

Reader's digest

SEPTEMBER 2014

The Beautiful Life of Your Brain

An **RD ORIGINAL** ... 76

What We've Learned So Far

By **GARRISON KEILLOR** ... 35

The Late-Bloomer Phenomenon

By **MALCOLM GLADWELL** ... 112

Why We Fall for Con Men

From **THE NEW YORKER** ... 120

Hang On to Your Hope

By **E. B. WHITE** ... 16

Raising Creative, Confident Kids

From **THE ATLANTIC** ... 98

THE GENIUS ISSUE

Jokes That Make You Sound Smarter

From **RD.COM** ... 13

What It's Like to Notify a Nobel Prize Winner

From **INTELLIGENT LIFE** ... 96

Quiz: Could You Be a Genius?

From **AMERICAN MENSA** ... 136

Myths About the World's Poor

By **BILL & MELINDA GATES** ... 124

13 Things Homeschoolers Won't Tell You

An **RD ORIGINAL** ... 130

PLUS Brilliant Advice:

123 Ways to Make Wiser Choices for Your
Health, Home, Family, and Budget



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18 THINGS WE'VE LEARNED SO FAR

Revolution

KIDS



NOBEL PRIZE WINNER

The Genius Issue


SEPTEMBER 2014

GREAT MINDS

Everyday Heroes

- 8 HE DIDN'T MISS A BEAT  MELODY WARNICK
- 11 A TEEN'S INSPIRED INVENTION ALYSSA JUNG

The RD Interview

- 28 THE KING OF CONNECTION 
Ze Frank is the master of the cute cat video—but he's deeper than you think. BRANDON SPEKTOR

Cover Story

- 76 THE BEAUTIFUL LIFE OF YOUR BRAIN
The neuroscience of our most human traits. KIMBERLY HISS

What It's Like ...

- 96 TO NOTIFY A NOBEL PRIZE WINNER
TOM WHIPPLE FROM INTELLIGENT LIFE

My Most Unforgettable Character

- 108 JUDGING JACK
My biggest mistake was thinking my student was ordinary. DAVID MCCULLOUGH JR. FROM YOU ARE NOT SPECIAL

Big Idea

- 112 THE LATE-BLOOMER PHENOMENON
Even Cézanne tapped into his talent in midlife. MALCOLM GLADWELL FROM WHAT THE DOG SAW

Culture

- 120 WHY AMERICA LOVES A CON MAN
Savvy entrepreneurs have always sold people the same thing: dreams. JAMES SUROWIECKI FROM THE NEW YORKER

National Interest

- 124 3 MYTHS ABOUT THE WORLD'S POOR
Bill and Melinda Gates give global good news. FROM THE GATES FOUNDATION 2014 ANNUAL LETTER

AIR PLANE FOOD

GLUTEN

ZE FRANK

SHARING

SCHOOLERS

Mistake

THE GENIUS ISSUE

ART BY TIMOTHY GOODMAN

Beans

NOBEL PRIZE WINNER

COMEDY

HA! HA! HA!

CON MAN

19 WAYS TO COOK FASTER

HA HA MYTH

SECRET

HEALTH BOOST

FROZEN

The Genius Issue

A creative celebration



4 Editor's Note 6 Letters



READER FAVORITES

- 18 Life in These United States
- 23 You Be the Judge
- 26 100-Word True Stories 
- 32 Points to Ponder
- 54 All in a Day's Work
- 70 Photo of Lasting Interest
- 86 Laughter, the Best Medicine
- 107 That's Outrageous!
- 129 Laugh Lines
- 146 RD.com
- 148 Humor in Uniform
- 152 Quotable Quotes



IDEAS OF INTEREST

Department of Wit

- 13 **25 Jokes (That Make You Sound like a Genius)**

ANDY SIMMONS



Words of Lasting Interest

- 16 **Hang On to Your Hope**

E. B. White's letter to a man who felt humanity's future was grim.

FROM LETTERS OF E. B. WHITE

Finish This Sentence

- 20 **Someone Should Invent ...**

Medical Drama

- 88 **Frozen Back to Life**

Hypothermia was often lethal. Now doctors use it to save people.

KEVIN FONG, MD FROM *EXTREME MEDICINE*

Parenting

- 98 **The Revolution Will Not Be Supervised**

How to raise creative kids.

HANNA ROSIN FROM *THE ATLANTIC*

- 130 **13 Things Homeschoolers Won't Tell You**

MICHELLE CROUCH



ILLUSTRATION BY VALERO DOVAL

GENIUS ADVICE

35 18 Things We've Learned So Far

GARRISON KEILLOR
FROM *THE KEILLOR READER*

Food

38 19 Ways to Cook Everything Faster

MARK BITTMAN ADAPTED FROM
HOW TO COOK EVERYTHING FAST

Family

42 17 Secrets of Happy Families

BRUCE FEILER FROM *THE SECRETS OF HAPPY FAMILIES*

Home

46 13 Clever Ways to Clean

ALISON CAPORIMO



Technology

48 3 Ways to Avoid Identity Theft

DAMON BERES

Money

50 33 Ways to Get a Deal on Anything

Health

62 Why Does Airplane Food Taste So Bad?

COMPILED BY LAUREN GELMAN

66 6 Good Habits Made Even Healthier

THE PHYSICIANS OF *THE DOCTORS*

68 What If Gluten Isn't Making You Sick?

KATE SCARLATA, RD



SERIOUS FUN

132 When Scientists Experiment on Themselves

REGINA NUZZO

136 Could You Be a Genius?

ABBIE F. SALNY
FROM AMERICAN MENSA

138 "The Dumbest Thing I Ever Did"

143 Word Power

Are you smarter than a 12th grader?

EMILY COX & HENRY RATHVON



Bonus


Faces of America

Profiles of bright minds from across the country.

Pages 25, 106, 142, 150

Editor's Note

Welcome to the Genius Issue

 WHO ARE THE SMARTEST PEOPLE you know? Here's my list: If *smart* means clear-eyed wisdom, then my daughters win. If *smart* means well-read, then my bookworm mom wins. If *smart* means worldly, then my German-born, trilingual grandmother wins. (Women, all of them. Hmm.) But doesn't *genius* mean all those things and more?

The elegant lady who graces our cover reminds me that genius blossoms differently—and beautifully—in each of us. The genius who first comes to mind is the person with exceptional talent or intelligence, and you will find those famous names—from **Albert Einstein** to **Steve Jobs**—celebrated here. But in our first-ever completely themed issue, we explore the topic in all its nuances.

If genius isn't publicly recognized, does that mean it doesn't exist? In "Judging Jack," **David McCullough Jr.** ponders how everyday brilliance so often goes unnoticed, while our special Faces of America series by photojournalist **Glenn Glasser** profiles four smart folks working in the arts and sciences. We also examine how an exceptional mind takes shape: from "The Revolution Will Not Be



Supervised,” about a controversial approach to children’s playtime, to **Malcolm Gladwell’s** treatise on late-blooming creativity.

In our cover story, “The Beautiful Life of Your Brain,” we examine the ancient circuitry of our minds, learning how our essential modern traits (including self-control and the ability to form a lifelong bond with a spouse) evolved.

We devote the entire Art of Living section to—you guessed it—genius advice. We scoured the print and digital universe for the freshest strategies to help you improve your health, cook fast, clean easily, enrich your family time, and get a deal on anything your heart desires. (I dare you not to learn something!)

We delve into the dark side of genius too: The thin line between hope and hype reveals itself in **James Surowiecki’s** “Why America Loves a Con Man.” In the dramatic “Frozen Back to Life,” doctors transform the horror of hypothermia into a lifesaving procedure. Later, you’ll meet some adventurous scientists who put their own lives in

danger to search for medical cures.

Don’t worry, there’s plenty of fun: jokes that make you sound like a genius (one of the most popular articles on rd.com), **Garrison Keillor’s** homespun life lessons, a Mensa

quiz that lets you test your own smarts, and perhaps the most optimistic essay we’ve ever read, by the legendary **E. B. White**. Philanthropists **Bill and Melinda Gates** also deliver good news about the state of the world. Share a laugh with more than a half

dozen accomplished leaders who confess the dumbest thing they’ve ever done. Heck, even our everyday hero makes a brilliant discovery that saves his mom’s life.

You’ll find everything spelled out in our special table of contents. We’ve listed stories under four themes: great minds, ideas of interest, genius advice, and serious fun. It’s the work of another genius in my life, Executive Editor **Courtenay Smith**, who shepherded all this brilliance onto the page.

Using our minds to better our lives and the lives around us: It doesn’t get any smarter than that. **R**

“

*Cynicism
masquerades as
wisdom, but it
is the farthest
thing from it.*

STEPHEN COLBERT, *page 152*



I invite you to e-mail me at liz@rd.com and follow me at [facebook.com/lizvaccariello](https://www.facebook.com/lizvaccariello) and [@LizVacc](https://twitter.com/LizVacc) on Twitter.

Letters

COMMENTS ON THE JULY ISSUE



Best of America

A note to Professor Tyler Nordgren, the night-sky photographer: Canyonlands National Park's Maze District may be even darker than your Lassen Volcanic. Hope you get to visit soon.

JIM GREEN, *Rockford, Illinois*

Senate Chaplain Barry C. Black is right. Politicians who hold hands at the Prayer Breakfast should have enough sense to work together and avoid government shutdowns.

DAVID TULANIAN, *Los Angeles, California*

The Brave Boy Scout

This boy was brave, yes, but very, very lucky. There are many times when this same scenario could play out as a double drowning, not a story of heroism. Please tell your readers—especially children and young adults—that they must never try to rescue a drowning person unless they are trained to do so.

BETH SEIFERT, *Cedar Rapids, Iowa*

How Doctors Die

As an RN of 43 years, I have seen so much unnecessary suffering. Like

most doctors, I wish for no chemotherapy, few medications, and quality over quantity in my last days. I assisted both my parents in dying peacefully at home. God knows that is my wish as well.

CHARLENE UPTON, *Morgan Hill, California*

After I was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, my family and I decided I would forgo surgery and strive for a good quality of life in the time I have left. This article confirmed my decision. Thanks for this positive outlook.

KENNETH HOHE, *Harrisburg, Pennsylvania*

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAN ROBERTS

Why We Forgive

Desmond Tutu is always an inspiration, and the picture of hands that you ran adds a visual exclamation point to his words: Turn the photo 180 degrees, and those same hands become an arrow pointing skyward. It really brings his message home.

DON HAURY, *West Monroe, New York*

Points to Ponder

Senator Elizabeth Warren misses the point when she uses the expression *gun violence*. The enemy in our society is violence of all types, and if we take away one tool, those who are driven to hurt others will find another. Instead, we should focus on what causes people to act out.

TOM HAIKIN, *Williamsburg, Virginia*

A Poison Runs Through It

Having read this story, and having put up with all that goes on in the federal and state governments, my new motto is “reelect no one.” Elected officials must realize they are responsible to those who voted them in, not to big business.

C. P., *via e-mail*

I was shocked to see this diatribe in your magazine. The author has a right to his views, but there is

enough negativity in one half-hour news segment to last us for years. Could you please try to stick to inspirational and uplifting stories?

DIANA PARSONS, *Hudson, New Hampshire*

Watch Out for the Wildman!

I am disgusted by the flagrant mistreatment of animals for people’s “entertainment,” and I hope the investigation will lead to banning such practices. Thanks for publishing this article.

B. N., *via e-mail*

Sensory Seduction

This story was very enlightening. My sweet grandmother died in 1986, and to this day, the smell of Jergens lotion brings memories of her wonderfully soft hands. I need only to close my eyes and breathe in that cherry-almond scent to feel the warmth of her love.

LILLIE TIDWELL, *Wichita Falls, Texas*

The Case of the Bone Marrow Buyer

This piece inspired me to join the national bone marrow registry—I had no idea there was such a need. I hope that one day I have the opportunity to help someone. Thanks, *RD!*

MELISSA HOPPER, *Ripon, California*

Send letters to letters@rd.com or Letters, Reader’s Digest, PO Box 6100, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1600. Include your full name, address, e-mail, and daytime phone number. We may edit letters and use them in all print and electronic media. **Contribute** Send us your 100-word true stories and funny jokes and quotes, and if we publish one in a print edition of *Reader’s Digest*, we’ll pay you \$100. To submit your 100-word stories, visit rd.com/stories. To submit humor items, visit rd.com/submit, or write to us at Jokes, Box 6226, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1726. Please include your full name and address in your entry. **Do Business** Subscriptions, renewals, gifts, address changes, payments, account information, and inquiries: Visit rd.com/help, call 877-732-4438, or write to us at Reader’s Digest, PO Box 6095, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1595.



EVERYDAY HEROES



Inspired by his grandfather's ingenuity,
Andrew Josephson saved his mother's life

He Didn't Miss a Beat

BY MELODY WARNICK

IN MAY 2013, Andrew Josephson, 23, was clearing a spot in his parents' basement for his college gear, and he stumbled upon a mysterious old set of CDs. The disc jacket read "Heart Sounds and Murmurs, by Daniel Mason, MD." Mason was Andrew's grandfather.

The CDs were accompanied by a booklet, the size of a CD case, which explained that the discs contained the sounds of 125 different heartbeats, some indicating rare heart conditions. Dr. Mason, who passed away at 92 in 2011, had recorded them throughout his

50-year career as a prominent Philadelphia cardiologist.

These should be heard, Andrew thought.

That summer, Andrew, a recent graduate of Lehigh University with a biochemistry degree, bought books on computer coding and, ensconced in his family's summer home on Long Beach Island, New Jersey, taught himself how to write a mobile app of heart sounds for smartphones. "I was lifeguarding all ➡➡

"My mom never goes to the doctor," says Andrew. "The app changed her mind."



day, then writing code until 1 a.m.," says Andrew.

The program used an iPhone microphone to record a heartbeat and then match it with Dr. Mason's recordings to determine if the beat was irregular.

By July, Andrew had created a prototype, which he first tried on his own heart. As he expected, it registered that his heartbeat was normal.

The heartbeat of his father, Jeffrey, also registered normal, as did those of his sister Molly and the neighbors and friends he tested. But when Andrew used the app to test his mother, Tina, her heart sound came up abnormal. He recorded it several more times, and each time, the app produced the same outcome.

"At some point, you're going to get that result," he says now. "But I would rather it not have been my mom."

Tina herself was skeptical. "This can't be right," she said to Andrew. "I'm fine." At 54, Tina, a family doctor, was fit and felt well; she was not a textbook candidate for heart problems. But months later on a family ski trip, Tina noticed she was exhausted at the end of each run. Her mind returned to the irregular reading she'd received from Andrew's app. What if it was right? she wondered.


At home, Andrew gave his mother another test with the app. Again, it registered an abnormal reading. Now Tina was convinced she should see her doctor.

A week later, tests revealed that Tina was suffering from mitral valve regurgitation, a serious disorder that prevents a heart valve from shutting properly. Left untreated, the condition can cause heart failure.

When Tina told her doctor that her son's smartphone app had persuaded her to seek him out, "he was amazed," Tina says.

Later, when Tina showed a video of her echocardiogram to Jeffrey and Andrew, they saw an image of a "colored jet of blood going the wrong way," says Andrew. "When I saw what the iPhone was picking up, the possible impact of the app really hit me."

In March, Tina underwent successful open-heart surgery. She's now back at work seeing patients, and she's playing tennis, running, and cycling again.

Andrew's initial curiosity about his grandfather's recordings and his tenacity in making the app astound Tina. "I'm just very lucky," she says. "My son saved my life." 

NOMINATE A HERO! In 100 words or fewer, tell us about someone who has impressed you with a brave deed, kind act, or humanitarian effort in 2014. The story could be published in a future issue. E-mail the details and your name, location, and phone number to heroes@rd.com.



Joseph, who has won several engineering awards, with his tester teddy bear

A Teen's Inspired Invention

BY ALYSSA JUNG

JOSEPH ANAND, 15, is an electronics whiz with a heart of gold. When the Akron, Ohio, then-ninth grader read news reports about injured veterans returning from Afghanistan, he immediately thought he could use his robotics knowledge to make their lives at home a little easier. "I want to be an Air Force pilot," Joseph says. "So it felt good to think that I could help the military in some small way."

The teen turned his family's living room into a workshop and took a year to create a motorized pulley system that can be calibrated by a physical therapist to help soldiers exercise. The device also has a built-in sensor that monitors and adjusts weights to provide the right amount of resistance.

Joseph's father, Vijay, an electrical

engineer, offered technical assistance, and a University of Akron computer science professor taught the youngster software coding. Joseph tested the prototype on a giant teddy bear.

In September 2013, Joseph demonstrated his device at the World Maker Faire New York, a gathering of amateur inventors. Now he's putting on the final touches and has filed for a patent. His goal is to have the device approved for official testing at veterans' hospitals, but first he's turning his attention to his studies. "I have high school to finish and college to start, so it might take a year or two to test the device in real life," says Joseph.

