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IT'S IN THE CARDS

WHY VALENTINE'S DAY IS THE ULTIMATE CARD HOLIDAY

This may be the first year in a long time that kids don't pass out Valentine's Day cards at school. Going in to the new year, the seasonal section of most stores is lined with cards featuring fun characters from superheroes to unicorns. Handing out cards is now a well-loved tradition, but have you ever wondered how Valentine's Day became one of the biggest card-giving holidays of the year?

Like many holiday traditions, the convention of handing out Valentine's Day cards goes back centuries. During the 1700s, it became fashionable to trade Valentine's Day cards with a short poem or verse. The popularity of swapping cards only increased throughout the 1800s. Sometimes, people would go as far as to paint or draw spring-like images on the cards. They were much more elaborate than what we typically see today, though they were still usually very small.

But where did those folks get the idea? People of that era were likely inspired by stories that go back even further. There are legends that the originator of this holiday tradition was Saint Valentine himself. One story says that on the night before he was set to be executed, Valentine wrote a small letter to a jailer's daughter. He ended the note with "Your Valentine."



It's unknown whether that story is true, but to 18th century Europeans and Americans, it was inspiring! So inspiring, in fact, that the entire Valentine's Day industry began to gain traction. A guidebook called "The Young Man's Valentine" was published in 1797 to help suitors garner the attention of their love interests through the written word. Eventually, books aimed at women were also published, including "The Lady's Own Valentine Writer," which served much the same goal.

These publications, along with young people writing notes to one another every February, have made Valentine's Day cards an ingrained tradition, and now people can't get enough of them!

THE PRESENT YEAR

Starting 2021 on a Positive Note

With this edition of our newsletter, I want to welcome all of you to the present year. I know that many people are not as eager for 2021 as they were for years past, and I also know that things have been difficult across the board. It's more important than ever to engage with the world and take advantage of the opportunities we're given — or make opportunities if none arise by themselves.

In that spirit, I've been sending information about a great opportunity — see the practice pearl from the PDTA for January. In addition to follow-up emails, this great information perfectly encapsulates what I mean by opportunity. We all know how important social media is in today's day and age; Facebook rules the roost, especially with the people who look for information on your practice through social media outlets or Google. So wouldn't it be wonderful to start 2021 with a big boost to your Facebook marketing — say, 5,000 new "likes" on your business page in a just a few days?

I can hear you now saying, "That'd be great — if it were possible!" or "It's a scam," or maybe just "We don't have the budget for whatever you need to do for that." But you also know that I'm not in the business of pushing things that don't work. Not only is the 5,000 likes in just a few days strategy possible; it's easy.

After all, I did it. And if I can do it, you can too. I promise.

Ready for the secret? Here's the fun part: It's likely already in your inbox. I've sent out a few emails to you over the last few weeks, so all you have to do is search my address and you'll find the email, which is about "How to Increase Your Presence on Social Media." You might have to check your spam or other filters, of course. It's so easy to miss these things,



but there's a marketing gold nugget hidden away somewhere in your email right now. Find it, follow the link, and you're in business. Best of all, you get this free because you are a PDTA member.

We haven't been able to physically get out there and let people know about our practices. Handshakes, parties, and conventions are now happening over Zoom or not happening at all. The social sphere is now online, and the answer to the question, "How much are 5,000 likes really worth?" goes up in value every day.

Once you have that many "likes," the odds of getting more activity are much higher. More people in your area will see your page, and Google will also look at your Facebook "likes" when it determines how high in their ranking your website should appear. It's a snowball effect that gets bigger and

bigger after the initial push. And with Valentine's Day coming up, you'll be making your posts to a much wider audience.

I don't know what's going to happen this year, but I know that we're rewarded when we work hard and look for positive outcomes, even in tough situations. You have to go big out of the gate, and that's what my "5,000 likes" strategy is all about: starting the new year off on the right foot.

Welcome to 2021, and good luck to all of you.

Rhea
Rhea M. Haugseth, D.M.D.



“Like our content? Use the provided articles in your company blog or Facebook posts!”

HOW HABIT TRACKING AND DAILY RESOLUTIONS COULD TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE

Yearly resolutions are so last year ... if they're your only resolutions, that is.

Having long-term goals isn't a bad thing, but do you have a daily plan to reach them? The huge boost of motivation in January isn't always enough to sustain you all year long. That's why there are major benefits to starting new healthy habits, whether you increase your weekly exercise time, eat healthier foods, or work on getting better or more sleep.

Luckily, sticking with these habits might be as easy as making daily resolutions to complement your yearly goals.

BJ Fogg, a Stanford University professor and author of "Tiny Habits: The Small Changes That Change Everything," notes that tiny habits can make a new habit easy to implement into your daily ritual. For example, taking a short daily walk could lead to an exercise habit, or keeping an apple in your bag every day could encourage healthier snacking.

It's important that you stick with it because habits take a long time to create. One study published by the European Journal of Social Psychology asked people about a simple habit they wanted to form, like drinking water at lunch or taking a walk before dinner. They found that the average amount of time it took before the action became automatic was 66 days! Don't be too hard on yourself if you miss a day, but know that sticking to a new habit is serious work, so starting small might help you out.

