Create Jobs. How can that happen in this economy? The answer is plain and simple and we find it historically proven.... small businesses create jobs. Small business is indeed the backbone of our economy. It has been historically proven that in either a very slow recovery or during a robust economy; small business creates jobs and drives the economy. The challenge for our legislatures is to create a climate that cultivates this growth. We need to ensure there are opportunities for the creation of new businesses; in addition, we need to ensure there are ample resources available to enable and encourage growth.

Nationally 7 out of 10 businesses are classified as small and the Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry’s membership reflects this statistic. Currently we consist of 70% small business (under 100 employees) and 30% large business. Offering opportunities for business owners to grow is a vital piece of our program of work. We continually seek circumstances that allow us to advocate on their behalf and connect entrepreneurs and business owners to legislatures to tell their story. Chamber seminars and workshops are created to help inform and educate our members; and everyone is aware of the value of building relationships through networking, which is a pillar of our work here at the Chamber.

Every year the Chamber hosts a dinner to honor a member as the Small Business of the Year at our Annual Small Business Dinner. After careful consideration of all nominees, this prestigious award is given to a Chamber member who exemplifies excellence. Please help us honor small business and keep the Spirit of Free Enterprise alive, at our Annual Small Business Dinner, January 24, 2013. This premier business event will draw together over 300 business and community leaders, to salute small businesses throughout the region and recognize this year’s recipient.

Do you know of an outstanding small business that shows leadership in its industry and community? Nominate them or nominate your own business for this prestigious award. Currently our Small Business Advisory Group is in the process of soliciting nominations. The deadline for all nominations is November 28th. To nominate a business or for more information regarding this signature event, visit our website at cccbi.org or contact Danielle Vetter today. We hope to see you there!
From the President
From my desk to yours...

Where has the month gone? We have had an incredibly busy start to our new year, which began on October 1. The energy that has resulted from an infusion of new members that joined during our September Campaign month and the spirit and enthusiasm of our membership at the Annual Dinner at Longwood Gardens has gotten us off to a great start! Thank you all for your support and motivation as we prepare for the year ahead.

In early October, I had the opportunity to “escort” a group of members to Costa Rica as part of our annual business mission. Our local guide shared so much information about their country, including their political landscape and quality of life. It is clear that they love Americans and welcome our visits and possible business alliances. It was especially fun to see one of our local business products in the stores. I was very drawn to the Herr's products and so proud to share with them the wonderful connection Chester County has to the Herr family and their business. Check out the photo inside this newsletter and visit our photo gallery on page 7 for a look at this beautiful country.

I also participated in a State Conference (PACP) for all Pennsylvania Chamber executives and their management teams. This was a special occasion for me as I have completed my year as the Chairman of PACP and was able to reflect on the importance of professional development for our industry. The keynote speaker spoke of business trends and chamber’s roles in increasing their relevance to their communities based on these trends. A few of the trends really hit home and was a reminder that one size does not fit all. Our movement to a tiered benefits model was used as an example of chambers that have used innovative approaches to providing value to its members by understanding the need to customize its offerings. Secondly, they stressed the need to communicate with our members on many different levels. The old motto for chambers was “get involved...get results”. The new model is “access, connections and solutions”. I am pleased to say that our Strategic Planning efforts of the past year clearly align with this new approach.

Finally, the past month has brought a lot of attention to the election topics focusing on the future of our state and country. We have shared with you our endorsed candidates; those we believe who have the best interests of business in mind. Now it is up to you to get out and vote. Whether you are voting early or plan to get out on November 6...in the words of NIKE, “Just Do It!”

Business Plan Approved

The Chamber’s Board of Directors approved the Business Plan for 2012-2013 at their October meeting. The Business Plan is developed by the Chamber’s committees with input from staff, and highlights the areas of main focus for the Chamber for the next year.

The Business Plan holds the chamber and its committees accountable to carry out the many initiatives for the chamber to ensure the relevance of the organization. “Having been developed by active volunteers serving on our committees allows us to meet the needs outlined and deemed important by the business community,” stated Chamber President, Nancy Keefer. This also reflects the Chamber’s strategic vision as an organization focused on advocacy, connections and professional development opportunities.

To download a copy of the Business Plan, click here.
Upcoming Events

November

1 Th  Joint Chamber Fall Mega-Mixer & Biz Expo
      American Helicopter Museum & Education Center
      5:00 pm – 8:00 pm

10 Sat.  Emerging Leaders partners with
         Habitat for Humanity of Chester County
         Community Lane in Coatesville, PA
         8:30 am – 4:30 pm

To register online go to www.cccbi.org
Questions? Please contact the Chamber at 610-725-9100.