Regardless of the timeline, giving back will always be part of Joseph's life, he says. "My parents taught me that if you're blessed with a talent, you use it to help others."

R



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VOICES & VIEWS

Department of Wit

25 Jokes

(That Make
You Sound
Like a Genius)

BY ANDY SIMMONS



THE SMARTEST JOKE I ever heard was so clever, I didn't get it. It had to be explained to me seven times before I sort of got it. By the eighth explanation, I'd wised up enough to say, "Oh, now I get it," just to shut them up. Here it is: "Counting in binary is as easy as 01 10 11." I'm still not sure I get it, but I tell it all the time just so I sound smart. (Here's the kind of joke I like: "What did 0 say to 8? Nice belt.")

If you want to find out how it feels to sound smart, try out some of these jokes.

These gags, held in high esteem among the literati, are best told while wearing a smoking jacket and a smug smile.

- 1 What do you get when you cross a joke with a rhetorical question?
- 2 A pun, a play on words, and a limerick walk into a bar. No joke.
- 3 Oh, man! A hyperbole *totally* ripped into this bar and destroyed everything!



4 This sentence contains exactly threee errors.

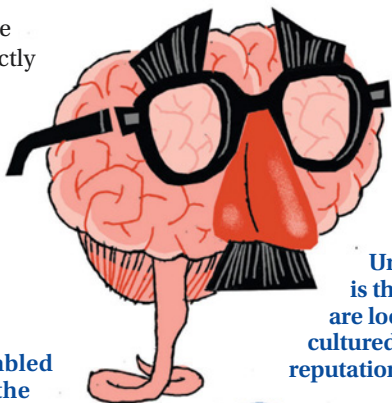
5 Knock, knock.
Who's there?
To.
To who?
No, to whom.

Nothing has scrambled more brains than the sight of numerals waiting to be added, subtracted, divided, multiplied, or fractioned. So if you can tell a digit-laden joke without stumbling, get ready for a phone call from Mensa!

6 **Q:** How do mathematicians scold their children?
A: "If I've told you n times, I've told you $n+1$ times ..."

7 A mathematician wanders back home at 3 a.m. and proceeds to get an earful from his wife.
"You're late!" she yells. "You said you'd be home by 11:45!"
"Actually," the mathematician replies coolly, "I said I'd be home by a quarter of 12."

8 Did you hear about the mathematician who's afraid of negative numbers?
He will stop at nothing to avoid them.



9 A recent finding by statisticians shows the average human has one breast and one testicle.

Unless their instrument is the triangle, musicians are looked upon as highly cultured. Leach off their reputation with these:

10 Why did Beethoven get rid of his chickens? All they said was, "Bach, Bach, Bach ..."

11 C, E-flat, and G walk into a bar. The bartender shows them the door and says, "Sorry, we don't serve minors."

12 A sign at a music shop: "Gone Chopin. Bach in a minuet."

13 **Q:** What was Beethoven's favorite fruit?
A: BA-NA-NA-NAAAAAA!

To me, a periodic table is what opens up whenever I walk into a fancy restaurant. But telling these science-y gags screams, "Behold! I am that person who did not blow up my chemistry class."

14 A photon is going through airport security. The TSA agent asks if he has any luggage. The photon says, "No, I'm traveling light."

15 What did the DNA say to the other DNA? "Do these genes make me look fat?"

16 The bartender says, "We don't serve time travelers in here." A time traveler walks into a bar.

17 Did you hear about the suicidal homeopath? He took 1/50th of the recommended dose.

Religion is fraught with roiling self-doubt and unwavering faith. Show you're well aware of the issues by sharing these jests (and be sure to call them a jest, which sounds way smarter than a joke!) ...

18 A ship, sailing past a remote island, spots a man who has been stranded there for several years. The captain goes ashore to rescue the man and notices three huts.

"What's the first hut for?" he asks.

"That's my house," says the castaway.

"What's the second hut for?"

"That's my church."

"And the third hut?"

"Oh, that?" sniffs the castaway.

"That's the church I used to go to."

19 What did the Buddhist say to the hot dog vendor? "Make me one with everything."

20 A man is talking to God. "God, how long is a million years?" God answers, "To me, it's about a minute."

"God, how much is a million dollars?"

"To me, it's a penny."

"God, may I have a penny?"

"Wait a minute."

Is it your hope to impress upon people that you've been around the globe a few times, even though a walk into the living room is too far? Trot out these worldly gags:

21 If you jumped off the bridge in Paris, you'd be in Seine.

22 Your mama is so classless, she could be a Marxist utopia.

23 A German walks into a bar and asks for a martini. The bartender asks, "Dry?"

The German replies, "Nein, just one."

24 René Descartes walks into a bar. The bartender says, "Would you like a beer?"

Descartes replies, "I think not," and promptly disappears.

25 Did you hear about the weekly poker game with Vasco da Gama, Christopher Columbus, Leif Erikson, and Francisco Pizarro? They can never seem to beat the Straights of Magellan. **R**

Are you as confused as I am by these jokes? Go to rd.com/september for a full explanation of each one.

Beloved author E. B. White responds to a letter he received predicting a grim future for humanity

Hang On To Your Hope

North Brooklin, Maine
30 March 1973

Dear Mr. Nadeau,

As long as there is one upright man, as long as there is one compassionate woman, the contagion may spread and the scene is not desolate. Hope is the thing that is left to us, in a bad time. I shall get up Sunday morning and wind the clock, as a contribution to order and steadfastness.

Sailors have an expression about the weather: they say, the weather is a great bluffer. I guess the same is true of our human society—things can look dark, then a break shows in the clouds, and all is changed, sometimes rather suddenly. It is quite obvious that the human race has made a queer mess of life on this planet. But as a people we probably harbor seeds of goodness that have lain for a long time waiting to sprout when the conditions are right. Man's curiosity, his relentlessness, his inventiveness, his ingenuity have led him into deep trouble. We can only hope that these same traits will enable him to claw his way out.

Hang on to your hat. Hang on to your hope. And wind the clock, for tomorrow is another day.

Sincerely,
E. B. White

R

A noted essayist, White wrote *Charlotte's Web* and *Stuart Little* and coauthored *The Elements of Style*. He died in 1985.

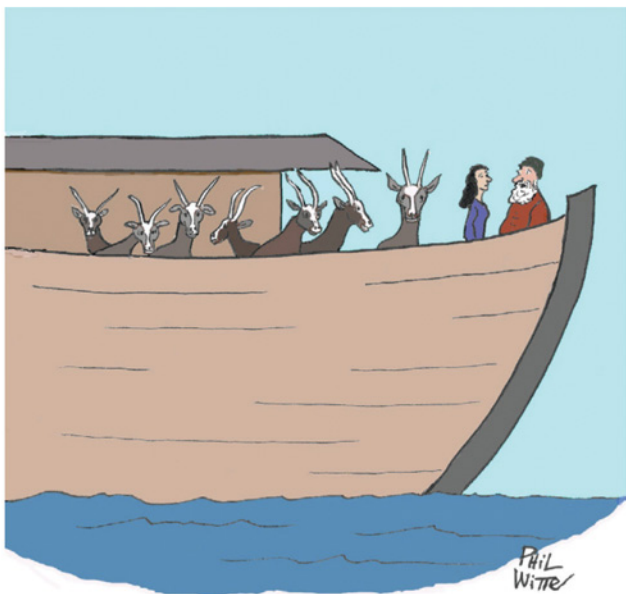
FROM THE BOOK *LETTERS OF E. B. WHITE*, COPYRIGHT © 2006 BY WHITE LITERARY LLC,
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Life

IN THESE UNITED STATES



"The lions insisted."

THE BARBERSHOP was crowded, so the woman at the cash register offered to put my name on the waiting list. "What is it?" she asked.

"Stephen, with a P-H," I said.

Minutes later, a chair opened up, and my name was called: "Pheven?"

STEPHEN HUDSON, *Falmouth, Maine*

TO GET MY COUSIN to write to her even once, my aunt resorted to

sending him a check with this note: "Do not cash until you write me a thank-you." A few weeks later, the check had cleared, yet no message had arrived. So she called him.

"I told you not to cash the check until you'd written to thank me," she complained.

"I didn't cash the check," he said. "I deposited it."

MARK FORMAN, *Berkeley Heights, New Jersey*

I RECENTLY STUMBLED upon my favorite new sports team. It's a woman's bowling squad called I Can't Believe It's Not Gutter.

JACQUELINE TESSMAN,
Benton Harbor, Michigan

QUESTIONS ON YAHOO that will destroy your faith in humanity:

- "Can I safely look at a picture of the sun?"
- "How can I be sure I'm the real mom of my kid?"
- "How do you get spaghetti stains out of underwear?"

Source: buzzfeed.com

THE BEAN SOUP I'd ordered was mostly water. I decided to tell the waitress.

"This soup is awful," I said.

"I know," she said. "I don't like bean soup either." **J. M., via mail**

EVENTS HAD LEFT MY son-in-law's sister feeling sad, and she started tearing up. Luckily, our two-year-old grandson was nearby to dispense words of wisdom. "Don't cry," he said. "Sometimes batteries die and toys break."

PERRY FINKELMAN,
West Hempstead, New York

WHILE SERVING JURY DUTY, I noticed that the defense attorney seemed a bit nervous. At one point, he picked up a piece of evidence and asked his client, who

was on the witness stand, "I see an acronym on this receipt. What would CAR stand for?"

The defendant replied, "Car."

KRISTI BOERNER, *Fleming, Colorado*

IF YOU'VE SEEN ME impatiently standing in line, then you've seen me dancing at a concert.

@SAMMYRHODES



SPEL CHEKERS

On Facebook, the English language has few friends. Three examples:

Post: I can't stand people that don't know the difference between your and you're. There so dumb.

Response: Their, their, calm down. Source: studentbeans.com

Post: Is it me or does nobody have manors these days?

Response: I just have a normal house. Source: studentbeans.com

Post: I do not have patients for stupid today.

Response: Patience. Source: lamebook.com

Would you rather post "I got \$100 for being funny" on Facebook? See page 7 for details, or go to rd.com/submit.

Someone should invent...

Boise, ID

...bike lanes above cities, like skywalks,
to keep cyclists safe
and drivers happy.
KIMBERLY LEWIS

...teleportation—

try traveling across the world
with three kids under six!

DIANA JAUREGUI DE SEVILLA

...shopping carts with

phone chargers.

MISSY PARSONS JOHNSON

**...an
underground
road**

for emergency responders.

MEGHAN NGUYEN

San Diego, CA

Huntington Beach, CA

...a phone line
to heaven.

TINA GAGNE

**...a remote
control**

to find my remote
control.

SHANE STOCK

Laredo, TX

...a vaccination

to prevent meanness in
human beings.

JAGESH JHA

Minneapolis, MN

...a way for people to have their own

theme music,

so when you meet them, you
immediately know if they are good
or evil—like in a movie.

KELLY JOHNSON

New York, NY

...a dream recorder.

I'd like to be able to watch the
good ones again and again.

AMBER ASHABRANNER

Columbus, OH

McCune, KS

Russellville, KY

...pants that actually catch fire

when you lie.

RAYMOND PORTALATIN

...a pipeline

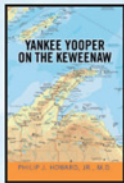
to carry floodwaters from
different parts of the country to
California. It really needs water
for fighting fires and droughts.

MARIE TERNULLO LEE

New Orleans, LA

Houston, TX

 Go to facebook.com/readersdigest
for the chance to finish the next sentence.



Yankee Yooper on the Keweenaw

Philip J. Howard, Jr., M.D.

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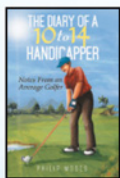


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Passive Conflict

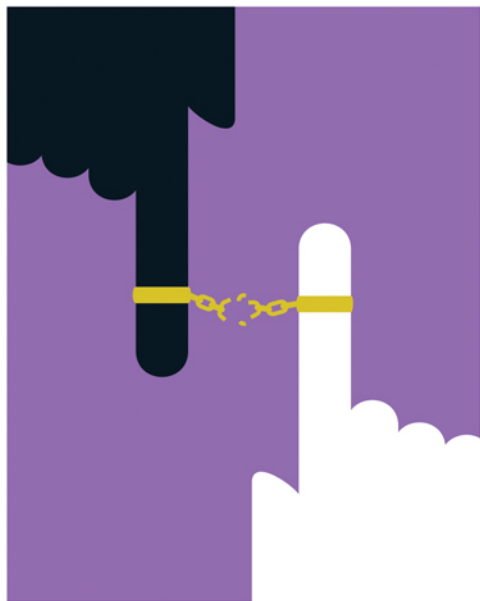
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When a prospective groom misbehaves and then calls off the wedding, should he pay the expenses?

The Case Of the Jilted Bride

BY VICKI GLEBOCKI

LAUREN SERAFIN was heading into the busiest, most exciting month of her life. In just five weeks, on August 21, 2010, she would marry her fiancé, Robert Leighton, in Chicago, where they'd been living together for about a year. The couple were both young lawyers fresh out of Loyola Law School and had dated for two years before Leighton proposed on July 2, 2009.

Using money from her parents and her own funds, Serafin had made deposits on a band, salon services, a florist, a photographer, and a banquet room and catering at the Ritz-Carlton Chicago. She had purchased dresses, accessories, and gifts for her bridesmaids and flower

girls, as well as the groom-to-be. She had spent money on her bridal shower at Quartino Ristorante on the North Side and on two plane tickets to Bora-Bora for the honeymoon. And she had bought a \$5,000 wedding gown.

Leighton still had one thing left on his to-do list. On July 16, he hopped on a plane to Las Vegas with some friends for a weekend bachelor party. Back at home the following weekend, he attended a shower with Serafin, and they received lots of gifts and talked about their big day.

On July 28, while Leighton was in the shower, his phone received a text, and Serafin read the message. ➔

It was from a woman named Danielle, indicating that she and Leighton had been intimately involved during his trip to Vegas. Serafin asked Leighton about it, and he denied it. When she pressed the issue, he admitted that the two had kissed, and then he said he wanted to call off the wedding.

Still concerned that she didn't have the whole story, Serafin tried to contact Danielle directly. She received a response from a person calling on behalf of Danielle, stating that Leighton not only had had sexual relations with Danielle but also had never let on that he was engaged. Finally, Leighton confessed that

he had had sex with Danielle.

Serafin asked Leighton to pay for the wedding expenses she had accrued—a total of \$62,814.71—but he refused. On October 6, Serafin sent a letter stating she would file a civil action. Then, on March 4, 2011, her attorney, Enrico J. Mirabelli, filed a complaint with the Circuit Court of Cook County.

“Basically, this is a contract case,” says Mirabelli. “It’s a breach of promise to marry.”

After canceling the wedding, should Robert Leighton be required to reimburse his former fiancée for wedding expenses? You be the judge.



THE VERDICT

There's an antiquated statute in Illinois and a few other states called the Breach of Promise to Marry Act, which covers “breaches of promises or agreements to marry.” The only condition is this: Within three months of the breach, the plaintiff must mail a letter “in a sealed envelope with first-class postage prepaid” informing the defendant about the intent to file suit. Serafin did just that. But this case never made it to court; it was settled for an undisclosed amount days after the complaint was filed. “We brought this lawsuit to recoup damages,” says Mirabelli. “My client was very satisfied [with the settlement].” And Mirabelli can reveal the story's moral: “What happens in Vegas doesn't always stay in Vegas.” **R**

Do you have a case? E-mail a synopsis of your situation along with your name and location to rd.com/letters (include the word *judge* in the subject line) for a chance to be included in an upcoming issue.



FACES OF AMERICA

BY GLENN GLASSER

Bobak Ferdowsi

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

"I'm one of the engineers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory and was part of the team for the *Curiosity* rover, which landed on Mars in 2012. My parents have always encouraged me to do what I love. They even sent me to space camp, where I had my first kiss! I remember that distinctly—I don't know if everybody can say that. It's a pretty nerdy, awesome experience."

Your True Stories

IN 100 WORDS

A HARD CALL

The phone was ringing. My palms were sweaty, and my heart was pounding. I was fearful that the recipient of my call would be angry. A pleasant-sounding woman picked up: “Hello?” “Can I speak with the parents of Sergeant Jones?” I asked. The woman paused and then replied, “I’m sorry. He was killed in Iraq a year ago.” I took a deep breath and said, “I know. I was the nurse who took care of him. I wanted to let you know that he wasn’t alone. I held his hand.” She wasn’t angry. I was relieved.

ERIN POPE, *Riverside, California*

“I THOUGHT SHE FORGOT”

Three times in my life I saw my father cry. The first was when his mother died. I was seven. The second was at the airport when my brother departed for Vietnam. The third was when my father was in his 80s. My mother, in late-stage Alzheimer’s, resided in a nursing home. He had visited her daily for



ten years, except for three months when he broke his foot. Finally he could walk again. “I thought Mother forgot me,” he said, “but when she saw me, she smiled and said, ‘I love you.’” Then my father sobbed.

