

# Healthy Wednesday Club

## Newsletter Issue 19

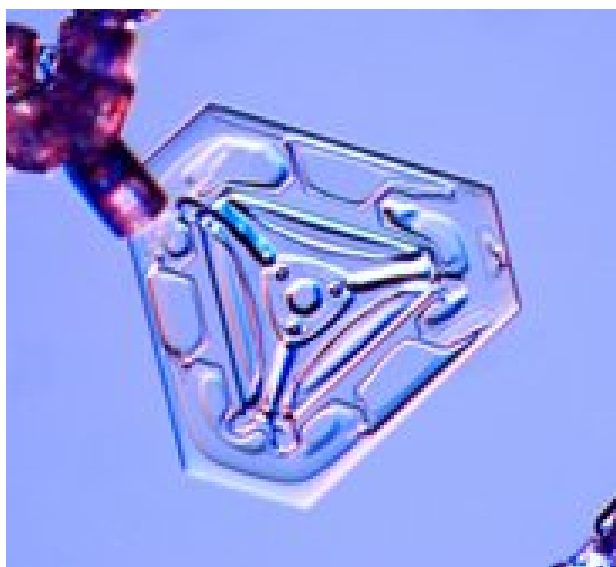
June 11th, 2008



Hope you all enjoyed the long weekend. I heard someone on the radio wondering whether there was enough time to 'charge our batteries' and be ready to 'get back into it'. She also wondered whether we'd all be tired again by the end of the week.

Rather than just clichés, I think these are really interesting questions. What is the 'it' that we are charging up for and why would be exhausted after just a week of 'it'. The article today is about this and not our 'genes', but 'memes'. You'll also find a link to a video of the world's leading expert, Susan Blackmore.

### No two snowflakes are the same



Wow!

Many thanks to Scientific American for these images... Please share things you would like to see in the newsletter.

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## FABULOUS LOW GI FOOD

### Tomato and Goji Salad

#### Ingredients

½ cup verjuice  
3 tbsp goji berries  
4 vine-ripened tomatoes  
¾ cup walnuts  
1 tbsp maple syrup  
2 tbsp olive oil  
pinch sea salt  
cracked black pepper  
1 cup flat leaf parsley, roughly chopped

#### Goji Berries -

...are also known as wolfberries and are grown in both Tibet and China. Although the Tibetan goji are more expensive to buy, they are chemical, pollutant and sulphur dioxide free.

#### Preparation:

Pour the verjuice into a small pan and gently heat. Remove from the heat and add the goji

berries to soak. While the goji berries are soaking, place the walnuts in a small dry pan with the maple syrup and stir continuously over a medium heat until the maple syrup dries and coats into the nuts. Remove from the heat and set aside. Drain the goji berries and return the verjuice to the pan to reduce over a medium heat. Reserve the reduced verjuice for the dressing.

#### Method:

Slice the tomatoes approx 7mm thick and arrange onto individual plates. Mix the olive oil with the verjuice and season with sea salt and pepper. Spoon some of the dressing over the tomatoes. Sprinkle the goji berries and parsley over the tomato, and top with the walnuts.

Serve with crunchy soy and linseed bread.

**Serves 6**

## HEALTHY WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES

**Body:** Sinuses can give us a bit of trouble at this time of the year. We can get stuffed up and this can muck up our breathing patterns. If you're still able to breathe through your nose, then try this: with your index fingers find the curve of your cheekbones. Bring your fingers to the sides of the nose and then slide the fingers along the cheekbones about 2cm. You might feel a slight sharp pain. This is a good indication you've hit a good spot. Press into the cheekbones and take a deep breath or two through the nostrils. Slide the fingers along the cheekbone until you find the next sore point and repeat the press and breath. Do this a few times or until your sinuses feel clearer.

**Mind:** Here's a neat link to a Wikipedia list of 50 things you can do for an active mind. There's lots of fun things and a few twists on the usual. Check it out and let us know how it went for you.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Exercise-an-Open-Mind> Here's a simple one – No. 23 Rotate your own tires. Make a friend do it with you. It's good for the car and a good bit of exercise, too.

**Soul:** How about something for those wintery, wet afternoons. Get out the old picture albums, especially that pile of photos in a box that you haven't got around to sorting yet. You might get very organised and sort all the photos, but you might find it a slow and memory filled process. It's really the memories that are most important. If you don't get all (or any!) of the photos into a new album, it doesn't really matter. Best of all, get others in your family to join in the process. It could turn into an afternoon of laughter and a new degree of bonding that recalling fond memories can so often do.