December

5 W  Business After Hours
     Sheraton Great Valley Hotel
     5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

7 F  2012 Pennsylvania Society -
     A Salute to Leadership Reception
     The Benjamin Hotel 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

20 Th.  Prospective Member Orientation Luncheon
        CCCBI Headquarters 12:00-1:15 pm

NEW YORK, NEW YORK -- Pa Society December 7, 2012 honoring
Bill Latoff, Chairman of the Board of DNB First

Let us be the first event on your calendar for this year’s Pennsylvania Society of New York.

On, Friday, December 7, 2012, we will be hosting a private reception at The Benjamin Hotel from 4:00 to 6:00 pm honoring William S. Latoff, Chairman & CEO, DNB First. This event will bring together a number of CEOs, elected officials and key political leaders here in the Commonwealth.

In keeping with the tradition of this event, we will be honoring Mr. Latoff with a very special award, our “2012 Salute to Leadership Award”, for his consistent leadership, support and overall advocacy in helping to push a business agenda.

Be sure to become a part of a very special evening with the Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry. Sponsorship opportunities are available. Call Marianne Martelli at 610-725-9100 x14 for more information.

If you are a member of the Chamber and will be attending PA Society Weekend please contact Marianne for your invitation to our reception.

Calling all Ladies!

The Women-In-Business Committee is a professional Chamber organization of women who network through specific program opportunities designed to educate, inspire, enhance business skills and maximize women’s membership in the Chamber. This dynamic group of women has grown over the past year and continues to thrive.

The committee has some great things planned for the upcoming year. Why not get involved? We meet the first Thursday of every month at 8:00 am at the Chester County Chamber Headquarters. For more information on becoming a part of the Women-in-Business Committee or updates on upcoming WIB events, contact Danielle Vetter at dvetter@cccbi.org.

We extend our condolences to the family, friends and associates of former

Senator Arlen Specter

who served more than 3 decades as a public servant.
1930-2012
Over 300 people joined us at our Annual Dinner on October 17, 2012 at the breathtaking Longwood Gardens. The night began with a cocktail reception amongst the beautiful flower gardens and fountains at Longwood. Once most of the attendees arrived, we entered into the ballroom. Having so many of our members present gave us the perfect opportunity to celebrate the Chamber’s successes of the past year as well as look into our future in 2013. We were also able to honor our 2012 CEO of the Year, Paul Redman and 2012 Citizen of the Year, State Senator Dominic Pileggi. As the presentations came to an end, guests were encouraged to move into the Conservatory, where they could enjoy various dinner stations while mingling with others. The perfect fall weather allowed for an outdoor dessert buffet overlooking the 80’s themed Fountain Light show. What a fabulous evening! Thank you to everyone who came out and a very special thanks to all of our sponsors, who made the night possible.

**Presenting Sponsor:**
DNB First

**Platinum Sponsors:**
- Aqua
- Exelon Generation
- Independence Blue Cross

**Gold Sponsors:**
- Bentley Systems, Inc.
- Buckley, Brion, McGuire, Morris & Sommer, LLP
- MacElree Harvey, Ltd. Law Offices
- Meridian Bank Longwood Gardens
- Republican Committee of Chester County
- Wells Fargo

**Silver Sponsors:**
- aEONRG, LLC, Citizen’s Bank
- Brumbaugh Wealth Management, Fox Rothschild, LLP
- JAECO Fluid Systems, Inc., Lamb McErlane, PC
- Lyons Companies, M & T Bank
- Nason Construction, National Penn Bank
- Liberty Property Trust
- Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel, LLP
- Rainer & Company, Certified Public Accountants
- Riley Riper Hollin & Colagreco, Stephano Slack, LLC
- The Vanguard Group, West Chester University

**Corporate Sponsor**
Fulton Bank

We received rave reviews from our attendees about the updated format, delicious menu, spectacular light show, and overall experience of the evening. Already looking forward to next year! Click here to see our photo page.
The Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry’s Emerging Leaders Group is once again proud to partner with Habitat for Humanity of Chester County for the second time this year to build hope and independence for Chester County families in need.