NANCY ABESHAUS,
Wakefield, Rhode Island

TO TONIGHT

Sometimes I tend to think about what I don’t have: a house on the ocean, a big career I could use to impress people at my high school reunion. Then I hear his car in the driveway. I think we’ll grill tonight. Later we’ll watch some reruns of sitcoms from a long time ago that remind me of when we were young. He’ll doze off, and it’ll be time for the day to end. We’ll say good night to the cats. We’re all still here, a miracle. When I’m very old, I will wish for a day like this.

KATHY CORNELL, *Haddam, Connecticut*

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#ReadyForAction

Ze Frank is the master of the cute cat video. But don't let that fool you—he's deeper than you think.

The King Of Connection

BY BRANDON SPEKTOR

HE HAS BEEN CALLED the Maharajah of New Media and a creative genius. He's a neuroscientist by schooling and a performance artist by nature. As the executive vice president of video for BuzzFeed's website since 2006, Ze (pronounced "Zay") Frank, 42, and his team have created more than 1,600 videos, many of which have made history by being watched millions of times. Frank has a talent for tapping into the universal psyche of Internet users, teasing out their hidden anxieties, passions, and dreams and distilling them into quirky, imaginative, profound, three-minute audiovisual bites that viewers then feel compelled to like, tweet, and forward to everyone they know.

Why do we share things online?

One reason: A video might explain part of who you are better than words. We had a pretty big video called "Why It's Hard Out There for a Lefty." Only 10 percent of the population is left-handed, but when a group of people see a video that says something about themselves that a lot of others don't know much about, they share it. They say, "Wow! Finally somebody gets it! Every time I write with a pencil, there's a smudge on my hand!"

What's another reason?

It's what I call an emotional gift: *This video made me feel this way, and I want you to feel this way too.* That covers humor, but it can also cover thankfulness or restoring faith in humanity. For instance, after a tragedy, some of us go into a spiral of wondering if people are good or not. So things that can restore faith in kindness are popular.



JUST ASK
OPRAH

Do some feelings spread more quickly and help people connect better than others?

Yes. Feeling awkward, for instance, is a big one. Anything that makes you feel the most alone also has the greatest power to connect you. It's when you recognize yourself in a book or a poem or a video, or you hear something revealing that's

been hard for you to admit to. This can apply to almost anyone—say, someone with red hair or someone raised by Asian-immigrant parents. I think this is one of the greatest gifts of this era: Because of the Internet, we can start to type a question into Google and watch the question auto-fill. In that moment, we know someone else has asked that same question. The gift of realizing you're not alone is incredibly powerful.

What can we do about bullies who exploit the desire for connection?

It's best to ignore them. But they are a reality. You have to come to a point where you can be exposed to them but not allow them to deter you from trying to live your life.

They're hard to ignore.

Absolutely. I once read about a psychological study that said a negative interaction has five times the power of a positive interaction.

What's the most inspiring thing you've seen people do on the Web?

There was a point at which we almost gave

Frank with images from some of his viral videos (clockwise from left): "Why It's Hard Out There for a Lefty," "Sad Cat Diary," and "True Facts About Morgan Freeman"



the Internet a free pass—our expectations of it were so low. If a few people got together to do anything, we were like, “Oh my gosh, it’s amazing!” Now the Web plays such a core part in our experience, so I have the same expectations for it that I have for the rest of the world. I’m always glad when people come together to help each other—whether they’re raising money for somebody in a bad situation or making a creative piece like a song.

Does your background in neuroscience help you reach people?

I studied neuroscience at the cellular level, so I was looking at learning and memory in the visual cortex of rats. [Laughs] Neuroscience mainly exposed me to a way of thinking—about experimentation, about what you believe to be true and how you could prove it—and how to approach things in a methodical manner.

Let’s talk about one of your hit videos. Why do you think “Sad Cat Diary” was so successful?

BuzzFeed founder Jonah Peretti likes to say, “It’s not about cats; it’s about people.” If you spend a lot of time with cats, you’ll know exactly what

I’m talking about in each scene. I don’t say, “Isn’t it crazy how cats meow outside your door?” I turn it into the crazy way a cat might be thinking about that circumstance. For cat owners, it captures a facet of this nonverbal relationship. You are so invested in the relationship that it’s fun to hear about it in a playful way.

Why was that video so much more popular than “Sad Dog Diary”?

Cats are more popular in general [on the Internet]. What’s so funny about cats is that they have this kind of aloof, superior vibe to them. Even if you love them, they are unpredictable. Dogs are more social, and the way that they attach and bond to us is much more human.

At the end of the day, what do you think most people want to feel when they go online?

Most of us yearn for really intimate, healthy, in-person relationships. People have a deep desire to be understood, to be told that it’s OK, that you’re not isolated and broken, that this is part of the human challenge, and that there is hope. The capacity for online interactions to do that is powerful. **R**



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you’ll ever regret. **GROUCHO MARX**

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Points to Ponder

THE CORE STRATEGY for self-control is to cool the *now* and heat the *later*—push the temptation in front of you far away in space and time, and bring the distant consequences closer in your mind.

WALTER MISCHEL,
professor of psychology, from his book
The Marshmallow Test: Mastering Self-Control

BOOKS ARE PERSONAL, passionate. They stir emotions and spark thoughts in a manner all their own, and I'm convinced that the shattered world has less hope for repair if reading becomes an ever smaller part of it.

FRANK BRUNI,
op-ed columnist, in the *New York Times*

SEPARATE BEDS MEANS better sleep, which in turn can produce healthier spouses and a happier marriage ... Though when I gingerly mentioned this theory to my husband and he agreed with me, I did feel a tiny bit hurt.


HOLLY ALLEN,
web designer, on *slate.com*

I'VE COME TO APPRECIATE, with the tyranny of the e-mail inbox, how important thank-you notes are. If there's an activist out there who's doing great work, sure, I can tweet, but it means more if I write a note.

SAMANTHA POWER,
U.S. ambassador to the United Nations,
in *New York*

In our culture, we have these twin myths: One is that genius falls fully formed from the sky, and people who are truly brilliant don't have to work. The other is that anyone can do anything. Neither is remotely true.

MAGGIE SHIPSTEAD,
novelist, in *Entertainment Weekly*

 **Think up!** Sign up for a daily *Points to Ponder* e-mail at rd.com/ptp.





When it's played beautifully, football is a symphony. And when it's played hard, it's a war.

JIMMY FALLON,
talk-show host, in Vogue

TO LIVE ENTIRELY in public is a form of solitary confinement.

MARGARET ATWOOD,
author, in the New York Review of Books

WHEN I WATCH police dramas, I always say to my wife, "Couldn't they do this without showing the suffering of the victims' families?" As I've gotten older, it's the pain in the people left behind that upsets me. I have a tremendous fear of my children having to deal with my death.

PENN JILLETTE,
magician, in an interview with Reader's Digest

ABOVE A CERTAIN LEVEL, intelligence doesn't have much effect on creativity: Most creative people are pretty smart, but they don't have to be *that* smart, at least as measured by conventional intelligence tests.

NANCY ANDREASEN,
neuroscientist, in the Atlantic

THE PUBLIC ALWAYS GETS its hackles up about sensible innovations like seat belts and granola and the all-volunteer military and no-smoking rules in cancer wards. The public needs to zip it.

JOE QUEENAN,
columnist, in the Wall Street Journal

You can't expect to preempt surprises. You just have to recognize that surprises will come, and force the system to build stronger defenses that can help it withstand the extreme ones.

TIMOTHY GEITHNER,
former secretary of the Treasury, from his book Stress Test: Reflections on Financial Crises





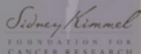
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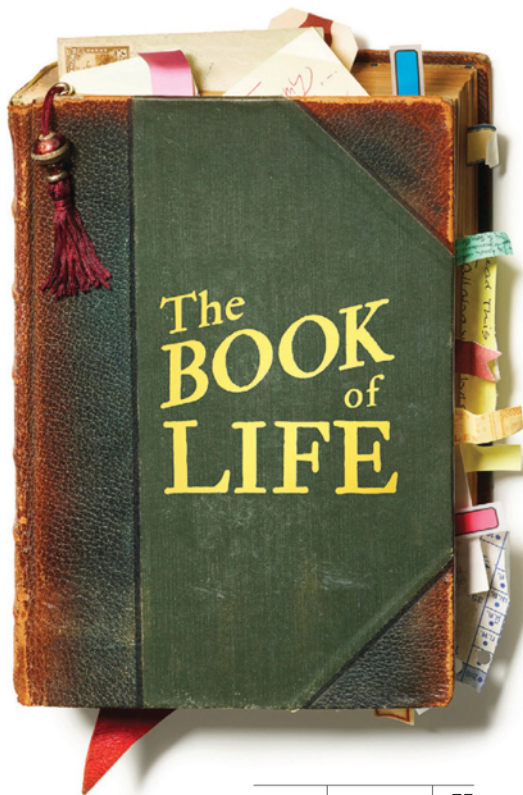
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ART *of* LIVING

18 Things We've Learned So Far

BY GARRISON KEILLOR FROM
THE BOOK *THE KEILLOR READER*

❧ I TURNED 70 aboard a ship on the Atlantic Ocean, just so I could do it quietly, without a cake flaming up like the wreck of the *Hindenburg* and a bunch of friends singing to me in their crinkly, ruined voices. And it was the right thing to do—a little lunch on the aft deck as the ship plowed through the fog, not far from where the *Titanic* went down. When I returned home, I found that younger people now addressed me as Sir. And when I spoke, they got all hushed as if it were an invocation, which was gratifying. I've waited a long time to reach this level of veneration, and now that I've gotten here, I might as well dispense some wisdom. ➔



1 The rules for mothering and fathering are: Keep your voice down; no sudden moves; don't crowd the child. Keep all thoughts of disaster to yourself. Find out how to enjoy being with your child, and do that as often as possible, even if it almost kills you.

2 Take care of your friends because there will come a time when you're not much fun to be with and there is no reason to like you except out of long-standing habit.

3 Put a big dish by the door, next to an electrical outlet, and when you come home, put your car keys, your billfold, and your extra glasses in the dish, and plug your mobile phone into the outlet to recharge. In the time you'll save not looking for these items in the morning, you'll be able to write *War and Peace*. Or the Mass in B Minor.

4 Don't think ill of crazy people—you may be one of them.

5 Be hospitable to strangers. You have been a stranger yourself,



GARRISON KEILLOR
*is a humorist, author,
and storyteller and the
host of the radio show
A Prairie Home
Companion.*

and you will be again. Extend yourself. On the other hand, your home is your home; it isn't the bus station. Scripture says to give all you have to the poor, but if you did, then you would be poor and they'd have to give it back, and so on and so on. But anybody can afford to give 10 percent.

6 There isn't a lot you can do, but you ought to do that much. And if you do, you'll likely find there is more you can do, and you should try to do that too.

7 No matter how much you want to keep your secret secret, you know that eventually people will find out, so you should start now to think up a good story. The secret may be shameful, but if you can make it interesting, you'll be less an object of pity and scorn. And that is good.

8 Don't beat up on yourself. Endless contrition is a pain. Make your apology, repair the damage, hold your head up, and march on.

9 It's good to dream, but the urge to perform is not in itself an indication of talent.

10 Never marry someone who lacks a good sense of humor. She will need it. It is a challenge to live intimately with your best-informed critic.

11 Tall people cannot count on short people to look out for things tall people might bump their heads on. You have to take care of that yourself.

12 Most tragedy is misunderstood comedy. God is a great humorist working with a rather glum audience. Lighten up. Whatever you must do, do it gladly. As you get older, you'll learn how to fake this.

13 Your friends are very fond of you, but there are limits. Sadness is tedious. When discussing your troubles, be concise. Five minutes and then change the subject.

14 Do unto those who don't like you as you would have them do unto you, but you know they won't. Do this before they can do the devious deed to you that they would do if given the chance. Shame them with goodness. Kill them with kindness. Cut their throats with courtesy.

15 Flattery is the reverse side of malicious gossip, and this coin is very quickly flipped. Beware.

16 Acts have consequences, and we are responsible for them even if we didn't intend them. Be kind, and exercise caution. Step on a crack and break your mother's back. Who knew it could happen? Anyway, it's your fault, so quit your job and take care of the old lady and don't complain.

17 People have made perfectly rational decisions that turned out to be dumber than dirt. There just doesn't seem to be any way around this.

18 The best cure for a disastrous day is to go to bed early and wake up fresh in the morning and start over. In fact, I am going to do exactly that right now. Good night. God bless you. Close the door on your way out. **R**

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THE CARTOON SURVIVAL GUIDE

I always thought quicksand was gonna be a bigger problem than it turned out to be. You watch cartoons, and quicksand is like the third biggest thing you have to worry about, right behind sticks of dynamite and giant anvils falling on you from the sky.

JOHN MULANEY, *comedian*

A famous cookbook author has come up with the most efficient kitchen routine ever

19 Ways to Cook Everything Faster

BY MARK BITTMAN

ADAPTED FROM THE BOOK *HOW TO COOK EVERYTHING FAST*



MARK BITTMAN writes for the *New York Times* and has penned several bestselling cookbooks. His newest book, *How to Cook Everything Fast*, goes on sale October 7.

- 1 Start with heat. Before doing anything else, turn on the oven, crank up the broiler, preheat a skillet, and set water to boil. Appliances, pots, pans, and water take time to get hot. Boiling water is always my first move.
- 2 Use kitchen scissors to chop cooked or tender raw vegetables (especially greens) right in the bowl or pan.
- 3 Put all the produce together in a colander and rinse under cold water. (If you have a large amount, wash in batches, putting what's done on towels.) During downtime while cooking, wash vegetables used toward the end of a recipe. Rinse foods like carrots and cabbage after they've been trimmed or peeled.
- 4 If a recipe calls for minced garlic, minced ginger, and/or minced chiles at the same time, consolidate the job with my go-to technique: Peel the garlic and ginger, trim the chiles, and put them all in a pile. Then chop and mince them together using a rocking motion.

5 Big, thick pieces of food take longer to cook through than those cut small or sliced thin. I cut chicken cutlets in half so they cook faster; chop veggies accordingly.

6 Making a pureed vegetable soup? Grate your veggies instead of chopping them. If you cut them into chunks, they'll take 20 minutes or more to soften. But grated, they're ready in a flash.

7 When you sauté or simmer something moist—such as vegetables, beans, or sauces—lay a different food on top (especially a protein like fish, chicken, or eggs), cover with a lid, and let the steam naturally cook that upper layer. For instance, for a fast eggs Florentine, steam the eggs on top of the spinach rather than poaching them separately.

8 Use less liquid when braising: Submerge your braising ingredients in about one inch of liquid, cover the pot, and cook, turning occasionally, adding a little liquid as necessary.

9 One sandwich is faster than four: Cut a baguette in half the long way, assemble one giant sandwich, then cut that into as many pieces as you like. (I've seen people do the opposite!)



10 Cut around the core: This method is a fast way to prep apples, pears, tomatoes, cabbage, peaches, and bell peppers. Slice downward around the core, removing flesh in three or four pieces; then cut flesh into slices or wedges.

11 Instead of roasting winter veggies, eat them raw. Squash, beets, parsnips, and celery root make great salads and slaws. Since root vegetables are sturdy, grate them. If they're still too crispy for comfort, marinate them for a half hour or longer in a vinaigrette.

12 Prep Brussels sprouts in the food processor. The machine does the job in a few pulses, and the small pieces will broil in about half the time. Plus, you get more of the delicious crispy bits that I can't get enough of (just ask my daughters).

13 Some soups need to simmer for hours, but cold soups, such as gazpacho, involve simply putting ingredients in a blender and turning it on. So underrated.

14 Use frozen vegetables in soups—or any dish. Minimally processed and chilled immediately after harvest, frozen vegetables are an anomaly in the frozen-food

aisle—a true gift to hurried cooks. I always keep frozen peas and corn on hand.

15 Unless you're baking—or roasting something that requires an initial blast of very high heat—you don't have to wait for the oven to reach its set temperature before putting in the food. Veggies and slow-roasted or braised meat work well this way.

16 If you've forgotten to let butter soften, melt it in the microwave; then use a brush to apply it to bread for a more even coating.

17 When making meatballs, the most time-consuming part is rolling them. The solution? Don't. Use two spoons to drop little mounds into the hot skillet. They'll brown beautifully—and taste just as good.

18 Make “unstuffed” cabbage. Blanching cabbage leaves to make them pliable is onerous. Use cooked cabbage as a base instead of a wrapper—it'll provide the same taste with much less work.

