
Ellie Malone

Trick-or-Treating in the Neighborhood

By Ellie Malone

It's that time of year again when you see foam gravestones, jack-o'-lanterns and spooky decorations appearing in front yards. As the neighbors prepare for this season there is an excitement and anticipation of what character or "thing" they will decide to be and what types of candy they will put into the buckets they will set at their front door.

In our town of Culver City, Halloween feels like an extra special time where we as a community get together to enjoy one night of fun. Culver City feels like a small town inside the large city of Los Angeles. Times like these when we get to walk in the neighborhood and see people we don't usually get to spend time with feels like something truly unique and an experience everyone gets to fully embrace.

Some neighborhoods go all out for their celebration of Halloween. Streets are closed-down to allow all the trick-or-treaters to be able to walk safely around the neighborhood. Some neighbors set up elaborate haunted houses that you can go into and get a rush of adrenaline. Other neighbors completely cover their houses in Halloween décor, creating an atmosphere that embraces the spirit of Halloween. The amount of time and effort many neighbors put into preparing for this holiday is truly impressive and greatly appreciated.

Many neighbors and friends like to go together in groups on this special occasion. They walk from house to house with their unique costumes and buckets ready to be filled with all sorts of candies.

It's events like Halloween that remind us how lucky we are to have this tight-knit Culver City community. We can look back on this time of year and treasure these special memories with one another. So as the excitement builds for October 31, let's look forward to carving pumpkins, setting up decorations, eating lots of candy, and spending time with the people we care about.

Ellie Malone is a Culver City resident and junior at Marymount High School who loves reading and spending time with her family. She enjoys performing in the theater and writing.



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CULTIVATING COURAGE WITH CHAILLE


Chaille DeFaria, MCC, CDWF

The Value of Novelty

By Chaille DeFaria MCC, CDWF



Wash, rinse, repeat...wash, rinse, repeat...Does your life ever feel like it's on repeat? Have you gotten so comfortable that your daily and nightly routine feels like it's on auto pilot? Do you crave "new and exciting?"

I think we can all relate, but some more than others struggle to pause and notice. The lack of stimulation in our lives can lead us to feeling numb and complacent. Then fear creeps in and grabs ahold of us.

So, what is it that we are missing?

Novelty!

The general consensus among neuroscientists once was that brain structure is relatively unchanging after early childhood. Current understanding is that many aspects of the brain do not remain plastic – but are changeable – even in adulthood.

For the brain to make neuroplastic changes, research has found that there are certain keys to neuroplastcity: exercise, sleep, food, focus, attention, and *novelty.*

New experiences stimulate neuronal connections. Novelty impacts our brain's ability to change when we experience something new by the wide range of effects it has on our cognition. Novelty can improve our perception and stimulate motivation, helping us to shift our behavior and change the way we think.

While most of us like consistency and predictability, new experiences are a must if we want to create more meaning and inspiration in our lives. However, in order to maintain the benefits, the new experience has to increase in challenge in order to create new growth. Making new neural connections stimulates the brain and creates more flexibility, making it easier to learn, remember, and change.

So What Can You Do?

- Practice critical awareness.
- Take a step back, zoom out, and what do you notice when you stand in that perspective? Pay attention to things that are boring.
- What is one small thing you can do to change it up?
- What is one thing you can remove or add to your day? What does fun look like outside of your routine?
- What is it to choose adventure for you?

They say youth is wasted on the young. That may be true, but adventure and dreaming big? Imagine what you could see and do by looking through the eyes of a child again. Find play. Have fun. Invite Novelty!

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Chaille DeFaria is a MCC (Master Certified Coach), and CDWF (Certified Daring Way Facilitator for Brené Brown).

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