On Saturday, November 10th lend a hand and help build a home for a fellow county resident. You don’t have to be a skilled homemaker or carpenter, all you need is a little direction before you start, one hammer, some nails and a team of volunteers to assist you. We invite you to join the members of the Emerging Leaders Group on Saturday November 10, 2012 from 8:30am - 4:30pm (or choose a morning or afternoon shift) at the Community Lane Project in Coatesville, PA.

**Bring your gloves, work clothes, bottled water, and give back to the community. You will feel great at the end of the day. Tools will be provided.**

Volunteers should bring their own lunch, unless staying for only the morning shift. Directions and signup information provided at this link: [http://www.volunteerup.com/Login.asp?w=1&o=24](http://www.volunteerup.com/Login.asp?w=1&o=24)

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**Chamber announces new automated payment options**

Beginning next month, The Chamber will offer two new automated ACH payment plans for your membership dues. Under these optional plans, you can elect to have your membership dues automatically deducted from your account on either a monthly or annual basis.

**Monthly Plan:**
This convenient payment option will allow you to break out your dues payments into monthly installments. Your membership dues will be automatically debited from your checking account on a monthly basis. Payment Plans will include a $1.00 per month ($12.00 annual) processing fee. For example, under the monthly payment plan, members in the Entrepreneur tier will pay $24.75 per month (instead of $285.00 per year).

**Annual Plan:**
We will also offer an automated annual renewal process option. Under this plan, you can elect to have your membership automatically renewed each year and your annual membership dues (plus a $12.00 processing fee) will be automatically debited from your checking account on an annual basis. You will receive a renewal notification at least 30 days prior to your renewal.

The following conditions will also apply to both plans: Member changes to plan must be made in writing at least 30 days prior to effective date of requested change. The Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry may adjust the payment on an annual basis with a written notice to members. A $20.00 service charge will be billed for insufficient funds. Please note that your account must be current in order to set up automatic monthly payment. Other terms and conditions can be found on the ACH Agreement. Please be sure to check out our website for more information as we roll out these new payment options.

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**Let us Pay you Back**

That’s right! Pay your annual investment prior to the due date and you will be entered into a drawing to win $100 in Chamber dollars to be used within the year for any program, event, sponsorship or advertisement. You will automatically be entered into the drawing when we receive your renewal payment in advance of the due date (we just love those members!). We will also recognize our monthly winners in our e-brief publication giving your company added exposure to our membership.

The Winner for November is:  
Tague Lumber

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The perfect holiday gift is the Gift of Giving

Emerging Leaders Group – What’s ahead

The Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry’s Emerging Leaders Group is once again proud to partner with Habitat for Humanity of Chester County for the second time this year to build hope and independence for Chester County families in need. On Saturday, November 10th lend a hand and help build a home for a fellow county resident. You don’t have to be a skilled home builder or carpenter, all you need is a little direction before you start, one hammer, some nails and a team of volunteers to assist you. We invite you to join the members of the Emerging Leaders Group on Saturday November 10, 2012 from 8:30am - 4:30pm (or choose a morning or afternoon shift) at the Community Lane Project in Coatesville, PA.

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Board Member Profile

Name: Joel Frank  
Title: Managing Partner  
Company: Lamb McErlane PC

50 Word description of company: Lamb McErlane delivers the breadth of services one would expect from a downtown firm with the personal attention typically associated with a neighborhood law office. Known to be one of the most sophisticated, diverse and respected boutique practices in the Delaware Valley, Lamb McErlane delivers competent, dedicated and results-oriented legal services.

What is the best leadership/management tip you have received?  
Be a leader but be inclusive of those with whom you work.

If you were not in the position you currently hold, what would you be doing?  
Running a fishing charter in the Florida Keys.

What is the one thing that you are willing to share that one might not know about you?  
Spent the summers between the ages of 13 and 20 working for a paving contractor installing driveways and sidewalks.

What is your favorite quote?  
“It is not your aptitude but your attitude that determines your altitude.” - Zig Ziglar

Building Industry Shared Interest Group Plans 2013 Programs

Members of the Building Industry Shared Interest Group (SIG) will meet on November 8 at 7:30 a.m. at the Chamber to announce and discuss the plans for the group for 2013. At this meeting, the dates and topics of the upcoming programs for the year will be provided and attendees will have the opportunity to help determine the focus for each session.

Any member of the Chamber that is in a business directly related to the building industry is invited to attend. If you have not received a direct invitation to the November 8 meeting, please let us know so that we can add you to this special group.