19 Trade typical lasagna noodles for egg roll wrappers, which don't have to be boiled and come in small, easy-to-handle squares. They taste like fresh egg pasta. **R**



BITTMAN'S FASTEST CHICKEN PARM

Speed: 30 minutes. **Serves:** 4.

Brilliant! Bittman's new book folds prep instructions (**in green**) into the cooking process so you won't waste a minute. In his version of chicken parm, instead of dredging and panfrying, you'll stack ingredients on a baking sheet and broil.

INGREDIENTS

- 5 tbs. olive oil
- 3 medium ripe tomatoes
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 2 lbs.)
Salt and pepper
- 8 oz. fresh mozzarella cheese
- 2 oz. Parmesan cheese
(½ cup grated)
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- 1 bunch fresh basil

PREP | COOK

1. Turn broiler to high; put rack 6 inches from heat. Pour 2 tbs. olive oil onto rimmed baking sheet and spread it around; put baking sheet in broiler.

- **Core and slice tomatoes.**
- **Cut chicken breasts in half horizontally to make 2 thin cutlets from each breast. Press down on each with heel of hand to flatten.**

2. Carefully remove baking sheet from broiler. Put chicken cutlets on sheet, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Top with tomatoes; broil on one side only until chicken is

no longer pink in center, rotating pan if necessary for even cooking, 5 to 10 minutes.

- **Grate mozzarella and Parmesan.**
- **Combine bread crumbs, mozzarella, and Parmesan in small bowl.**
- **Strip 16 to 20 basil leaves from stems.**

3. When chicken is cooked through, remove baking sheet from broiler. Lay basil leaves on top of tomatoes, sprinkle with bread crumb-and-cheese mixture, and drizzle with remaining olive oil.

4. Return sheet to broiler; cook until bread crumbs and cheese are browned and bubbly, 2 to 4 minutes. Serve immediately.

EVEN FASTER Use about 2 cups tomato sauce instead of sliced tomatoes.



17 Secrets of Happy Families

BY BRUCE FEILER FROM THE BOOK *THE SECRETS OF HAPPY FAMILIES*

■ SIT BESIDE YOUR PARTNER WHEN MAKING DECISIONS

Scientists have found that people sitting next to each other were more likely to collaborate than those sitting across or diagonally from each other.

■ TURN DOWN THE LIGHTS

Dim lighting can make people feel relaxed and safe, so they may be more revealing in conversations.

■ CONNECT GENERATIONS

Research shows that kids who know more about the successes and failures of their kin are more resilient and better able to moderate the effects of stress.

■ CUSHION YOUR BLOWS

A study from MIT, Harvard, and Yale shows that people are more flexible and accommodating when they sit on cushioned surfaces. My wife and I now have difficult conversations on the sofa, and we have family meetings at the breakfast table, which has padded seats.

■ INVITE GRANDMA OVER

Grandparents are the “ace in the hole” of humanity, says Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, an evolutionary anthropologist. A meta-analysis of 66 studies found that mothers who have child-care help from grandmothers have less stress, and their children are more well-adjusted than those who don’t.

■ PLAY THE “BAD & GOOD” GAME

Over dinner, each member of the family should report on a positive and a negative from the day. A growing body of research has found that by watching others (including Mom and Dad) navigate ups and downs in real time, children develop empathy and solidarity with those around them.

■ ADOPT A SOLDIER’S MENTALITY

“In moments when the needs of the family conflict with your own needs, you have a choice to make,” says Jason McCarthy, a former Green Beret. “You can either turn toward or against one another.” Use conflict as a chance to show family loyalty.



■ CREATE A CHORE FLOWCHART

Make three columns and label them, respectively, “Stuff to Do,” “Things in Progress,” and “Things Done.” As family members begin working on an item, they move it from the first to the second column, and so on.

“I guarantee you’ll get twice as much done,” says Jeff Sutherland, coauthor of the Agile Manifesto.

■ REJECT RIGIDITY

Research shows you have to be flexible, whether with the strategy you use to get everyone out the door in the morning or with the techniques you use to discipline, entertain, or inspire your family.

■ USE SPORTS FOR GOOD

Parents have the most important job when it comes to a child’s experience with sports, says Jim Thompson, founder of the Positive Coaching Alliance. After the game, avoid deconstructing your child’s mistakes. “Say, ‘You didn’t get a hit, but I think that you’re the kind of person who doesn’t give up easily,’” says Thompson.

■ GATHER REGULARLY

“Family meetings are a regularly scheduled time to draw attention to specific behaviors,” says David Starr, author of the report *Agile Practices for Families*. If you don’t have a safe

environment to discuss problems, any plan to improve your family will go nowhere.”

■ MIRROR EACH OTHER DURING FIGHTS

Studies have shown that people in power positions—those sitting higher than their partners, putting their feet up, or lacing their fingers behind their necks—have increased feelings of superiority, while people in lower-power poses, such as sitting lower, are defensive and resentful.

■ DON'T ROLL YOUR EYES

Indiana researchers spent years monitoring the twitching of noses, raising of eyebrows, and pursing of lips during marital spats. They checked back with the couples four years later and determined that above all other gestures, eye rolling predicted marital tension.

■ CIRCLE THE FURNITURE

In the 1950s, a British psychiatrist noticed that patients interacted more socially when they sat facing one another instead of side by side. The same rule can apply to families.

If you want to have more communal family gatherings, sit in an *O*, not an *L* or a *V*.

■ STOP SAYING “YOU”

Use *we* instead: “We have to get better at communicating” will diffuse a fight quicker than “You never tell me what’s wrong,” says James Pennebaker, a psychologist at the University of Texas and the author of *The Secret Lives of Pronouns*.

■ AVOID DIFFICULT DISCUSSIONS FROM 6 P.M. TO 8 P.M.

Two Chicago psychologists determined that this two-hour window is the most stressful time of day, as parents are coming off tension-filled workdays, kids are tired, and family members are converging at home.

■ LIMIT ARGUMENTS TO THREE MINUTES

John Gottman of the University of Washington found that the most important points in any argument can be found in the first three minutes. After that, he says, people often repeat themselves at higher decibels. **R**

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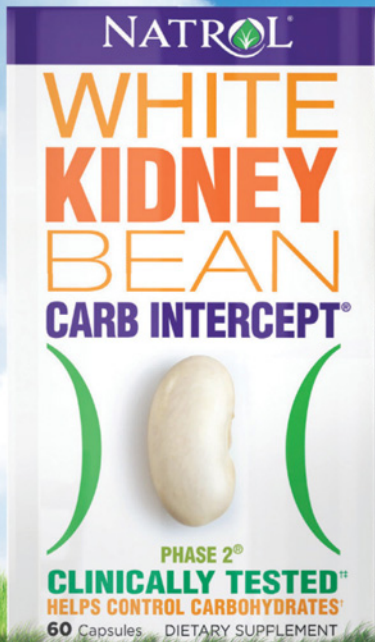
WHAT DO YOU CALL A PARADE OF RABBITS HOPPING BACKWARD?

A receding hare line.


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[‡]For Detailed clinical studies visit: www.phase2info.com. The trademarks Phase 2 Carb Controller[®] and Foodbound[®] are being used under license.

13 Clever Ways To Clean

BY ALISON CAPORIMO

■ THE INSIDE OF YOUR PURSE

Push a lint roller along the bottom of an empty purse to pick up dirt, loose change, and more.

■ STICKY CANDLES

Place a grimy candle inside a stocking and roll it around. The nonabrasive nylon will clean the wax surface without sticking to it.

■ GRUNGY WINDOW BLINDS

Dip a sock into a mixture of equal parts vinegar and water. Put it on your hand inside out and use it to clean both sides of window blinds at the same time.

■ DINGY TV SCREENS

Swipe a coffee filter across dusty and staticky computer monitors and plasma TV screens to remove buildup.

■ A STINKY KITCHEN

Toss orange and lemon peels into the garbage disposal and grind them up for a few minutes to give your kitchen an amazing fresh citrus smell with no work at all.



PROP STYLIST: SARAH GUIDO FOR HALLEY RESOURCES

■ KITCHEN SINK CLUTTER

Clamp a binder clip onto the short end of your sponge. Stand the clip upright on its side to keep the sponge clean, dry, and mold-free.



■ PET HAIR HORRORS

Drag a window squeegee (you can find one at any home-goods store) across a carpet to remove pet hair. The rubberized blade will quickly lift fur from rug fibers.

■ DUSTY CLOTHES

Cut a hole in the center of a cloth napkin and place it over a hanger to keep dust from settling on nice dresses and leather jackets.

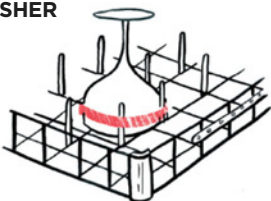


■ THAT RING AROUND YOUR TOILET

Let an Alka-Seltzer tablet sit in the bowl for 20 minutes, and then flush. The citric acid will eliminate rings and stains.

■ BROKEN GLASSES IN THE DISHWASHER

Stretch a rubber band around a wineglass and over the



spokes of the dishwasher rack to keep the glass from moving around and breaking during the wash cycle.

■ HARD-TO-FILL BUCKETS

If you have a bucket or a large watering can that won't fit under the faucet, place a dustpan with a hollow handle beneath the stream of water to redirect it into the larger vessel on the floor in front of the sink.

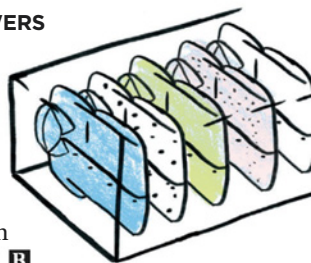


■ A SOILED COFFEE GRINDER

If you use this tool to crush spices as well as coffee beans, process a handful of Cheerios in the appliance for 30 seconds. This will remove any smells from the machine before you brew your next cup.

■ MESSY DRAWERS

Try vertical stacking: Place folded shirts vertically into drawers to make it easy to see and reach what you need. **R**



Sources: buzzfeed.com, Real Simple, viralnova.com, keephomesimple.blogspot.com, aol.com, huffingtonpost.com, wellnessmama.com, lifehacker.com, coffeemakeroutlet.blogspot.com

3 Ways to Avoid Identity Theft

BY DAMON BERES

EVERY YEAR, millions of Americans see their personal information leak into the wrong hands. Maybe there's spyware on their computer, or a service they use suffered a security breach—as eBay did this year, leaving customers at risk of exposure. Or perhaps their password is easy to guess: Security company SplashData reports that the most popular passwords in 2013 were *123456* and *password*.

Fear not: It's a lot easier than you might think to set up proper defenses. In fact, you can easily do it all in a weekend. Here's how.

Clean Your Computer And Smartphone

Before you put new security measures into place, make sure your devices are as spotless as possible. This means installing a good antivirus program and taking the time to clear out any spy- or malware that may have already infected your system. Go with AVG Free

Antivirus (free.avg.com) or Avast! (avast.com)—each is free. Run a full system scan. This can take over an hour, so start it before settling into other plans. When you return to your computer, clear out anything that shouldn't be there with a few simple steps (the program will guide you).

These days, it's also worth it to make sure your phone is safe from



viruses. iPhones are less likely to be targeted by malware, but Android users should download the Lookout app (lookout.com) to scan their devices and ensure everything is as it should be.

Secure Your Wi-Fi

Now that your computer is clean, you should plug any holes in your home network. It's fairly easy for potential criminals to gain access to your information if they're able to share your connection—that's why you want to be careful when using public Wi-Fi.

For your home, the Federal Communications Commission recommends a few steps. Even if you put security measures into place a couple of years ago, it's a good idea to refresh your settings. You may have to refer to the instructions for your wireless router or call tech support for help. Different routers will have different setup pages, so the actual step-by-step will vary, but the end result will be the same. Here's what to do:

- Enable basic password protection. That means setting up WPA2 encryption via your router, if possible, which will allow you to set a password of your choosing; make it good!
- You also need to change the password that allows you to access your router's settings to begin with. This will keep unsavory types out.
- Then change the default name of your wireless network. Don't use any personal information here.

Something nondescript that you'll recognize (even something random like "Bran_Muffin") will work well.

- Turn network-name broadcasting off to keep anyone from selecting your network from a drop-down menu.

Each of these steps takes some time, so sprinkle them throughout a day if you want: There's no need to tackle everything at once. When you're done, you'll know that your wireless network is safe.

Dig Deep with Your Passwords

Everything you just accomplished could be for nothing if a thief has your existing passwords, so you need to change them for every service you use. Try it when you find yourself on those sites anyway.

What you've heard is true: Passwords should use a variety of special characters, numerals, letters, and cases when possible. They should be close to random, and there should be a different one for each website you use. Doing this, and keeping track of it all, is a pain—which is why people don't do it and wind up with stolen identities. Try Dashlane (dashlane.com), a password manager with powerful encryption that can securely keep track of the weirdest codes you can come up with. Best of all, it logs you into sites automatically, so there's no need to worry about all those obscure keystrokes. Whew! **R**

33 Ways To Get a Deal On Anything

Groceries

■ Try Boxed, a handy app for iPhone and Android. You can get discounted cereal, applesauce, peanut butter, body wash—you name it—shipped in bulk to your home for free. And unlike some warehouse services, there's no membership fee.

■ No smartphone? Shop from your laptop. The *Wall Street Journal* recently reported that groceries from delivery services like Walmart and AmazonFresh are sometimes 10 percent less than the same items from a grocer.

Dental Care

■ Groupon offers significant discounts on work such as teeth whitening, root canals, and crowns.

■ Investigate a dental price club or discount plan. These can help if you anticipate work that goes beyond the scope of the twice-yearly checkups many insurers cover.



PROP STYLIST: ROBIN FINLAY

You pay a yearly fee—up to a couple of hundred dollars—then the plan's discounted rate per visit. Assess your options at dentalplans.com.

Gas

■ GasBuddy (iOS, Android: gasbuddy.com) and SmartFuel (iOS) let you compare prices of nearby gas stations.

Cars

■ Wait until the end of the year. New models typically roll out in the summer or early fall, making an older-inventory car easier to get for less. Plus, dealers need to meet their quotas before a new quarter, so you could save thousands.

■ Be smart about your credit. Credit.com's Adam Levin advises against financing a car at the dealership right away to avoid tricky salespeople who have relationships with banks. Instead, shop around and get approved for an auto loan before you visit the dealer—you could save thousands depending on fees and interest rates.

■ Check prices online. Sites like cars.com allow you to search in your zip code with a variety of criteria to get a great deal—or at least have a bargaining chip when it comes to squaring off with a dealer.

Fitness Clubs

■ For no fee, yipit.com lets you search for and find bargains on a variety

of gym memberships and individual classes, from boot camp to yoga.

Workouts

■ No gym? No problem. Download the free Nike Training Club app (iOS, Android) to access training videos, from aerobics to weight lifting.

Movie Tickets

■ Visit your theater chain's corporate website to see if tickets are available in bulk. Regal Cinemas, for example, allows customers to buy Premiere Tickets for \$8 a pop, good for movie releases nationwide, even brand-new ones. In certain areas, that can amount to almost a 50 percent discount. The one downside: Because you're buying in bulk, the total price can be high, so ask friends to split the cost with you.

Apps

■ Ninety-nine pennies saved is 99 pennies earned. Free apps whose sole purpose is to track other apps you want and alert you when they're on sale are available for iOS (try AppShopper Social) and Android (download AppSales).

Concert Tickets

■ No need to pay an arm and a leg to scalpers: Goldstar.com helps members find half-price tickets to events, members-only complimentary tickets, and personalized event recommendations. Sign-up is free.

■ For more events, try SeatGeek (iOS, Android: seatgeek.com). It consolidates information from online ticket sellers for professional sports like racing and fights, concerts, theater performances—basically anything you can think of. It also lets you search by venue or city and find a seat with the best sight lines.

Newspaper Subscriptions

■ Look no further than discountednewspapers.com, which offers subscriptions to both local and national papers.

Books

■ Subscribe to bookbub.com to browse significantly discounted and free digital books from a variety of publishers that work with all major e-readers.

Gift Cards

■ Visit Gift Card Granny (giftcardgranny.com), which collects deals on gift cards, to nab, say, a \$100 Applebee's card for \$86.

New Clothes

■ You can get secondhand steals on eBay and Etsy, but for deals on new items, turn to windowshopper.me. This site allows you to search for specific items, set a price range, and

sort by style. You can quickly swipe or click through items, mimicking the action of ripping through sale racks at a department store.

Fancy Dresses

■ Click over to renttherunway.com, where you can lease designer gowns for reasonable prices. You're also not charged more, beyond shipping, if you want to try on the same dress in a different size.

Plane Tickets

■ Airfares are often at their cheapest 18 to 28 days before a trip, and Tuesdays and Wednesdays are usually the best days to buy tickets and travel.

■ You can also dig for deals online. Try airfarewatchdog.com, which tells you when low rates become available. And you can compare prices at kayak.com.

