

## Our Healthy Lifestyles

# What is it that really matters in our lives?

By the time this article runs, the mess dubbed "The Late Night Wars" between Jay Leno, Conan O'Brien, and NBC should have found some kind of resolution. It's an ugly mess that seemingly could have been avoided had the executives at NBC had either a true strategic plan or the stomach to let one of their popular talk show hosts leave for another network.

I cannot explain why I'm so interested in this story. I used to love *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, but I've seen a grand total of three episodes of his *Tonight Show*. I hardly watched Jay Leno's *Tonight Show*, and I've never watched his prime-time show. Why their business is so interesting to me I may never understand.

A few Mondays ago, after he was through that night's requisite "NBC executives are morons" jokes, Conan got serious. Said Conan, "My little dust-up with NBC has



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been in the news a lot in the last week, but the devastation in Haiti reminds us there is real tragedy in the world. This is just show business...it's silly."

He, then, went on to promote Ben Stiller's charity website [www.stillerstrong.org](http://www.stillerstrong.org) for those interested in donating to the relief effort in Haiti. It was a brief respite from his acid-tongue lashing of NBC, and it was both sincere in its sentiment and urgent in its

directive.

In sum, it was the kind of self-aware "what really matters in life" moment that really seems personal and honest.

I took the scene at face value, promised I would make a donation, finished watching the show, and went to bed. The next morning, for no apparent reason, I was reviewing the previous night's show in my head. Conan's serious aside stuck out especially.

It struck me that I was thinking more about these "Late Night Wars" than the Haitian devastation. Moreover, it bothered me that I was thinking of a late night host's reminder of the devastation rather than the tragedy itself. I asked one of my friends if he thought about the "Late Night Wars" as much as I did. He replied with an emphatic, "YES!" When I asked him why, he shrugged and offered, "No one can look away from a car

crash," as his rationale.

This left me feeling empty. Why was I drawn to a "car crash" with minimal effect before a "crash" with enormous effect? Doesn't the worldwide tragedy deserve to occupy more of my attention than a drama revolving around millionaire celebrities?

I thought again about what my friend said about our inability to avoid watching a car crash. I began to feel his defense was true, but inaccurate. I think it's more true to say, "No one can look away from a car crash, provided no one gets seriously injured."

The success of television shows like *RealTV* is testament to this. *RealTV* shows outrageous animal attacks, auto accidents, domestic incidents, and more.

It's like a not-so-funny *America's Funniest Videos*. After each clip viewers are reminded that "no one was permanently injured", or, "the

injured experienced a speedy recovery." *RealTV* adds this disclaimer, because no one would tune into a television show to see people die.

One hundred years ago American philosopher William James, an ardent Christian with great concern for morality, argued for the benefit of a "moral holiday". To James, a moral holiday is when an otherwise conscientious person allows him/herself to relax and enjoy something without anxiety. Someone on a moral holiday knows full well that there is immense tragedy in the world, but allows him/herself time to escape thinking about it. It's important to note that a moral holiday doesn't last long, and the moral vacationer will always return to focus on the crisis as needed.

In some respects I think I've been on a moral holiday. I allowed myself to get caught up in the silliness at NBC when there were more impor-

tant ways I could have spent my time. By the time this article runs, Conan O'Brien will no longer be the host of *The Tonight Show*, and I will be back from holiday.

If you're interested in making a contribution to the Haitian relief effort there are too many worthy institutions to list. I would recommend institutions like UNICEF ([www.unicefusa.org](http://www.unicefusa.org)) or the International Red Cross ([www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)) which guarantee 100% of your donation goes directly to relief work. Moreover, it's important to mention that soon, we'll move past Haiti.

The country will rebuild, their way of life will be restored. Don't let the fact that disaster hasn't yet struck somewhere else prevent you from donating.

The more money these charities have to work with, the faster they will be able to respond to the next global crisis.

## Interval training is an important aspect of staying healthy

I am always after my patients to exercise. Once the joints are working properly with Chiropractic care, it is important to have strong muscles to keep the joints stable. And if a patient is overweight, the extra pounds put stress on the joints which can undo what I try to accomplish.

Most people have a hard time starting an exercise program because they "don't have the time." Now there is no excuse because of this recent study.

New findings suggest that it pays to alternate short bursts of high-intensity exercise with gentle recovery during workout regimens at least once a week. Although this alternating technique, called interval training, has existed for decades, a new study has



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confirmed that it can dramatically improve cardiovascular fitness and the body's fat-burning capabilities.

Researchers asked eight college-age men and women to sprint for 30 seconds, and then either stop or pedal

gently for four minutes. After only two weeks of this interval training, 75 percent of them doubled their endurance.