## Charging Up the Batteries for 'It'.

This sounds like a classic case of having a great time, but now we'd better get back to the real world! The radio program was discussing the question – balance of work and life. I know this is an important question, but on the other hand it's also a very damning message. It seems to be saying that life and work are mutually exclusive and are out of balance. That means that if you are working a lot you don't have much life. Wow! What does work do to us? I think the better question is, What do we let work do to us?

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Susan Blackmore, the famous English neurologist, presented a talk recently on TED. (If you haven't checked out the TED talks yet, you must as soon as possible – [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com) – and listen to some of the most interesting people in the world – for free!). Susan Blackmore is from England and during an illness she decided to take advantage of her inactivity to seriously investigate the idea of Memes. Memes were first suggested by Richard Dawkins in his book, *The Selfish Gene*, to describe the second replicating mechanism – thoughts and ideas. Biological information reproduces through genes. Ideas and thoughts reproduce through memes.

Memes are just packets of information. Memes survive if they successfully reproduce. Memes probably didn't exist before humans (primates maybe) because we're the ones that grew a brain that was capable of moving ideas from one person to another. Mostly we do that through language, but we also use music and art and writing, too. The last three are even more interesting because they become entirely separated from the original person. I'm spreading a meme right now I'm spreading a meme right now, but I'm nowhere to be seen or heard. Amazing stuff.

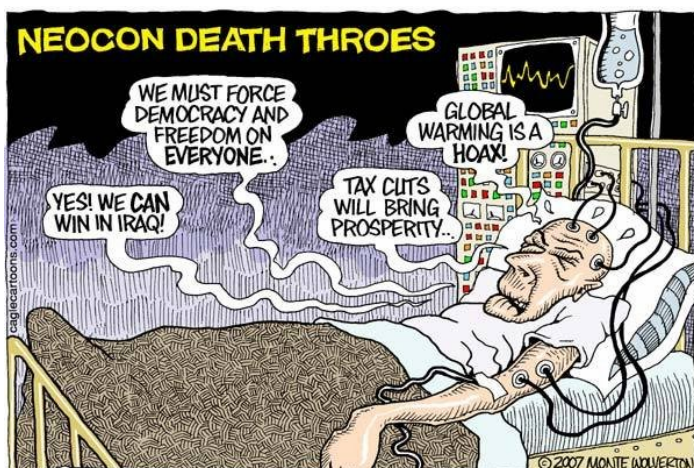
But here's the dampener. For a meme to survive it doesn't have to be a particular type of idea or thought, just one replicates. Information has no morality. We even have a meme that says that only good ideas reproduce. It is a lofty hope, but not true. We all know of things that are just plain stupid, but everyone does it.

You could argue that the Mona Lisa is not the best piece of art in the Louvre, but even if you find something more entrancing, very few people will resist at least seeing the Mona Lisa once. When you stand before the bullet proof glass, in the throng of all the other admirers it seems very hard to have a truly personal opinion. The Mona Lisa is a very successful 'best painting of all time' meme.

I feel that the meme that work and life are two separate things is another one of those unfortunate, but successfully replicated memes. It seems to me that we are in our life no matter what we are doing. Somehow work is different. Somehow it has become something more important, something worth putting your life on hold for. John Lennon told us, *Life is what happens to you while you're making other plans*. That's a successful meme, too.

Is it easy to change a meme? Clearly not, or we wouldn't be having another conversation on the radio about improving our work/life balance. Memes tend to stick around because our brains like to do what it is used to and think what it usually thinks. Even if those thoughts are a bit barny. Do them often enough and they seem to make sense. That is how a meme successfully reproduces.

So, the real question is, How do we interrupt a meme that is doing us harm? Well, the answer is in the concept of reproduction. If you think first about something, instead of promiscuously spreading it like the plague, then maybe there will be a better population of ideas out there. I guess it's a bit hard to change the way the world thinks, but surely we can be a bit more in charge of what goes on in our own head.



This cartoonist obviously thinks these are some memes that should die off. What are some of the memes you think we can do without. Share your thoughts for next weeks newsletter [richhill@iinet.net.au](mailto:richhill@iinet.net.au)

Looking forward to sharing more thoughts, suggestions, news and making a very Healthy Wednesday connection with you!

Take Care, Richard, Susie and The Healthy Wednesday Team

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