Phone Bills When Abroad

■ Use WhatsApp (iOS, Blackberry, Android, Windows, Nokia: whatsapp.com) to text with friends when you (or they) are out of the country. It sends your messages over your phone's Internet connection, so you can avoid running up your bill when sending texts internationally.



Electronics

■ Try a refurbished unit. Many manufacturers—Dell, HP, Sony, etc.—sell discounted used goods online.

■ For more deals, go to rakuten.com, which sells discounted electronics, with great buys on everything from camera equipment to computers.

Apple Products

■ Visit applesliced.com. It tracks the Web for the cheapest prices on iPods, iPads, iPhones, Macs, and everything in between. Enter your zip code to find out which retailers waive sales tax in your state.

Printer Ink

■ Trade in your depleted ink cartridges at stores like Office Max for a discount on your next round, or try off-loading them on a site such as ecyclegroup.com or tonerbuyer.com.

Online Shopping

■ Visit getinvisiblehand.com to install the Invisible Hand extension on your computer. Whenever you're shopping online, it'll automatically search alternatives and notify you at the top of your browser window if there's a better deal elsewhere.

■ Or go to camelcamelcamel.com: You can search for any item and track its price history—it'll show you a graph and the highest- and lowest-price positions it's had over the past several days. Close to the lowest point? Snatch it up now!

■ Finally, using your smartphone, ring up your own items and see if you're getting a deal. Download the RedLaser app and use it to scan bar codes: It'll pop up relevant deals.

Rewards Cards

■ On its own, the Key Ring app (iOS, Android: keyringapp.com) can't save you money, but the convenience it offers should: It keeps all your rewards cards for various outlets stored so you won't have to carry all that plastic in your wallet or on your key chain. No more forgetting cards means no more missing deals.

Student Discounts

■ Anyone in school can get deals that others would miss, such as free Amazon Prime for six months (followed by 50 percent off a membership), unlimited *Washington Post* digital access, and discounts from many popular clothes shops.

Starbucks Coffee

■ For starters, bring in your own cup for a discount. Resourceful types can save on iced lattes by ordering a double shot of espresso over ice and filling the cup with milk from the bar.

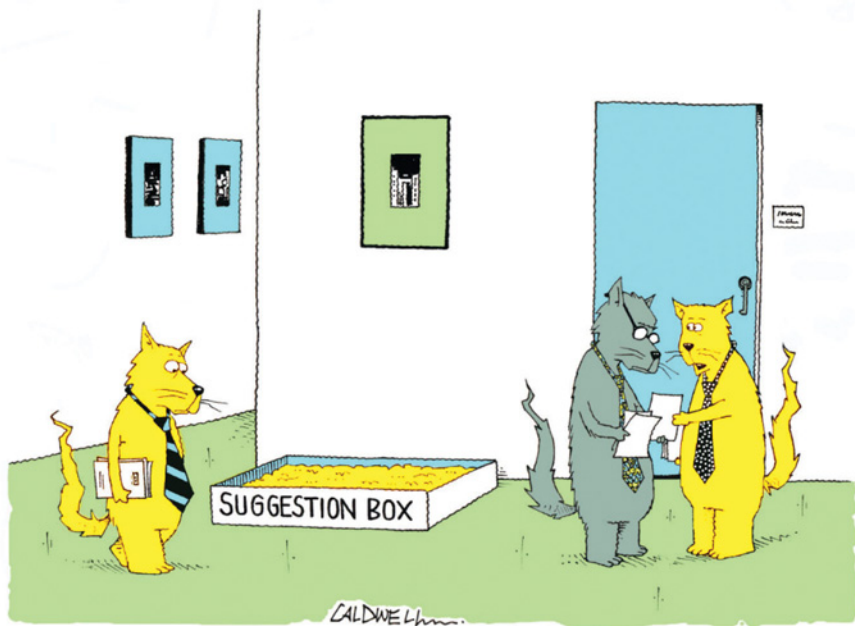
■ If you buy ground Starbucks coffee at grocery stores, check for a code on the bag and enter it to your Starbucks account online to earn free refills or drinks.

R

Sources: ABC News, *Wall Street Journal*, about.com, marketwatch.com, lifehacker.com, and *USA Today*

ALL IN

A Day's Work



THE TOPIC of my student's essay was the importance of trust, camaraderie, and toughness among football players. "After all," he wrote, "you don't want a bunch of pre-Madonnas out there on the field."

MICHELE METCALF, Louisville, Kentucky

IF A COMPANY'S most valuable resource is its people, how come the employees aren't locked up,

but the toilet paper is in a reinforced steel box with a lock, bolted to the stall?

MARK SEVERIN, from humorlabs.com

WHEN MY CUSTOMER ordered iced tea, I asked, "Sweetened or unsweetened?"

Her answer: "What's the difference?"

RUTH ANNE PLUCKHORN,
Moorestown, New Jersey

AN IRATE PATIENT called our pathology group, demanding that I explain every lab test on her statement. “Of course,” I said. I brought up her bill: “Number one, urinalysis ...” She interrupted me: “I’m a *what?!?*”

From gcfi.net

SCENE: Our break room. Coworker #1 pulls out a bottle of vitamins.

Coworker #2: What’s that?

Coworker #1: Vitamin D.

Coworker #2: Why do you take that?

Coworker #1: Because we live in Ohio, and we never see the sun.

Coworker #2: Wait a minute ... they make a vitamin that gives you a tan?

SALLY CHURLEY, *Cortland, Ohio*

THE NOTE LEFT ON the office refrigerator was addressed to “The culprit who ate what you thought were two peanut butter ice cream bars.”

We’ll skip over the details and go straight to the signature: “Love, Constipated-Dog Owner.”

Source: someecards.com

WE’VE BEEN OVER THIS BEFORE:

Stupid doesn’t play well on job interviews. Hiring managers wish these job seekers had gotten the memo.

- Applicant acted out a *Star Trek* role.
- Applicant asked for a hug.
- Applicant popped out his teeth when discussing dental benefits.
- Applicant crashed her car into the building.

From CareerBuilder’s 2014 Interview Blunders Survey



THAT REMINDS ME OF A JOKE

We read in the news:

Employees at a Spanish zoo conducted an emergency drill that simulated a gorilla escape. To make it more realistic, a zookeeper dressed up as an ape and took off. Unfortunately, not everyone on staff was notified about the drill. Upon seeing a fleeing “gorilla,” one of the zoo veterinarians grabbed a tranquilizer gun and shot the employee in the leg.

Source: thedodo.com

That made us think of this:

When a zoo’s gorilla dies, the zookeeper hires an actor to don a costume and act like an ape until the zoo can get another one. In the cage, the actor makes faces, swings around, and draws a huge crowd. He then crawls across a partition and atop the lion’s cage, infuriating the animal. But the actor stays in character—until he loses his grip and falls into the lion’s cage. Terrified, the actor shouts, “Help! Help me!” Too late. The lion pounces, opens its massive jaws, and whispers, “Shut up! Do you want to get us both fired?!”

Buy your own gorilla costume with the \$100 we’ll pay if we run your gag! See page 7 or go to rd.com/submit for details.

Why Does Airplane Food Taste So Bad?

Answers to 11 compelling questions about your body

COMPILED BY LAUREN GELMAN



FOOD STYLIST: JAMIE KIMM; PROP STYLIST: PHILIP SHUBIN

How come the food I eat on airplanes is so bland?

“At 35,000 feet, the first thing that goes is your sense of taste,” explains Grant Mickels, executive chef for culinary development of Lufthansa’s LSG Sky Chefs. The quality of the food isn’t the issue. In a mock aircraft cabin, German researchers tried out ingredients at both sea level and in a pressurized condition at 8,000 feet. The tests revealed that the cabin atmosphere “makes your taste buds go numb, almost as if you had a cold,” says Mickels. Our perception of saltiness and sweetness drops by around 30 percent at high altitude. Decreased humidity in the cabin also dries out your nose and dulls the olfactory sensors essential for tasting flavors.

BARBARA PETERSON, from *Condé Nast Traveler*

Why do I hate the sound of my own voice on a recording?

Every sound we hear—birds chirping, bees buzzing—is a wave of pressure moving through the air, which our outer ears “catch” and funnel through the ear canal to be interpreted by the brain. When you speak, your ear is stimulated by internal vibrations from your vocal cords and by the sound coming out of your mouth and traveling through the air and into the ears. This combination gives your voice (as you hear it) a fuller, deeper quality that’s lacking when you hear it on a recording.

MATT SONIAK, from *Mental Floss*

I always seem to wake up just a few minutes before my alarm clock goes off. Why is this?

In anticipation of the day, your body starts to churn out certain stress-related hormones during the later stages of sleep, says Jan Born, a professor of behavioral neuroscience at the University of Tübingen in Germany. His research team found that sleepers had more of the hormone adrenocorticotropin in their blood when they expected to be wakened at a certain time. Genes also play a role. One University of Kansas study pinpointed the gene *KDM5A* as the so-called alarm clock gene, which controls when our own personal “rise and shine” switch is flipped.

SARAH KLEIN, from *huffingtonpost.com*

How come bruises go through a range of colors before they fade?

A bruise occurs when small capillary blood vessels break under the skin. Hemoglobin in this leaked blood gives the bruise its classic purplish hue. The body then ropes in white blood cells to repair the damage, causing hemoglobin to break down into biliverdin, which is green, and then bilirubin, which is yellow. The debris at the bruise site ultimately clears, and the color fades.

From *New Scientist*

Does sweating guarantee that I’ve gotten a good workout?

A workout’s benefits derive from

exercise itself, not how much you sweat. The more intense the effort, the greater the health benefits and, generally, the more you sweat (your body's natural response to your core temperature rising). But perspiring, in and of itself, does not amplify those effects (not even calorie burning). You could sweat a lot due to a hot or humid environment, and you wouldn't get any extra fitness benefit.

GRETCHEN REYNOLDS, from the *New York Times*

Why does food taste bad after I brush my teeth?

Thank sodium laurth sulfate for ruining your breakfast. This surfactant—added to toothpastes to create foam and make the paste easier to spread—suppresses receptors on our taste buds that perceive sweetness. It also breaks up the tongue's phospholipids, enhancing bitter tastes. To end this torture, consider a toothpaste without this ingredient—or brush after meals instead of, say, right before breakfast.

MATT SONIAK, from *Mental Floss*

I've read that surgeons can operate on a person's brain without an anesthetic, since the brain has no pain receptors. So what is a headache?

The brain itself has no pain-sensing neurons. But the dura mater—the thick membrane surrounding the brain beneath the skull—is filled with pain receptors. Both it and the

sensitive site of cranial incision on the skin get local anesthetic during surgery, says Dimitris Placantonakis, MD, a neurosurgeon at New York University. Headaches can occur when the dura or other non-brain structures, like muscles and sinuses, are irritated, inflamed, or under pressure. Whether the disturbance results from a tumor, trauma, or the freeze of triple-churned ice cream, pain-sensing receptors in the head send signals to the brain, which processes them as “ow!”

JAMES CARLTON, from *Discover*

Why are the blood vessels in our eyes more visible when we're tired?

Sleepiness slows down blinking, which normally keeps the outer layer of the eye lubricated. Dryness triggers mild inflammation and dilation of blood vessels that are usually invisible. Blinking more frequently may help ease discomfort.

From *New Scientist*

Do hair and nails keep growing after you die?

Hair and nails stop growing pretty much as soon as a person kicks the bucket. But when someone dies, his skin dries out and pulls away from nails and hair, making them appear to grow. The growth of new cells requires oxygen and sugar, things that are no longer available to someone who has died.

Courtesy of Smithsonian Enterprises, smithsonian.com

Why do annoying songs get stuck in my head?

Because you're unfamiliar with the lyrics. People can recall the first verse of a song, but after the chorus, they might stumble over the words. The song becomes incomplete, which transforms into an intrusive thought, according to Ira Hyman Jr. of Western Washington University. Songs intrude during tasks that are either difficult, causing the mind to wander, or easy, allowing repetitive thoughts to enter. To flush out these stuck songs, called earworms, find an engaging task that requires the auditory and verbal components of your working memory, like reading a good book or watching a favorite show.

ANAHAD O'CONNOR, from the *New York Times*

In TV shows or movies, characters often urge a wounded figure to stay with them, not to lose consciousness. Is there any medical basis for this?

No. If someone's about to fall into a coma, there's nothing you can say to stop it. Whatever problem is causing a loss of consciousness—stroke, drug overdose, or something else—will generally continue to unfold irrespective of a patient's state of awareness.

It's often said that head-injury patients should be kept awake, on the theory that dozing off could send them into a coma. Many doctors say that's not the case. The one thing they do watch for in an unresponsive patient is hindered breathing. ER doctors and technicians are trained to keep a victim's airway clear. They may do this by inserting a tube into the trachea—not by begging her to stay alert.

DANIEL ENGBER, from *slate.com*



Doctor's Orders

6 Good Habits Made Even Healthier

BY THE PHYSICIANS OF *THE DOCTORS*

WHEN YOU: SIP TEA

Make Sure to: Steep Tea Bags for Five Minutes

Research links this beverage to lower risks of heart attack, certain cancers, type 2 diabetes, and Parkinson's disease. More antioxidants were unleashed in tea steeped for five minutes than for just one or two, according to a British study.

WHEN YOU: BLOW YOUR NOSE

Make Sure to: Do One Nostril at a Time

A University of Virginia study found that honking your nose hard produced a lot of pressure and pushed mucus into the sinuses, which could increase infections. Gently blow one nostril at a time instead.



Cohost
Travis
Stork, MD

Cohost
Jennifer
Ashton, MD

Reader's Digest and *The Doctors* bring America the health information that helps you thrive. Watch the show daily (check local listings).

THE DOCTORS

WHEN YOU: GET A FLU VACCINE**Make Sure to: Exercise The Same Day**

Flu vaccines are the best way to prevent the virus, but they're only 50 to 70 percent effective. Exercising before or after getting the vaccine may prime your immune system to produce more infection-fighting antibodies. In one study, Iowa State University students who jogged or biked at a moderate pace for 90 minutes after receiving the shot had nearly double the amount of antibodies of those who were sedentary.

WHEN YOU: EAT MORE PROTEIN**Make Sure to: Add It to Breakfast**

It's common nutrition advice for anyone on a diet: Eat fewer refined carbs, more protein. But timing matters. Americans typically eat three times more protein at dinner than at breakfast. However, studies show that people who eat protein-rich morning meals have fewer blood sugar spikes throughout the morning (which can prevent cravings) and are less likely to snack on junk food at night.

WHEN YOU: STAND UP**Make Sure to: Do It in A Work Meeting**

Getting off your duff is undoubtedly good for your health: Research links too much sitting—even if you hit the gym regularly—with obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cancer. Now new Washington University research suggests that standing during work meetings can lead to more creativity. Workers were given 30 minutes to create a university recruitment video. The group that worked in a room without chairs suggested more inventive ideas and produced better videos than the team that was more sedentary.

WHEN YOU: FLOSS YOUR TEETH**Make Sure to: Do It After, Not Before, You Brush**

Once you've removed large pieces of food with your toothbrush, floss to better clear tiny particles and bacteria that remain between your teeth, some dentists say. Don't jerk the floss up and down. For a more thorough cleaning, make a C shape with the floss around each tooth and gently move it up and down. **R**

**RIDDLE ME THIS ...**

QUESTION: With pointed fangs I sit and wait; with piercing force
I seize my bait, grabbing victims, chomping tight, physically
joining with a single bite. What am I?

ANSWER: A stapler.

What If Gluten Isn't Making You Sick?

Three tips to help you decide **BY KATE SCARLATA, RD**

🌀 I WORK WITH a lot of people who have stomach issues. One of the first things they ask is “Should I cut out gluten?” My usual answer: probably not. Here’s why.

For patients with celiac disease, ditching gluten—a protein in wheat, barley, and rye—is a must. In these people, gluten causes inflammation in the small intestines that can lead to malnutrition. But I’m concerned about the growing number of individuals who’ve adopted a gluten-free diet with no celiac diagnosis. Chances are you know folks like them: They had stomach issues, like bloating or pain, or fatigue and headaches. Then they stopped eating gluten and felt better. If they resumed eating it, symptoms came roaring back.

But new research out of Monash University in Australia suggests that gluten intolerance among people without celiac is far less common than previously thought—which I’ve long observed in my patients. It may be that other nutrients in grains, particularly carbohydrates called FODMAPs, trigger symptoms.



Does Gluten Intolerance Really Exist?

