It’s summer and sports are in full swing. Be cautious about pushing youngsters to compete with older, larger kids in sports competition levels where they are not physically matched, even if their skills are. Smaller kids are more susceptible to getting the short end of the stick, with a higher risk of injury in contact or collisions. Growth plates at the ends of long bones in young teens are also more prone to injury because they aren’t as completely developed as they are in older teens.

Source: National Institutes of Health, News in Health, June 2009
Most people know it’s important to have goals, but they don’t write them down. Those who do often neglect to describe them in detail. As a result, people remain frustrated with only vague longings and desires that never materialize. Because they have not put their goals down on the page, they have found it difficult to formulate the steps necessary to achieve them. Here’s an exercise worth trying: After specifying your goal, make it specific. Decide what, when, where, how much, etc. Now, work backward to formulate your steps. For example, if your goal is to buy a house, what must happen before you can do it? You need a date, of course. So decide on the date you will buy your house. Keep going—what comes before that? You need to choose a house. And before that, you need a real estate agent. And before that, you need to qualify for a loan. And before that, what must happen? Keep going backward, asking, “Before event X, what must occur?” You will uncover the numerous incremental steps required to achieve your goal. The more steps you write down, the more attainable your goal will become. Each step is likely to be more manageable. This approach to goal attainment establishes a realistic timeline, which is essential to your success. This procedure also transforms your longings and desires into specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-specific goals. Watch your excitement mount. It will fuel your energy and your intention to achieve what you want.

Psychotherapy: Not What You Think

If you think all professional counseling is the same, characterized by what’s been depicted in movies and comic strips, rest assured, you’ve gotten the wrong idea. There are many different approaches to professional counseling, but by far the most popular is cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). That’s a fancy way of saying that the counseling approach focuses on the important areas of what you think, how you feel, and what you do. The goal is to get the changes you want in your life. CBT has been extensively studied, and it works. It’s frequently brief, time-limited, action-oriented, and measurable. You start with a goal, track your progress, and “team” with your therapist to get the job done. If you’ve thought about professional counseling, but stigma and comic strip images are holding you back, talk to your health care provider or employee assistance professional to learn more about an approach to counseling that will work for you. It might be CBT.

Now, Let’s Talk Graduate School!

Congratulations on graduating from college. Yes, you may have been in school since age five, but don’t dismiss the idea of an advanced degree and graduate school just yet. Examine the benefits and upside arguments. You’re beyond basic course requirements, so graduate courses are almost entirely those that interest you, which means they’re almost always more fun. It’s often easier to get good grades in graduate school, and research shows irrefutably that you will probably earn more money later in your career. Plenty of scholarships and grants are out there, and most master’s degree programs require only two more years of school!