions or comments to: Subhash Kapur, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham MI 48009.)

Plant foods provide vital sources of protein

Sometimes you wonder how many steaks those big bodybuilders eat in order to maintain their muscle mass. Most probably consume a lot of meat and processed protein drinks to boost their protein intake each day.

But do they really need to? The answer is no. Protein is very important for building and repairing muscle tissue and it plays a role in the formation of skin, hair, nerves and bone.

It actually plays a role in almost every chemical reaction in the body, including the building of anti-bodies. So, it's obvious that protein is essential to our body, but there are plenty of ways to get it besides eating meat.

In moderation, eating animal proteins such as meat, eggs and fish as part of your daily diet is fine. Remember, however, with animal protein comes fat.

There are other ways to include protein in a healthy diet. Protein is found in plant foods, too. Whether you are a

vegetarian or a meat-eater, you should include plenty of plant proteins in your diet because they contain many other important nutrients such as vitamins, minerals and carbohydrates. Furthermore, plant proteins tend to be higher in fiber and lower in fat than animal proteins.

The best plant sources of protein include legumes such as soybeans, lentils and kidney beans; grains such as brown rice and barley; nuts and seeds; and vegetables such as broccoli and peas.

Dieters that want to consume protein while keeping the fat in check should avoid eating too many nuts and seeds, even though they are excellent non-meat sources of protein. One cup of roasted peanuts contains 38.8 grams of protein but just one ounce of peanuts packs in 14.1 grams of fat. That's about the size of a bag of peanuts you get on an airplane!

A better choice for people who are watching their weight is beans. Dried soybeans have nearly 20 grams of protein per cup and dried Lima, kidney and black beans all contain at least 15 grams of protein per cup.

Other acceptable options are grains and vegetables, which have about 3-5 grams of protein per cup and are generally the lowest in fat. Cooked fresh spinach, steamed broccoli spears and baked potatoes (with the skin) all have about 4-5.5 grams of protein per cup. Even a slice of whole wheat bread and a half a cup of brown rice each contain three grams of protein.

Plant proteins provide other vital nutrients such as vitamin C, vitamin E, and beta carotene and contain energy-giving carbohydrates that may be lacking in some high-protein, animal-based diets. Therefore, people who exercise regularly at a vigorous pace can be sure they are getting the extra protein they need by consuming more plant foods.

Some athletes turn to protein supplements to build muscle and boost their protein intake, but there is really no need to use processed protein drinks or powders to supplement your diet unless you are severely malnourished. The best thing to do is to eat a well-balanced, low-fat diet with a combination of animal and plant proteins.

If your protein intake is mainly derived from animal foods, be careful

not to eat an excessive amount of protein. The recommended dietary allowance for protein is 0.8 grams for every 2.2 pounds of weight. Women who are pregnant or nursing need more.

No more than 15 percent of your calories should come from protein. Too much protein increases the risks of kidney and liver problems, heart disease and obesity.

So, the next time you reach for that high-fat, high-protein steak, perhaps you should consider a low-fat, protein-rich meal of legumes, vegetables and grains instead! Your health and waistline will thank you for it.

I read every one of your letters and I love your comments! Please keep writing me with any questions, inspirational stories or suggestions for upcoming articles to: "Talk to the Mirror," Weight Watchers Corporate Communications, P.O. Box 9072, Farmington Hills MI 48334-2974. For more information on Weight Watchers, call 1-855-3FLORINE.

(Florine Mark is an appointee to the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and the Michigan Fitness Foundation.)



DR. KEITH LEVICK



FLORINE MARK