Another important aspect of forming new daily habits is rewarding yourself. Bad habits, like smoking, have an inherent reward. However, healthy habits can have rewards too! Try consuming a bit of dark chocolate after a workout or treating yourself to a fresh beverage or relaxing to a podcast after tackling an important task. Find ways to reward yourself, and you'll be more likely to stick to your new habit.

Certain daily resolutions don't have to be related to exercise or diet to majorly improve your life. For example, having a gratitude journal might boost your long-term happiness by 10% and improve your blood pressure. Don't hesitate to improve your quality of life! Just start small, and you'll be amazed by how far you'll go.

OUT WITH THE NEW, IN WITH THE OLD! 4 OLD-SCHOOL HOBBIES MAKING A MAJOR COMEBACK

January is National Hobby Month — and for good reason! As people set goals for 2021, they're also thinking about trying new hobbies. But with so many out there, picking just one can be a hobby in itself. Thanks in part to COVID-19, many people have rediscovered old-school hobbies. Some of these have been around for decades or even longer, and others have established communities that can rely on one another for support, sharing information, and more. Here are four great examples.

MAKING BREAD

Over the last year, interest in this ancient hobby has skyrocketed. Homemade bread is tastier and more nutritious than store-bought, and it's so satisfying to watch it come together. Not to mention it's a great skill to have! With so many types of bread to try, you're not going to run out of ideas any time soon.

COLLECTING CARDS

No matter what people were into during the '70s, '80s, and '90s, there was a trading card game for it. And even going into 2021, that tradition has been kept alive. When many people were stuck at home last year, they rediscovered their card collections and remembered how much fun they were. As a result, card sales went through the roof, and online card communities lit up with activity from all over the world.

RESTORING CARS

Car restoration is a hobby that lets you get your hands dirty, and it's one that you can do with your kids or grandkids. It can be not only educational for them but also fun! Together, you can track down parts, talk to folks who are also interested in



restoration, and learn about the history of your car. Though car restoration can be a bit costly and time consuming, it's certainly a journey worth taking.

EMBROIDERING

Embroidery has taken off because it's both inexpensive and fairly easy to get into. Plus, many people have fallen in love with its meditative quality. One of the great things about embroidery is that you can use it to make amazing personalized gifts, like pillows, wall hangings, and kitchen towels!

SITUATION OF THE MONTH

DEAR PDTA PRO,

I've actually got two questions, but I think they're related. The first, I think, is pretty straightforward. We always flag Halloween as the big "candy" holiday, which means people aren't looking out for Valentine's Day — which can be almost as bad. Any tips for spreading the word to our patients? That leads to my other question because spreading the word is a kind of marketing, and as a staff, we'd like to get more involved in the marketing side of the practice. Any tips for us there?

Sincerely,

—Wants to Help

Dear Wants to Help,

Your suspicions are correct: These two questions are related. First, the message you want to spread about sugary candy: One idea may be to allow the kids unrestricted access to the candy with parental supervision for the first half-hour to hour after they receive it. After that, it should only be given out with a snack or meal and have them brush their teeth as soon as possible.

It is wonderful that you want to get involved in marketing, which often falls on one member of the staff or on the dentist themselves. Talk to whoever handles the marketing in your office and ask if you can help lighten the load. They might ask you to run the practice's Facebook page for a while — you do have a Facebook page,

right? Make a post on Valentine's Day with the above message about candy, and don't forget Easter! Those baskets are often full of sugary treats!

Speaking of Facebook, another way the staff can help is to add the practice page to your friends or "likes" lists and interact with it regularly by leaving comments, posting pictures, etc. That creates activity, which is something that people (and search engines) like to see, making it more likely that the practice's page will be visible to a larger audience.

The staff can also help with the practice's marketing. Each person can contribute a Blog article and have another staff member make sure the content is relevant and correct. A Blog post on your website or a Facebook practice page post is also a great place to run a notice about sugary candy. You can also print a flyer to hand out, email, or mail this information for readers to share with their friends and family. It can be printed on special bordered paper that's available at any office supply store, with hearts for Valentine's Day and eggs or bunnies for Easter.

Taking the initiative like you are is very helpful in these current times. Good marketing can mean a steady influx of new patients, which is the lifeblood for pediatric dental practices.

All the Best,
—Pediatric Pro

HAVE A LAUGH



BALSAMIC ROASTED VEGETABLE PASTA

INGREDIENTS

- ½ tbsp grapeseed oil
- 2 ½ lbs mixed vegetables of choice, chopped into ¾-inch pieces (parsnips, turnips, carrots, butternut squash, Brussels sprouts, etc.)
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 shallot, thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 8 oz uncooked pasta
- ½ cup vegetable broth
- 3 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 handfuls arugula
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Nutritional yeast, to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400 F.
2. In a large bowl, combine grapeseed oil, root vegetables, and onion. Toss until evenly coated, then spread the mixture across two foil-lined baking sheets.
3. Sprinkle vegetables with salt and pepper, then roast them for 35–40 minutes. While vegetables are roasting, cook pasta according to package directions.
4. When vegetables are done, heat olive oil in a deep skillet over medium heat. Sauté shallots and garlic for 4–5 minutes.
5. Add the root vegetables and onion, pasta, vegetable broth, and vinegar to the pot and stir until warm. Add the arugula and cook until wilted.
6. Serve with salt, pepper, and nutritional yeast.

Inspired by TheFullHelping.com