In the study, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) patients who were on a gluten-free diet switched to a low-FODMAP diet. (This entails avoiding certain fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes.) Participants all reported feeling better on the low-FODMAP diet. They were then told that gluten

would be added back into their diets (they were given prepared foods), but they didn't know when or how much. Certain people got a high-gluten diet; others, low-gluten; and still others got a placebo without any gluten. Most patients said they felt worse no matter which diet they were on. Here's the real shocker: The placebo diet was identical to the soothing low-FODMAP plan, but subjects reported an uptick in symptoms. Actual gluten sensitivity occurred in only 8 percent of respondents. Translation: Gluten may make you sick because you expect it to. When you cut out foods with gluten—such as refined carbs—you also remove FODMAPs, which may be the true reason you feel better.

Meet the Real Culprit

Certain people have trouble digesting all or some FODMAPs: lactose (milk sugar), excess fructose (in apples, pears, high-fructose corn syrup, honey), fructans (in wheat, barley, rye, onion, garlic), galacto-oligosaccharides (in legumes), and polyols (in mushrooms, cauliflower). This group of carbohydrates can cause gas, bloating, fatigue, constipation, and/or diarrhea in those with sensitive stomachs.

So before you give up gluten, consider whether FODMAPs might be your real problem. Here's how both affect common health issues.

■ **To treat a troubled tummy:** A low-FODMAP diet may be better, especially if you eat gluten-free and still have stomach upset. That's what I created with the book *21-Day Tummy*, which offers a nutrition plan for weight loss and digestive distress. Your doctor can recommend other resources.

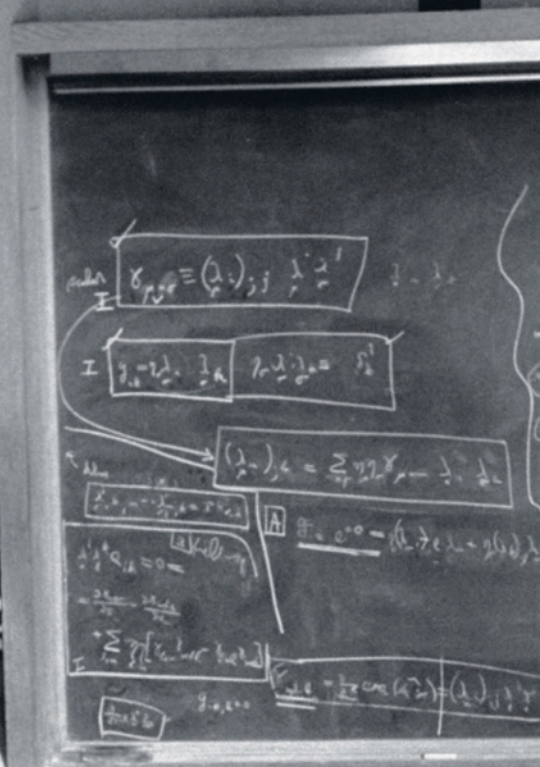
■ **To clear up headaches or fatigue:** Gluten may affect such symptoms, but scientists can't yet explain the mechanism. And FODMAPs may still be responsible. We know that a low-FODMAP diet alters the balance of gut bacteria, which could affect other areas, like the brain. I've had patients who've cut out FODMAPs report drastic improvements in their energy and well-being.

■ **To stop overeating carbs:** You may be better off focusing on healthy carbs than on gluten specifically. My favorite whole grains are quinoa and brown rice. Though they happen to be gluten-free, I like them because they're also low-FODMAP and packed with nutrients. **R**



WHAT DID KING ARTHUR TELL HIS MEN BEFORE BEDTIME?

“Knighty Knight.”



PHOTO

OF LASTING
INTEREST

**Photograph by
Ralph Morse**

**Chosen by
Michio Kaku,**

theoretical physicist

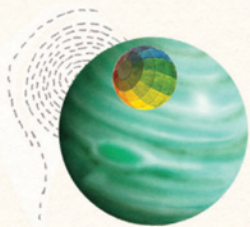
On April 18, 1955, just hours after Albert Einstein's death, a *Life* magazine photographer captured the Nobel laureate's office in Princeton, New Jersey. "This is the photo that changed my life," says Michio Kaku, author of *Einstein's Cosmos*. "As a child of eight, I was fascinated that on his desk were the unfinished notes of his 'theory of everything.' I decided then and there that I would try to finish it. This, to me, was greater than any adventure story."

NOTE: Ads were removed from this edition. Please continue to page 76.

RALPH MORSE/TIME & LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES



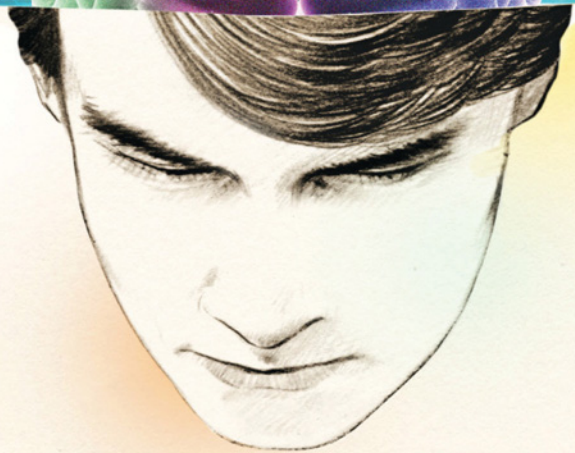
A look at the neuroscience of our most human traits—love, anger, compassion—and how to harness your mental muscle for a more fulfilling life



The Beautiful Life of Your BRAIN

BY KIMBERLY HISS

AT THIS VERY MOMENT, the twin *Voyager* spacecrafts, launched in 1977, are carrying precious cargo on their journey beyond the solar system: special records that contain, among other things, a Mozart aria, greetings in 55 languages, and the brain waves of a young woman newly in love.



Renowned astronomer Carl Sagan led the Golden Record project, intended to introduce the people of Earth to any beings the spacecrafts might encounter. To include as part of the contents, Sagan's teammate Ann Druyan had her brain waves measured with an EEG test, which was then compressed into one minute of sound. Just two days before, Sagan and Druyan had realized they were in love—an overwhelming sensation flooding Druyan's mind during the EEG. So today, 18 years after Druyan became Sagan's widow, that precious song of a brain in love (it sounds like exploding firecrackers) is still soaring into the vastness of space.

To distill the essence of the human race for an interstellar audience, Sagan and his team chose to reveal a hint of our brain's inner workings. The question of what makes us human is well-worn territory for philosophers, theologians, and artists. But to many scientists, the answer lies in the mystery of our brain, the three-pound organ between our ears firing nearly 100 billion neurons. "On a physical level, there's just a bunch of atoms sloshing around," says Christof Koch, PhD, chief scientific officer of the Allen Institute for Brain Science in Seattle. "But then there is a magical jump where this activity turns into feelings of anger or the memory of your first kiss."

Advances in technology, such as fMRI scanning, allow us to see how regions of the brain function and

where certain emotions originate. Last year, President Obama declared "the next great American project" to be the Brain Research Through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative, which pledged scientists financial support to crack our brain's mental code. Experts hope such efforts will advance the fight against autism, Alzheimer's, and depression. This research may also shed light on questions about how we fall in love or make a tough decision, says Thomas R. Insel, MD, director of the National Institute of Mental Health. "To understand the brain is the ultimate journey to find out who we are," he says.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF YOUR MARVELOUS MIND

This sophisticated organ has been evolving for millions of years through a process similar to adding ice cream scoops to a cone, says David J. Linden, PhD, a Johns Hopkins University neuroscientist and author of *The Compass of Pleasure*. "Lower parts like the cerebellum and hypothalamus, which handle survival-oriented behavior like sex drive and eating, haven't evolved as much, so what a lizard has and what we have are not fundamentally different," he says, describing the first evolutionary scoop. "Higher centers involved in emotional processing, like the hippocampus and amygdala,

are a lot more elaborate in mice than in lizards," he says of the second scoop. "Then as you move farther up, humans have a giant, complex cortex," he says of the top scoop. This is home to our thoughts and language.

Here's another way to look at the haphazard way our brains have evolved. "Say someone asked you to build a racing boat, but they gave you a wooden rowboat and said you could only add things to make it into the racing boat," says Linden. "That's what brain evolution has been: You can only subtly tweak what was there before and can't change the basic plan." The interaction between these older and newer brain regions makes us who we are today.

"Both people and mice can feel pleasure from eating and making babies, which both need to survive and pass down their genes. But only a human can take pleasure in fasting or abstaining from sex, which has no evolutionary advantage. The miracle of human thinking is that our ancient pleasure circuitry can be activated by higher, more complicated parts of our brain," Linden explains.

"In a way, this is the basis of all human culture," he continues. "That we can take pleasure from things that are



The interaction between these older and newer brain regions makes us who we are today.

utterly arbitrary is what enriches so much of our lives."

Human evolution is a glacial process, but we can directly affect our personal "evolution" in our lifetime. "There's a well-known saying: Neurons that fire together, wire together," says neuropsychologist Rick Hanson, PhD, author of *Hardwiring Happiness: The New Brain Science of Contentment, Calm, and*

Confidence. Repeated patterns of thoughts and feelings actually change our brain structure—evidenced by practices such as mindfulness meditation. In other words, we can help build our own racing boat. Here's how our brain operates during seven common situations. We can use these insights to flex our mental muscle.

YOUR BRAIN UNDER CRITICISM

Think back to your last performance review. "Your boss starts by saying 19 positive things," says Hanson. "But if there's one piece of criticism at the end, that's what you remember. What sticks is the negative 20th."

That overreaction—called negativity bias in psychology circles—helped keep ancient humans alive.

“Ancestors had to ‘get carrots,’ meaning food and mates, and ‘avoid sticks,’ such as predators,” Hanson explains. “If you don’t get a carrot today, you’ll have another chance tomorrow. But if you fail to avoid a predator? Whap! Game over. Our brains became wired to hyper-focus on bad news.” He continues, “The brain is like Velcro for bad experiences but Teflon for good ones.”

Simple practices can help you counteract this bias. “Negativity quickly becomes neural structure,” he says. “Positive experiences, however, can take more time to encode. Intentionally feeling positive experiences longer helps them sink in, which can help you become happier and more resilient.” Savor receiving a compliment. Be mindful during happy moments; note details so they’re easier to remember.

YOUR BRAIN WHILE PROCRASTINATING

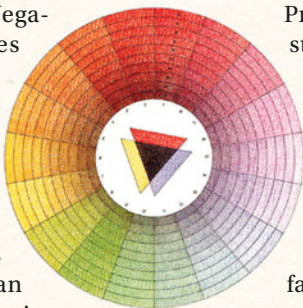
When you put off a pressing project, you avoid negative emotions caused by an unpleasant task because you want to feel good now. But all you’re really doing is giving the problem to your future self. “So the question neurologically becomes, Why do we treat

Future Self like that?” says Timothy A. Pychyl, PhD, an associate professor of psychology at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, and the author of *Solving the Procrastination Puzzle*. One study that used fMRI to see what parts of the brain were active when subjects thought about their present selves, their future selves, and a stranger found that the brain thinks about the future self more similarly to the way it thinks about a stranger.

Procrastination is also the struggle between two different brain systems. The limbic system, which is responsible for our basic emotions, is an old part of our brain (in the second ice cream scoop). It’s also a very fast automated system that responds nonconsciously. It

wants immediate mood repair—to feel good now. Then there’s the newer prefrontal cortex (the third scoop), home of executive function, which involves planning and impulse control. It’s a slower process you have to consciously kick into gear.

When you contemplate doing your taxes, the limbic system first activates with its urgent goal of feeling better now, which is accomplished by avoiding this dreaded task. Lagging behind is the more responsible prefrontal cortex, which you need to engage to think about the benefits of completing your tax return on time.





YOUR BRAIN IN LOVE

The luckiest among us relate to not only the romantic love Ann Druyan experienced when she first fell for Carl Sagan but also the long-lasting bond that linked the couple until Sagan's death 19 years later. Those two distinct types of love arise from different brain regions, says Helen Fisher, PhD, a member of the Center for Human Evolutionary Studies at Rutgers University.

"Romantic love originates in the ventral tegmental area in the oldest part of the brain near centers that govern thirst and hunger," she explains. "Romantic love is a basic drive that focuses our energy on winning life's greatest prize: a mating partner. It is a mechanism for survival."

A primary brain region linked with attachment, however, is the ventral pallidum, which is more modern and higher up (in the third scoop). "Intense, romantic attraction is a more

primitive response than feelings of attachment, which are more recent,” she says. This circuitry is linked to lifelong love.

“People in love long term show activity in the ventral medial prefrontal cortex, which is linked with ‘positive illusion’—the ability to overlook cons and focus on pros,” Fisher says. People in long-lasting love relationships say things like “It annoys me when he doesn’t pick up his socks, but I love his sense of humor.” This mind-set may help nurture loving feelings long after the honeymoon period.

YOUR BRAIN ON ROAD RAGE

Being pepper-sprayed, getting punched, and landing in jail are all outcomes of recent cases of ... traffic incidents like tailgating. How is it that road rage can result in 12,610 injuries and even 218 murders over a seven-year period, as a AAA report concluded?

Blame a psychological quirk called fundamental attribution error. “We assume that someone’s behavior is due to their innate disposition, as opposed to thinking about the situation that could be causing it,” says Joseph Moran, PhD, research associate at



*Your dreaming
brain is
perfectly suited
to solve the
problems of your
waking life.*

the Harvard University Center for Brain Science. When somebody cuts you off, you assume that person is a jerk—instead of wondering if he’s rushing to the hospital—and that makes you mad.

Our brains were built to overreact to a perceived threat. “The same neuronal machinery that protected our ancestors from charging lions is locked and loaded when we en-

counter ordinary stresses like traffic,” says neuropsychologist Rick Hanson. Your body releases the hormone cortisol; this sets off the brain’s alarm bell by stimulating the emotionally charged amygdala while damaging neurons in the hippocampus, which shrinks the calming part of the brain that puts things in perspective.

To bring this stress response under control, we can use our newer brain regions, like the prefrontal cortex, to regulate our older ones. For example: Everyone has an involuntary reaction to a stressful situation like giving a public talk. “We feel butterflies and have a dry mouth because that’s how evolution has trained us,” Moran explains. But some people can recast that nervous energy as a positive force. Their higher brain regions allow them to reinterpret physical symptoms as a

sign they are excited and ready to connect with the crowd. When you feel angry behind the wheel, forcing yourself to refocus—say, by thinking, I'll be only 15 minutes late, or, I might as well enjoy the nice day while I wait—may help you dial down your emotional reaction.

YOUR BRAIN WHILE DREAMING

A participant came to a dream study with a dilemma. He couldn't decide between two graduate programs near his Massachusetts home and two farther west. Then he dreamed he was in a plane flying over a map. The pilot said they were having engine trouble and needed a safe place to land. The student suggested Massachusetts, but the pilot said Massachusetts was "very dangerous." The student woke up realizing the right choice was a program away from home.

By conducting such dream studies, Deirdre Barrett, PhD, assistant clinical professor of psychology at Harvard University, has been exploring the complex workings of the brain's sleep circuitry. After you conk out, she explains, your brain becomes quiet, but after 90 minutes, it dramatically reactivates with rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, becoming as active as it is when you're awake. However, that activity comes from a different distribution of brain regions.

While the primary visual cortex, which receives light input from your eyes, is less active while you're sleeping than when you're awake, the secondary visual cortex, which is involved when you imagine something, is most active during REM sleep. The motor cortex turns on, firing off movement commands that are countered by another area that paralyzes muscles during sleep. Also notably, the "censoring" prefrontal cortex, which helps ensure you behave in conventional ways, becomes less active while you snooze.

Not only does this new distribution of activity match the iconic features of dreams—visually rich environments where you perform over-the-top actions and events take bizarre twists—but it also makes dreams fertile ground for solving the problems of your waking life. Increased activity in the secondary visual cortex allows your dreaming mind to visualize new solutions to problems. "Inventors might see a design, or chemists might visualize the structure of molecules," says Barrett. Decreased activity in the prefrontal cortex can help in instances where you've been stuck.

To maximize dreaming's problem-solving benefits, Barrett suggests in her book *The Committee of Sleep* that at bedtime, you phrase your concern in a succinct way by writing it or repeating it to yourself. Then come up with a visual image



representing the issue, and tell yourself you want to dream an answer. Of equal importance, keep a pad and pen by the bed, and write down your dream as soon as you wake up. “Dreams are held in short-term memory, but writing them down transfers them to long-term memory,” says Barrett.



YOUR BRAIN WHILE LISTENING TO MUSIC

Imagine you're in line for coffee, and Pharrell Williams's bouncing hit “Happy” comes on the radio. The resulting cascade of mental activity it takes to process the music “touches on all the most advanced aspects of human cognition,” says Robert Zatorre, PhD, professor of neuroscience at the Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital at McGill University. First, the sound hits your ear, activating a series of structures from the cochlea (where vibrations are turned into electrical impulses) to the brain's cortex. When you recognize the tune—its name or where you last heard it—your auditory cortex is connecting with regions that handle memory retrieval. Then, if you start tapping your foot, you've activated the motor cortex in a very particular way because you're tapping to the exact beat of the song.