For more information on our Building Industry SIG, you can contact Chamber President, Nancy Keefer at nkeefer@cccbi.org.

SMALL BUSINESS WEBINAR

Where is the economy headed and how will it affect your business?

Economic Update  
Thursday, October 25th from 12:00pm - 1:15pm

Please join us!  
You’re invited to a webinar covering an Economic Update and its potential impact on small business owners.

Keynote Speaker:  
Luke Tilley  
Regional Economic Advisor  
Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia

To learn more or register, please visit: ListeningIsJustTheBeginning.com

Fulton Bank  
LISTENING IS JUST THE BEGINNING.

Fulton Bank, N.A. Member FDIC. Member of the Fulton Financial Family.
Congratulations to Paul Redman, Longwood Gardens, our 2012 CEO of the Year.

Chamber President Nancy Keefer congratulates Senator Dominic Pileggi and presents his Citizen of the Year Award on behalf of CCCBI. Pileggi was honored at the Chamber's Annual Dinner in October.

Guest enjoy the new format of food stations and extended networking.

Business Mission to Costa Rica!

Chamber President Nancy Keefer finds local Chester County product in Costa Rica. Herr's Potato Chips and presents to Costa Rican Tour Guide, Ricardo Howell.

Local member landscaper, Guy Pyne, Dooley-Pyne Landscaping Co., helps plant a tree in Costa Rica as part of our trip to Costa Rica. Jon Corle, Tycor Benefits, participates with local Costa Rican business owner.

Locally grown fruits and vegetables sold at village market. Participants learned a lot about many products exported to the US from Costa Rica.

Made in Chester County: Devault Foods

Thomas Fillipo shares the Devault Foods family story and his secret for a great tasting meatball.

Emerging Leaders Business After Hours

Over 40 Emerging Leaders enjoyed a rooftop networking event at MAS Mexicali Cantina in West Chester.

Chamber members toured the Devault Foods plant and received some new fashion tips.
"A Brief Abstract on QR Codes."
An article submitted by: Garett Otterbein

The QR, short for Quick Response, code is the most fundamentally misunderstood marketing tool today. Developed as an improvement to the 2-D bar code as a stock keeping tool, QR technology has become a marketing phenomenon with both disciples and detractors.

The most common mistake with QR technology is remembering that QR codes have to do something. As a marketing junkie, I scan every QR I come across, and around 90% of the codes I see take me directly to the main page of the company’s website. This does nothing for your customers for several reasons. First, without fail, these pages aren’t mobile ready, forcing customers into a bad user experience right off the bat. Second, there’s no legible call to action, and when the customer is already looking at your signage or ad, what does a tiny, indecipherable homepage add to the experience or coax them into doing? Finally, they’re scanning your QR rather than visiting your website, so they are probably on the move. A single missed beat could be the difference between a sale and a pass. QR codes are the elevator speeches of the digital world: You have thirty seconds, go!

QR codes can’t do everything, which is why it is so important to think about what you want your customers to do when they scan your code. Above all, a mobile ready site is imperative if you’re going to direct customers to your website. Mobile browsing will surpass PC browsing by 2013, and a recent survey by Adweek makes it abundantly clear that consumers expect a mobile-friendly environment when browsing on their cell phones. Consider hiring a developer to create a mobile site, or invest in a responsive website, which will provide a traditional and mobile browsing experience in one.

The channel through which your QR codes are distributed is just as important as any aspect of the code itself. A QR code is nothing more than a pictograph of a link. It is pointless to show someone a code they can’t scan (like in a subway) or when it’s more convenient to use their computer (like in an email). Moreover, QR codes are often mistaken as a call-to-action in and of themselves. It might seem obvious, but I’ve seen far too many instances where businesses have put QRs on their storefronts or in their advertisements without telling me what I’m signing up for. The average consumer won’t scan if there’s no evident value in doing so.

QR codes get a bad reputation because many marketers fundamentally misunderstand what a QR code is and what it can and can’t do. There are no inherent factors or technological wonders that are unique to QR; they must be supplemented with a call to action on the front end where the code is displayed and content on the back end worth the consumer’s time. Through patience, careful planning, and some trial-and-error, business owners can rely on QR to be a steadfast tool in their marketing toolbox. Click here to read the full article, located in our resource library on the web.