A control group, which did not do any interval training, showed no improvement in endurance. The marked improvement in the interval training group was even more startling because the volun-

teers were already fairly fit. (Kirsten A. Burgomaster,1 Scott C. Hughes,1 George J. F Heigenhauser,2 Suzanne N. Bradwell,1 and Martin J. Gibala1. "Six sessions of sprint interval training increases muscle oxidative

potential and cycle endurance capacity in humans." *J Appl Physiol* 98: 1985-1990, 2005 see <http://jap.physiology.org/cgi/content/abstract/98/6/1985> to read abstract)

Another study also showed that interval training enhances the body's ability to burn fat. Eight women in their early 20s were told to cycle for 10 sets of four minutes of hard riding, followed by two minutes of rest.

After two weeks, the amount of fat burned in an hour of continuous moderate cycling increased by 36 percent, and their cardiovascular fitness improved by 13 percent. (King, J., Panton, L., Broeder, C., Browder, K., Quindry, J., & Rhea, L. (2001). *A comparison of high intensity vs. low intensity exercise on*

*body composition in overweight women. Medicine and Science in Sports & Exercise*, 33, A2421)

The new evidence suggests that this may actually provide more protection against heart attacks than long duration aerobic type exercises.

Another major benefit of this approach is that it radically decreases the amount of time you spend exercising, while giving you even more benefits. It would be wise to have clearance by your physician if you are not in good shape before embarking on a program like this. However, you could start simply by walking and progress at your own pace.

But this is a technique that should help nearly anyone who uses it. The take-

home message? Don't rely solely on cardio. You will need to incorporate interval-type training along with strength training to develop a far more rounded and comprehensive exercise program. You will be very pleased with the results and perhaps even more pleased with the free time you have if you have been a slave to hour-long cardio workouts.

If you are investing the time, energy and money to get healthy, incorporate this in addition to your regular routine.

*Dr. Carol Grant, a local chiropractor, does not intend this column to substitute for medical advice. She urges you to always consult with your personal physician before changing any current program.*

## Elder law attorneys specialize in helping the elderly

Many elderly persons rely entirely on their children, family members or other trusted individuals to help them. This dependence makes an older person more vulnerable to abuse and financial exploitation. Legal arrangements and protective actions by family may be necessary to shield loved ones from making bad decisions or from being taken advantage of.

Most children wouldn't take advantage of their parents, but there is no way to know what someone will do who is desperate for money or who fees entitled to an inheritance. For example:

David's parents' health was failing and living alone in their home was becoming a concern. His sister, Jill, suggested assisted living, but



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David immediately became upset at Jill for wanting to spend their money. He brought his parents to his home. Being single and working, he was not available to them during the day, but left food and water on the table for them until he returned home. Jill lived over

300 miles away and when she visited, she found her parents' care was not acceptable. They couldn't remember if they took their medications, or if they had eaten a meal that day. David was draining their savings account, and when confronted, became angry and complained he needed their money to pay expenses. Jill felt her brother's care was abusive, but David's defense was he provided a home for them. This family needs a professional advisor to help them understand and clarify issues concerning their parents' care.

Making legal decisions about property, finances, power of attorney, and final wishes are important tasks to complete for the final years of life. Having legal docu-

mentation for a will, for medical treatment and for the person designated to be responsible for parents' welfare can avoid family disputes and financial abuse, and help to conserve assets that are needed for care.

Elder law attorneys specialize in legal issues affecting the elderly. They work with the elderly in assisting them and their families with all aspects of estate planning and obtain in home or nursing home care. A partial list of what an elder law attorney might do is:

- Preservation or transfer of assets to avoid spousal impoverishment when a spouse enters a nursing home
- Medicaid qualification, and application and Medicaid planning strategies

- Home care paid by Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders

- Veterans benefits
- Disability planning, with durable powers of attorney, living trusts and living wills

- Administration and management of trusts and estates

- Long term care placements in nursing homes and assisted living

Most elder law attorneys do not specialize in all the areas listed above. When considering an attorney you will want to find one who has experience in the area you need help.

According to The Nation Academy of Elder Law Attorneys—  
<http://www.naela.org/>

"Ask lots of questions

before selecting an elder law attorney. You don't want to end up in the office of an attorney who can't help you. Start with the initial phone call. It is not, unusual to speak only to a secretary, receptionist or office manager during an initial call or before actually meeting with the attorney. If so, ask this person your questions.

- How long has the attorney been in practice?

- Does his/her practice emphasize a particular area of law?

- How long has he/she been in this field?

- What percentage of his/her practice is devoted to elder law?

- Is there a fee for the first consultation and if so, how much is it?

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