Finally, if “Happy” has you feeling well, happy, the song has turned on your brain's reward system—ancient,

powerful circuitry triggered by essentials for survival like eating and sex.

Why does something seemingly nonessential like music engage that life-promoting system? Scientists are still trying to figure that out, but what happens to your brain when you hear a song you love may provide some crucial insight. “Music increases cross talk between brain structures in old reward centers that handle pleasure and newer areas of the cortex that handle prediction and anticipation,” says Zatorre. In one study, he found that the brain released dopamine, a chemical linked to pleasure and reward, in anticipation of a subject's favorite part of the song. So it may be that music fuels your brain's innate desire to detect patterns and solve problems.

YOUR BRAIN WHILE MEDITATING

Meditation may be a powerful way to build our brain's old rowboat into a sleek racer. The practice can grow brain tissue, improving our moods and making us more resilient.

“Meditation involves metacognition—thinking about thinking, paying attention to attention—which uses the prefrontal cortex,” says Hanson. “It engages the entire brain, accessing sensory and emotional experiences, wants and drives, and deep ancient

substrates of consciousness. Meditation seems to engage the most modern parts of the brain as well as the most ancient ones.”

In one study, participants who meditated 40 minutes every day showed thicker gray matter in areas involved in attention, decision making, and working memory, compared with those who didn't meditate. Another study showed that eight weeks

of mindfulness meditation boosted gray matter density in several regions, including the hippocampus (involved in learning and memory), and decreased gray matter density in the amygdala (which plays a role in stress).

“Sitting down, focusing on breathing, and relaxing every day is actually going to build brain structure?” Hanson says. “That’s pretty cool!” **R**



Laughter

THE BEST MEDICINE



A PRIEST AND A PASTOR are standing by the side of a road holding up a sign that reads “The end is near! Turn around now before it’s too late!” A passing driver yells, “You guys are nuts!” and speeds past them. From around the curve, they hear screeching tires—then a big splash.

The priest turns to the pastor and says, “Do you think we should just put up a sign that says ‘Bridge Out’ instead?”

KARATE: the ancient Japanese art of getting people to buy lots of belts.

Comedian **MYG KAPLAN**

HAPPY ONE-YEAR anniversary to the Lean Cuisine in my freezer!

@SCBCHBUM

A PRIDE OF LIONS, a gaggle of geese ... and here's how we might classify these groups:

- A brat of boys
- A giggle of girls
- A stagger of drunks
- A tedium of accountants
- A stitch of doctors
- A whine of losers
- A jerk of politicians

Your turn! Send 'em to rd.com/submit.

CAN A 3-D PRINTER make ink cartridges for a 2-D printer?

Comedian JOE MANDE

I TOLD THE KIDS I never want to live in a vegetative state, dependent on some machine and fluids from a bottle. So they unplugged my computer and threw out my wine.

Submitted by BEVERLY MCLAUGHLIN, Burnsville, Minnesota

FAMOUS FILM QUOTES get the redneck treatment:

- "You had me at 'Sooooey!'"
- "Use the horse, Luke."
- "Are you crying? There's no crying in NASCAR!"
- "Of all the trailer parks in Pine Cone County, she had to pull her '68 Rambler into mine."

From humorlabs.com

WEIRD ANNIVERSARY

On September 4, it will have been 132 years since Thomas Edison brought electric lights to Lower Manhattan. So: lightbulb jokes.

Q: How many telemarketers does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: Only one, but she has to do it while you're eating dinner.

Q: How many 16-year-olds does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: What-ever!

Q: How many economists does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: None. If the lightbulb needed changing, the market would have already done it.

Q: How many tech-support folks does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: We have a lightbulb here, and it works fine. Can you tell me what kind of bulb you have? OK. There could be four or five things wrong. Now, have you turned the light switch off and on?

Edison says:

"I should've invented better lightbulb gags."



You don't have to be a genius to make \$100. We pay for funny jokes and lists! Go to page 7 or rd.com/submit for details.



MEDICAL DRAMA

FROZEN

One hundred years ago, hypothermia was often lethal.



BACK TO LIFE

Now doctors induce it to save people on the brink of death.

BY KEVIN FONG, MD FROM THE BOOK *EXTREME MEDICINE*

ROBERT FALCON SCOTT IS DYING, SLOWLY SUCCUMBING TO HYPOTHERMIA IN A TENT PITCHED ON THE WASTELANDS OF THE ROSS ICE SHELF, FULL OF THE WEARY KNOWLEDGE THAT HE WAS NOT THE FIRST EXPLORER TO REACH THE SOUTH POLE—ONLY THE FIRST TO HAVE LOST AN ENTIRE EXPEDITIONARY PARTY DOING SO.

IT IS 1912. Antarctica is as inaccessible as it is fraught with risk; and that, of course, is its attraction, leading men to pit their lives against its challenges. Having been beaten to the pole by Roald Amundsen's Norwegian expedition, Scott now embarks on a race of a different kind: the scramble to write letters to the next of kin of his expedition team, telling of the men's brilliance and honor and how he was responsible for leading them to their deaths. Time is against him.

Not only can temperatures freeze exposed flesh in seconds, but the continent's great sheets of ice hold water locked away, and less than a single inch of rain falls inland each year. The Ross Ice Shelf is a desert, and it will attempt to dehydrate and desiccate Scott's body. With much of the continent thrust two miles above sea level, Scott is high enough to make heavy exertion uncomfortable, even for the acclimatized. That's not to mention the scouring Antarctic winds, which will carry heat away from his body, driving his temperature down. All told, Antarctica is a continent of fierce

extremes: the coldest, the highest, the most parched. Its climate has made it uninhabitable for all but the last hundred years of human history.

Bleak though Antarctica may be, it's important to consider how Scott's body reacts to his plummeting temperature because that process is the key to an extraordinary advance in future medical technology.

1912: Shivers, Then Merciful Sleep

Scott's physiology is designed to battle for him, to give him his best chance of survival. As he writes, he feels the heat draining out of his hand. The blood vessels that run through his body's periphery, carrying hot blood to his skin's surface and losing that heat uselessly to the outside world, are constricting. His body hair stands on end to trap more air close to his skin. Both of these measures are an effort to reduce conductive heat loss. In the Antarctic environment, however, this physiological strategy is next to useless.

Next, Scott begins to shiver uncontrollably, generating enough heat to slow the drop in temperature. This shivering is more than the casual tremor we might feel at a bus stop in midwinter; Scott's muscles shake as hard as they can, consuming fat and carbohydrates ravenously. This last attempt at staving off death becomes an act of physical endurance in itself. It continues while there is enough fuel to do so. But shivering, no matter how athletically, is merely the body's method of buying time in the hope that something in its external environment will change for the better.

As deep hypothermia proceeds, it alters Scott's mind, making him irritable and possibly irrational. When his body's reserves of fuel run out, the shivering stops—which only accelerates the rate at which he cools. Mercifully, something that looks like sleep follows, as the electrical activity in his brain begins to fail. He slips into a coma well before the impairment of his heart muscle's cell membranes, the gatekeepers of electrical stability in that organ. Frenzied anarchic rhythms may follow, the heart writhing uselessly like a bag of worms before finally coming to a standstill. With his heart no longer beating, his body is deprived of fresh oxygen.

But at such low temperatures, the rate at which Scott's cells fail and die is dragged out. The normal window of a few hundred seconds when his brain is dying, yet his circulation might still

be reestablished, is instead stretched to many minutes.

This window, elongated by cold temperatures, becomes crucial to medical practitioners in the years ahead. Here's how hypothermia has today become an asset to medicine, a tool for cheating death.

1999: Miracle Under the Ice

In May 1999, three junior doctors, Anna Bågenholm, Torvind Naesheim, and Marie Falkenberg, were skiing off trail in the Kjölen Mountains of Northern Norway. The beautiful evening was one of the first days of eternal sunshine at the start of summer. All three were expert skiers; Anna began her run confidently.

But Anna unexpectedly lost control. Torvind and Marie watched from afar as she tumbled headlong into a thick layer of ice covering a mountain stream. Anna fell through a hole in the ice, her head and chest trapped beneath the frozen surface. Her clothes began to soak, their extra weight carrying her deeper, dragging her downstream with the current and farther beneath the ice.

Torvind and Marie arrived just in time to grab her ski boots, stopping her from vanishing under the lip of the ice. Anna was lying faceup with her mouth and nose out of the water in an air pocket. She continued to struggle, freezing, in the Arctic stream.



ANNA'S HEART HAD NOT BEATEN FOR AT LEAST TWO HOURS. HER CORE TEMPERATURE, 56.7°F, WAS LOWER THAN ANY SURVIVING PATIENT'S IN RECORDED MEDICAL HISTORY.



None of the three could have been in any doubt about the seriousness of the situation. Even in those first minutes, Anna's core temperature was beginning to plunge. Torvind called for help on his mobile phone. Two rescue teams were sent, one from the top of the mountain, on skis, and another from the town of Narvik at its base. The ski team arrived first, but the snow shovel the group had brought couldn't

break through the thick covering of ice.

Forty minutes after Anna became trapped, her desperate thrashing stopped, and her body went limp. The hypothermia, now profound enough to anesthetize her brain, would soon stop her heart. Another 40 minutes passed before rescuers arrived with a more substantial shovel that could break through the ice.

Anna's body, lifeless and blue, was

pulled out of the stream. She had stopped breathing and was without a pulse. As the resuscitation effort began, the challenge Anna faced seemed insurmountable. Her core temperature was perhaps more than 36°F lower than it should have been.

The key to good resuscitation is to keep the blood supplied with oxygen and moving around the body. This is achieved by breathing for the patient and then compressing the chest rhythmically to provide something approximating circulation. None of this is as efficient as the body's native heartbeat and breathing, but it buys time. In principle, it sounds straightforward. In practice, there is perhaps nothing that adequately describes the sickening, repetitive crunch of ribs beneath the heel of the rescuer's hand or the rising sense of desperation that the rescuer feels as the minutes tick by.

Just before 8 p.m., more than an hour and a half after she fell into the stream, Anna was whisked onto a helicopter. While the aircraft was moving speedily across the Norwegian landscape, the struggle to save Anna's life became a desperate scramble. Helicopters, with their cramped conditions and deafening noise, are among the most difficult places to work.

When the helicopter touched down at Tromsø University Hospital, Anna's heart had not beaten for at least two hours. Her core temperature, 56.7°F, was lower than any surviving patient's in recorded medical history. This

was genuine terra incognita. Further attempts to resuscitate Anna could proceed only in the knowledge that in similar situations, past medical teams had always failed.

But the team at Tromsø decided to continue. There was still the glimmer of hope that the terrible cold might also have preserved her brain.

MADS GILBERT, the anesthetist leading the resuscitation effort, moved Anna to the operating room. Raising her temperature was going to be a massive challenge. Warm blankets and heated rooms alone wouldn't be nearly enough. Raising Anna's whole body temperature through all those missing degrees would take an enormous amount of energy—equivalent to the boiling of dozens of kettles of water. To do this quickly and without doing harm in the process, Mads knew Anna would have to be put on a heart-lung bypass machine, the sort of device normally reserved for open-heart surgery. By removing Anna's chilled blood, circulating it in a bypass machine, and heating and then returning it to her lifeless body, doctors could raise her core temperature rapidly. At least that was the theory.

Thirty minutes after Anna was established on the heart-lung bypass machine, her core temperature had increased by more than half, to 87.8°F. The heart, its molecular machinery now warm enough to work again,

stuttered at first, unable to regain its own essential rhythm. But eventually, electricity began to flow through the muscle of her heart, followed by waves of contraction. A little after 10 p.m., Anna's heart started to beat independently for the first time in at least three hours.

But the fight was far from over. During the scramble to save Anna's life, the team had damaged an artery behind the collarbone on the right side of her chest. The hemorrhage that followed was made far worse by Anna's hypothermic state because blood loses much of its ability to clot at low temperatures. The team now faced the possibility that she could bleed to death. Cardiothoracic surgeons had to open her chest, isolate the bleeding artery, and stop the hemorrhage. After hours of work by dozens of people, she was finally stable enough to be transferred to the intensive care unit.

While there, Anna miraculously survived lung failure and kidney failure and opened her eyes for the first time after just 12 days. She found herself paralyzed from the neck down, alive but quadriplegic.

Thankfully, Anna's paralyzed body did not remain that way. It wasn't an irreversible injury to her spinal cord that had left her unable to move. Instead, her peripheral nerves, damaged by the extremes of cold, had failed. Slowly but surely, these nerves and her flaccid muscles began to regain their function. It would ultimately take six hard years

of rehabilitation, but the day came when Anna was well enough to ski and return to her training as a doctor. She specialized in radiology and now works at the hospital that saved her life.

Anna Bågenholm is an extraordinary survivor. Against seemingly impossible odds, doctors exploited her profound hypothermia to resuscitate her. While her survival occurred in the context of an accident, other patients continue to benefit from hypothermia by design.

2010 and Beyond: Hypothermia Saves Lives

Esmail Dezhbod's symptoms had begun to worry him. He felt pressure in his chest, at times great pain. A body scan revealed that Esmail was in trouble. He had an aneurysm of his thoracic aorta, a swelling of the main arterial tributary leading from his heart. This vessel had doubled in size, to the width of a can of Coke.

Esmail had a bomb in his chest that might go off at any moment. Aneurysms elsewhere can usually be repaired with relative ease. But in this location, so close to the heart, there are no easy options. The thoracic aorta carries blood from the heart and into the upper body, supplying oxygen to the brain, among other organs. To repair the aneurysm, flow would have to be interrupted by stopping the heart. At normal body temperatures, this and the accompanying oxygen

starvation would damage the brain, leading to permanent disability or death within three or four minutes.

Esmail's surgeon, cardiac specialist John Elefteriades, MD, decided to carry out the procedure under the conditions of deep hypothermic arrest. He used a heart-lung bypass machine to cool Esmail's body to a mere 64.4°F before stopping his heart completely. Then, while the heart and circulation were at a standstill, Dr. Elefteriades performed the complicated repair, racing the clock while his patient lay dying on the operating table.

I was there to watch this remarkable feat of surgery. Though Dr. Elefteriades is an old hand with hypothermic arrest, he says that every time feels like a leap of faith. Once circulation has come to a standstill, he has no more than about 45 minutes before irreversible damage to the patient's brain occurs. Without the induced hypothermia, he would have just four.

The doctor lays the stitches down elegantly and efficiently, making every movement count. He has to cut out the diseased section of the aorta,

a length of around six inches, then replace it with an artificial graft. The electrical activity in Esmail's brain is, at this point, undetectable. He is not breathing and has no pulse. Physically and biochemically, he is indistinguishable from someone who is dead.

After 32 minutes, the repair is complete. The team warms Esmail's freezing body, and very quickly his heart explodes back to life, pumping beautifully, delivering a fresh supply of oxygen to his brain for the first time in over half an hour.

A day later, I visit Esmail in the intensive care unit. He is awake and well. His wife stands by his bed, overjoyed to have him back.

TO CURE ESMAIL, the surgeons had to come close to killing him—using profound hypothermia to buy his survival. Within a century, we have come to understand the process that killed Robert Falcon Scott—and learned how to use it to our advantage. Esmail and Anna are living proof that these physical extremes can cure as well as kill. **R**

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HIGH FASHION

A tough thing about being a giraffe is knowing that once you put on a necklace, it's there forever.

@ROLLDIGGITY

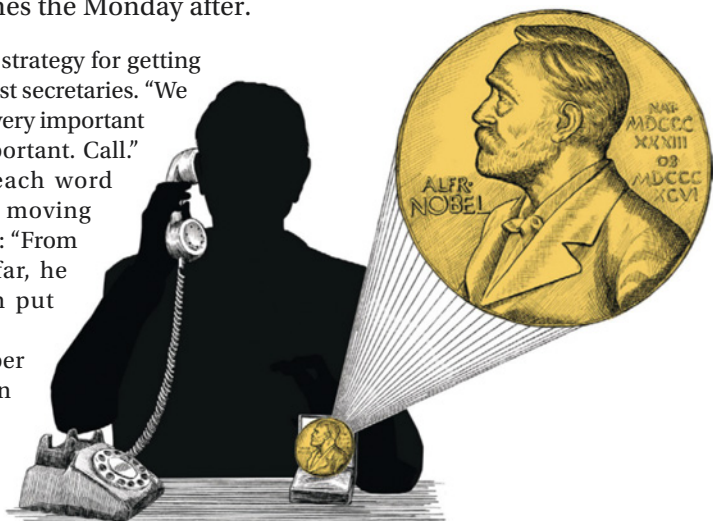
To Notify a Nobel Prize Winner

BY TOM WHIPPLE FROM *INTELLIGENT LIFE*

COME THE SECOND WEEK OF OCTOBER, if Staffan Normark, the permanent secretary of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, is on the line, it will probably be the most important conversation of your life. If it's a Tuesday, he will be informing you that you have won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. If it's a Wednesday, Physics. Economics comes the Monday after.