Garett Otterbein is a Branding Specialist with The nGage Company, a marketing firm with an emphasis on all things digital. He can help your business develop a marketing strategy, build a website, optimize your social media, write an app, or yes, execute a QR code campaign. The nGage Company also publishes a free monthly webinar on marketing topics that you can access by scanning the QR code below, or by emailing go@thengoengagecompany.com.
As our new program year begins at the Chamber, the staff is very excited as we begin planning all of our wonderful events. We have encouraged you to get involved as much as possible with all that we do. Participation is the easiest way to see the value in your membership, and we have just made it easier for your planning purposes and budget to attend our premier events.

We would like to offer you our “Signature Gold Card” sponsorship opportunity. Your Gold Card includes two tickets to our most sought out events: the Annual Dinner (Oct. 2013), Small Business Dinner (Jan. 2013), Women in Business Dinner (April 2013), State of the County Luncheon, Eye on Congress Breakfast, Wake Up Chester County, State of the Commonwealth and our Annual Barbeque.

What better way to connect with key community leaders and elected leaders than at our Chamber events. In addition, since the Gold Card includes two tickets, you can invite a client, customer or co-worker and let us help you entertain them!

Not only is this a great way to ensure you attend our events but it is a great value and easy on your budget. The Signature Gold Card is valued at $990.00 if you purchased two tickets per event separately. We are offering this wonderful sponsorship opportunity for only $875.00!

Why not budget in the cost of our Signature Gold Card now and mark your calendar for all of our events? You won’t want to miss out on this opportunity to save money and support the Chamber.

Please contact Marianne Martelli at 610-725-9100 ext. 14 or mmartelli@cccbi.org to purchase your Signature Gold Card or for more information.
Throughout the month of September the Chamber opened its doors to the business community by hosting a series of networking events, luncheons and open house receptions. These events were designed to connect regional businesses and help grow the membership, by offering non-members the opportunity to explore the value of the Chamber.

The campaign’s kickoff was at the Hotel Warner in downtown West Chester. The event was a huge success with over 150 businesses in attendance. Members and non-members made valuable business connections with each other, learned more about the benefits of membership and had the opportunity to get a firsthand look at the region’s newest boutique hotel.

Later in the month, the Chamber hosted its three day VIP Open House, where Staff, Board Members and Members Volunteers came out to assist with membership recruitment. VIPS learned more about the Chamber and shared their businesses with a packed room. Volunteers showed their support by referring businesses to the Chamber, and providing firsthand testimonials to VIPS about their experiences as a member. To date, the Chamber has recruited over 60 businesses to the organization and new members are joining every day.

A special thanks to all of our Member Volunteers, Ambassadors, Event Sponsors, and Board Members, who took time out of their busy schedules to assist in our recruitment efforts. We couldn’t have done it without your support! We also want to thank our newest members for choosing to invest in the Chamber. Keep an eye out for these businesses at future events, and help us welcome them to the CCCBI!

If you know a business that has expressed interest in joining the Chamber, or want to learn more about your membership benefits, please contact Lauren Magee at imagee@cccbi.org. Also, don’t forget about our Member Referral Program. For more information click here.

The event was a huge success and we could not have done it without your support!

Congratulations to
Peter Adams of TD Bank
as our Top Recruiter during the 2012 VIP Membership Campaign!!!
We want to welcome our newest members to the CCCBI this fall!

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<td>Connecting Your Family</td>
<td>J&amp;K Secure Shredding, LLC</td>
<td>Practical Energy Solutions</td>
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<td>Pam Lathbury</td>
<td>Kenny Pasquarella</td>
<td>Jeffrey Byrne</td>
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<td>Karr Barth Private Client Group, LLC</td>
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<td>Kevin Powers</td>
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The making of a good Business After Hours Networking event

The success of a good Business-After-Hours networking event starts with three important ingredients, our members, location and location.

In October we were dazzled by the location and scenery at The Farmhouse at People’s Light in Malvern. Over 70 members filled the restored 18th century farmhouse and had a chance to enjoy the beautiful ballroom, outdoor patio and garden setting. Members were welcome to tour the farmhouse and learn about the unique event planning features and dining experience. This month we will travel to the American Helicopter Museum & Education Center for a high flying MEGA MIXER. The location is expected to be perfect for more than 60 exhibitors and attendees. Soon CCCBI will begin planning the 2013 Business Expo in March and you don’t want miss registering for a booth or two. Contact the Chamber for more info at 610-725-9100.

Last but certainly not forgotten, to round-out our calendar year and to welcome in the true meaning of business, we finish up 2012’s Business-After-Hours networking event at the Sheraton Great Valley Hotel in Frazer, PA. This location can’t be any better for members seeking to experience the comfort and charm of the Sheraton Hotel and its talented executive team and staff. Our December 5, 2012 Business After Hours promises to be a festive holiday pre-celebration mixed with hours of networking, biz-card exchanges, and perhaps a few holiday gifts for good measure.

Make sure you plan ahead to attend any future Business After Hours events held on the first Wednesday of each month from 5:30pm – 7:30pm. We invite you and potential members to take advantage of expanding your network and business development prospects. We are here to set the stage for you, we hope you act accordingly.

If you have a great location that can accommodate 50 to 100 members we would like to hear from you. For more information and scheduling please contact James Logan at 610.725.9100 or jlogan@cccbi.org.

Foundation Executive League 2013

We are excited to kick off our fourth year of the Foundation Executive League (FEL) and I invite you to become part of that excitement.

The Foundation Executive League was established to financially support the work of the Foundation of the Chester County Chamber. Our Foundation provides youth leadership training, education, career and workforce development.

Now more than ever it is important that we develop the workforce of the future. Our very successful Youth Leadership Program is designed to get students not only college-ready but also job ready. While helping students develop a valuable network, we also help them develop job skills that are not taught; ultimately having a positive effect on the business climate in our region.

Membership in FEL entitles you to:
Invitation to exclusive receptions, a listing on the Chamber’s website and in appropriate publications as a supporter of the Foundation, and an opportunity to support the business education of our high school students.

We ask for a donation of $250.00 (up to two individuals) or $500.00 (over two individuals) to our Foundation as a Membership Fee for FEL. And of course your donation is 100% tax deductible contribution as our Foundation is a 501(c)3.

Please feel free to contact Marianne Martelli at 610-725-9100 ext. 14 or mmartelli@cccbi.org if you have any questions or concerns. I will be glad to help.

On behalf of the Chamber and our Foundation, thank you in advance for your support of this most worthwhile initiative. I hope that we can count on your support.
Mental Ghosts

By: Jodi Sensenig

It can certainly be difficult to make changes in our eating habits when we have long work hours, financial strains, and other distressing things going on that conflict with our ability to care for ourselves... I mean who has time?! When we experience stressful events or negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, emptiness and sadness, food can bring us comfort. They don't call it “comfort food” for nothing! Food helps us feel better temporarily, and it is easy to develop the habit of seeking food to improve our moods. Over time, this association grows stronger. We call these “mental ghosts.” However, there is something we can do to change this cycle, however. It requires patient and persistent action over time. The most effective method is a three-pronged approach.

First, we need to change our emotional appraisal of food. As I said before we have an expectation that “food brings us comfort.” In order to have success in changing, we will need to change this expectation. Think of this as “retraining your brain.” We need to flip these expectations by drawing towards what you want and pushing away from what is no longer desirable. Develop a statement that draws you towards healthy eating habits. Something like “I feel great when I choose a healthy way to cope with my emotions!” Next, develop a statement that pushes away from using food as a coping mechanism. Something like “Eating to comfort myself actually makes me feel more miserable.” Every day, read your new expectations to yourself over and over again as many times as you can until you begin to truly believe these statement.

Next, are going to be those healthy coping skills that will replace food. We need to find alternative activities that accomplish this. My suggestion is to develop a “Comfort Menu” that lists any enjoyable activities that you can think of. Some examples are: Deep Breathing, Meditation, Squeezing a Stress Ball, Spend Time Outdoors, Stretch, Take a Walk, Listen to Your Favorite Song, Journal, Call a Friend or Cuddle with a Pet. Identify as many options as you can and choose what works for you.

Finally, have a set of rules that shift your habitual responses from wanting to behave differently and actually doing it until it becomes programmed behavior. A planned response should include the “cue” that sets off the emotional desire for food, the “reward” that food would provide, and a new “routine” that will change the automatic response. You can use the items on your “Comfort Menu” to fill in as the new routine. Here’s an example: “When I feel stressed, I will take a walk because it provides me with a sense of calm and peace of mind.”

This new response is a guideline for you to follow. Write it down. Read it. Practice it. You may not be able to do it every time, but that doesn’t matter. We are going for progress, not perfection. Continued success will breed more success, and the intensity of your desires for comfort food will begin to diminish. I hope this information was helpful and I thank you for taking the time to read it.

Jodi and Harry Sensenig, Certified Health Coaches,
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