Normark has a strategy for getting his phone calls past secretaries. "We tell them this is a very important call. A. Very. Important. Call." He enunciates each word carefully before moving on to the clincher: "From Stockholm." So far, he has always been put through.

The 615-member academy votes on the winners at 9:30 a.m., and Normark makes his call at 11:15



a.m. If you don't pick up the phone, the ceremony continues without you. The public announcement comes at noon. If, like Saul Perlmutter (Physics, 2011), you live in California and the call comes, unanswered, in the middle of the night, then it could be the television news vans outside your house that alert you of your prize.

Making the calls is the best part of Normark's job, he says, though it can be stressful. Weeks of research go into finding the correct phone numbers. "How they get them, I don't know," he says. The morning of The Call, "it's nervous in the room," says Normark. "We like to find the individuals." Once the committee got the wrong number, conferring the most important scientific prize in the world on a confused neighbor of the right person.

Others take some diligent tracking down. Paul Nurse (Physiology or Medicine, 2001), for one, figured he was out of the running. The geneticist and cell biologist, and now president of the Royal Society in London, says, "For three years, I'd had some calls from journalists asking me, 'Do you think you'll win this year?'" So when he hadn't heard by mid-morning, he thought, Oh well, and went out.

But halfway through a meeting, a message came from Nurse's office.

Could he please listen to his voice mail? "I thought it might be saying I had won. I went back into the room I'd just left and said, 'Do excuse me. I think I've won the Nobel Prize.'"

More often, Normark must convince the recipient that he's telling the truth. Recalls economist James Mirrlees, who got the call in 1996,

"I politely suggested that I'd need some proof." John Gurdon (Physiology or Medicine, 2012) was in his laboratory when he was told he had won the Nobel for cloning a frog. Given that this was work he had done 50 years earlier, he assumed that "someone was pulling my leg." Luckily, says Normark,

"I have a very Swedish accent."

For Normark, the most satisfying reaction of all, though, is utter surprise. "The person on the line is completely silent. You can just barely hear breathing," he says.

Even when the would-be winners have an inkling that it could be their time, when their phone rings, they can't help being shocked. Serge Haroche (Physics, 2012) was out walking with his wife when he saw a Swedish area code appear on his cell phone. "[When I heard the news], I was lucky to be walking near a bench, so I was able to sit down immediately. It was really overwhelming." **R**

“
Often Normark must convince the recipient that he's telling the truth. It helps that I have a very Swedish accent.”

PARENTING

Re



If we want our kids to be their smartest, bravest, and most creative and independent selves, we've got to let them play with fire

The volution Will Not Be Supervised

BY HANNA ROSIN FROM THE ATLANTIC

A TRIO OF BOYS tramps along the length of a wooden fence, back and forth, shouting like carnival barkers. “The Land! It opens in half an hour.” When the gate finally swings open, the boys and about a dozen other children race directly to their favorite spots. “Is this a junkyard?” asks my five-year-old son, Gideon, who has come with me to visit. “Not exactly,” I tell him. The Land is a playground that takes up nearly an acre at the far end of a quiet housing development in North Wales. It’s only two years old but could just as well have been here for decades. The ground is muddy in spots and, at one end, slopes down steeply to a creek. The center of the playground is dominated by a high pile of tires that is growing ever smaller as a redheaded girl and her friend roll them down the hill and into the creek. “Why are you rolling tires into the water?” my son asks. “Because we are,” the girl replies.

Someone has started a fire in the tin drum in the corner. Three boys lounge in the only unbroken chairs around it. Nearby, a couple of other boys are doing mad flips on a stack of filthy mattresses, which makes a fine trampoline. At the other end of the playground, younger kids dart in and out of large structures made of wooden pallets stacked on top of one another. Occasionally a group knocks down a few pallets—just for the fun of it or to build some new kind of slide or fort or unnamed structure.

Other than some walls lit up with graffiti, there are no bright colors or anything else that belongs to the usual playground landscape: no shiny metal slide, no yellow seesaw with a central ballast to make sure no one falls off, no rubber bucket swing for babies. There is, however, a frayed rope swing that carries you over the creek and deposits you on the other side, if you can make it that far (otherwise, it deposits you in the creek). On this day, the kids seem excited by a walker that was donated by one of the elderly neighbors and is repurposed, at different moments, as a scooter, a jail cell, and a gymnastics bar.

The Land is an “adventure playground.” In the United Kingdom, such playgrounds became popular in the 1940s as a result of the efforts of Lady Marjory Allen of Hurtwood, a landscape architect and children’s

advocate. Allen wanted to design playgrounds with loose parts that kids could move around to create their own makeshift structures. But more important, she wanted to encourage a “free and permissive atmosphere” with as little adult supervision as possible. The idea was that kids should face what, to them, seem like “really dangerous risks” and conquer them alone. That, she said, is what builds self-confidence and courage. But these playgrounds are so out of sync with today’s norms that when I showed fellow parents back home a video of kids lighting fires, the most common sentence I heard from them was “This is insane.” That might explain why there are so few adventure playgrounds left around the world and why a newly established one, such as the Land, feels like an act of defiance.

The Land is staffed by professionally trained “playworkers,” who keep a close eye on the kids but don’t intervene all that much. Claire Griffiths, the manager, describes her job as “loitering with intent.” Although the playworkers almost never stop the kids from what they’re doing, before the playground had even opened, the workers had filled binders with “risk benefits assessments” for nearly every activity. (In the two years since the Land opened, no one has been injured outside of the occasional scraped knee.) Here’s the list of benefits for fire: “It can be a social experience to sit around with friends, make friends,

to sing songs and to dance around, to stare at; it can be a cooperative experience where everyone has jobs. It can be something to experiment with, to take risks, to test its properties, its heat, its power, to relive our evolutionary past." The risks? "Burns from fire or fire pit" and "children accidentally burning each other with flaming cardboard or wood." In this case, the benefits win because a playworker is always nearby, watching for impending accidents but otherwise letting the children figure out lessons about fire on their own.

"I'm gonna put this cardboard box in the fire," one of the boys says.

"You know that will make a lot of smoke," says Griffiths.

"Where there's smoke, there's fire," he answers, and in goes the box. Smoke instantly fills the air and stings our eyes. The other boys sitting around the fire cough, duck their heads, and curse him out. In my playground set, we would call this natural consequences, although we rarely have the nerve to let even much tamer scenarios than this one play out. By contrast, the custom at the Land is for parents not to intervene. In fact, it's for parents



The irony is that our attention to safety has not made a tremendous difference in the number of accidents kids have.

not to come at all. The dozens of kids who passed through the playground on the day I visited came and went on their own. In seven hours, aside from Griffiths and the other playworkers, I saw only two adults.

Even though women work vastly more hours now than they did in the 1970s, mothers—and fathers—spend much more time with their children than they used to. My own mother didn't work all that much when I was younger, but she didn't spend vast amounts of time with me either. She didn't arrange my playdates or drive me to swimming lessons. On week-

this isn't true, or at least not in the way that we think. Maybe the real questions are, How did these fears come to have such a hold over us? And what have our children lost—and gained—as we've succumbed to them?

In 1978, a toddler named Frank Nelson made his way to the top of a 12-foot slide in Hamlin Park in Chicago, with his mother a few steps behind him. The structure was known as a tornado slide because it twisted on the way down. But the boy never made it that far. He fell through the gap between the handrail and the steps and landed on his head on the asphalt. A year later, his parents sued the Chicago Park District and the two companies

We can't create the perfect environment for our kids any more than we can create the perfect kids.

days after school, she just expected me to show up for dinner; on weekends, I barely saw her at all. I, on the other hand, might easily spend every waking Saturday hour with one, if not all three, of my children, taking one to a soccer game, the second to a theater program, the third to a friend's house, or I might just hang out with them at home. When my daughter was about ten, my husband suddenly realized that in her whole life, she had probably spent not more than ten minutes unsupervised by an adult. Not ten minutes in ten years.

When you ask parents why they are more protective than their parents were, they might answer that the world is more dangerous now than it was when they were growing up. But

that had manufactured and installed the slide. Frank had fractured his skull in the fall and suffered permanent brain damage. He was forced to wear a helmet all the time to protect his fragile skull.

The Nelsons' lawsuit was one of a number that fueled a backlash against potentially dangerous playground equipment. Theodora Briggs Sweeney, a consumer advocate and safety consultant from John Carroll University, became a public crusader for playground reform. "The name of the playground game will continue to be Russian roulette, with the child as unsuspecting victim," Sweeney wrote in 1979. She was concerned about many things—the height of slides, the space between railings, the danger of

loose S-shaped hooks that hold parts together—but what she worried about most was asphalt and dirt. Sweeney declared that lab simulations showed children could die from a fall of as little as a foot if their head hit asphalt or three feet if their head hit dirt.

A federal government report around that time found that tens of thousands of children were turning up in the emergency room each year because of playground accidents. As a result, in 1981 the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission published the first *Handbook for Public Playground Safety*, a short set of general guidelines to govern the equipment.

In January 1985, the Chicago Park District settled the suit with the Nelsons. Frank Nelson was guaranteed a minimum of \$9.5 million. Park departments all over the country began removing equipment newly considered dangerous. The cultural understanding of acceptable risk began to shift, until any known risk became nearly synonymous with hazard.

At the core of the safety obsession is a view of children that is the exact opposite of Lady Allen's, "an idea that children are too fragile or unintelligent to assess the risk of any given situation," argues Tim Gill, author of *No Fear*, a critique of our risk-averse society. "Now our working assumption is that children cannot be trusted to find

their way around tricky physical or social and emotional situations."

What's lost amid all this protection? Ellen Sandseter, a professor of early childhood education, observed and interviewed children on playgrounds. In 2011, she published her results. Children, she concluded, have a sensory need to taste danger and excitement; this doesn't mean that what they do has to actually be dangerous, only that they feel they are taking a great risk. That scares them, but then they overcome the fear. Sandseter identifies six kinds of risky play: 1. Exploring heights, or getting the "bird's perspective," as she calls it—"high enough to evoke the sensation of fear." 2. Handling dangerous tools—using sharp scissors or knives, or heavy hammers that at first seem unmanageable but that kids learn to master. 3. Being near dangerous elements—playing near vast bodies of water or near a fire, so kids are aware there is danger nearby. 4. Rough-and-tumble play wrestling and play fighting—so kids learn to negotiate aggression and cooperation. 5. Speed—cycling or skiing at a pace that feels too fast. 6. Exploring on one's own.

The final irony is that our close attention to safety has not in fact made a tremendous difference in the number of accidents children have. The number of emergency room visits related to playground equipment, including home equipment, in 1980 was 156,000, or one visit per 1,452 Americans. In 2012, it was 271,475 visits, or

one per 1,156 Americans. The number of deaths hasn't changed much either. Head injuries, a fatal fall onto a rock—most of the horrors that Sweeney described all those years ago turn out to be freakishly rare.

The category on Sandseter's list that likely makes this generation of parents most nervous is the one involving children's straying from adult supervision. Parents these days have little tolerance for children's wandering on their own, for reasons that, much like the fear of playground injuries, have their roots in the 1970s. In 1979, nine months after Frank Nelson fell off that slide, six-year-old Etan Patz left his family's New York apartment to walk by himself to the school-bus stop. He never came home. The Etan Patz case launched the era of the ubiquitous missing child.

But abduction cases like Etan Patz's were incredibly uncommon a generation ago and remain so today. What has changed is the nature of the American family and the broader sense of community. For a variety of reasons—divorce, more single-parent families, more mothers working—both families and neighborhoods have lost some of their cohesion. Trust in general has eroded, and parents have sought to control more closely what they can: their children. Ask any of my parenting peers to chronicle a week in their child's life, and they will likely men-

tion school, homework, after-school classes, organized playdates, sports teams coached by a fellow parent, and very little free, unsupervised time. The result is a "continuous and ultimately dramatic decline in children's opportunities to play and explore in their own chosen ways," writes Peter Gray, a psychologist at Boston College.

When Claire Griffiths, the Land's manager, applies for grants to fund her play spaces, she often lists the advantages of enticing kids outside: combating obesity, developing motor skills. She also talks about the issue Lady Allen talked about all those years ago—encouraging children to take risks so they build their confidence.

But the more nebulous benefits of a freer child culture are harder to explain, even though experiments bear them out. For example, beginning in 2011, Swanson Primary School in New Zealand suspended all playground rules, allowing the kids to run, climb trees, slide down a hill, jump off swings, and play in a "loose-parts pit" that was like a mini adventure playground. The teachers feared chaos, but in fact what they got was less naughtiness and bullying—because the kids were too busy and engaged to want to cause trouble, the principal said.

Kyung-Hee Kim, an educational psychologist at the College of William & Mary, has analyzed results from the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking and found that, over the past decade or more, American children have

become “less emotionally expressive, less energetic, less talkative and verbally expressive, less humorous, less imaginative, less unconventional, less lively and passionate, less perceptive, less apt to connect seemingly irrelevant things, less synthesizing, and less likely to see things from a different angle.” The largest drop has been in the measure of “elaboration,” or the ability to take an idea and expand on it in a novel way. Practicing psychologists have also written about the unique identity crisis that this generation faces—a fear of growing up and, in the words of Brooke Donatone, a New York City-based therapist, an inability “to think for themselves.”

Researchers have started pushing back against parental control. But the real cultural shift has to come from parents. We can no more create the perfect environment for our children than we can create perfect children. To believe otherwise is a delusion, and a harmful one; remind yourself of that every time the panic rises.

As the sun set over the Land, I noticed out of the corner of my eye a gray bin—like the kind you would keep your recycling in—about to be

pushed down the slope that led to the creek. A kid's head poked out of the top, and I realized it was my son's. Even by my relatively laissez-faire parenting standards, the situation seemed dicey. The slope was very steep, and Christian, the kid who was doing the pushing, was only seven. Also, the creek was frigid, and I had no change of clothes for Gideon.

“You might fall in the creek,” said Christian.

“I know,” said Gideon.

Christian had already taught Gideon how to climb up to the highest slide and manage the rope swing. At this point, he'd earned some trust. “I'll push you gently, OK?”

“Ready, steady, go!” Gideon said in response. Down he went and landed in the creek. In my experience, Gideon is very finicky about water. He hates to have even a drop land on his sleeve while he's brushing his teeth. I began scheming how to get him new clothes. Could I knock on a neighbor's door? Or persuade him to sit awhile with the boys by the fire?

“I'm wet,” Gideon said to Christian, and then they raced over to claim some hammers to build a new fort. **R**

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WHAT LIES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN AND TWITCHES?

A nervous wreck.

FACES OF AMERICA

BY GLENN GLASSER

Amanda Gefter

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

"When I was a teenager, my father took me out to dinner and asked me how I would define *nothing*. He'd been thinking about the concept of nothing and how you can get something from nothing and how the universe could have come from nothing. So we had this conversation, and he recruited me to figure out the nature of reality with him. Now I'm a science writer."

That's Outrageous!

FUNNY NUMBERS

700 The number of church-bell tolls a Rhode Island man had to endure in one week, which put him in a bad mood and contributed to the demise of his marriage, according to his lawsuit against said church. Source: *The Week*



419.99 The mile marker Colorado put on Interstate 70 after the old one—420, which is linked to marijuana—kept being stolen. Source: *newser.com*

1, 3, 5, 7, 9 ... The odd-numbered seats that a man in China—recently split from his girlfriend—bought last Valentine's Day to make sure couples could not sit together at a movie theater. Source: *web.orange.co.uk*

29,305 The number of texts—constituting the entire works of William Shakespeare—sent by a British man to a video game seller who had ripped him off. The thief's phone beeped nonstop for a week. Source: *The Bristol Post*

73 The percentage of the vote that the government of Azerbaijan stated the president had received during the past election. Note: The results were accidentally leaked a day before anyone voted. Source: *huffingtonpost.com*

78 The number of antiriot vehicles bought by German police. During a public exhibition, one of the 33-ton vehicles—which was advertised as withstanding bricks, stones, and Molotov cocktails—was damaged by tennis balls, eggs, and plastic bottles filled with water. Source: *The Daily Mail*

1,089,920 The amount in dollars lost when a member of the cleaning staff at a German museum mistook a piece of art for garbage and threw it out. Source: *The Guardian*

911 The number called by a Texas woman requesting that someone bring her cigarettes. Source: *nbcdfw.com*

4,500,000,000 The divorce judgment in dollars against Russian billionaire Dmitry Rybolovlev. Source: *The New York Daily News*

I thought my student was ordinary.

I came to learn he was
just too busy being brilliant.

Judging Jack

BY DAVID MCCULLOUGH JR.

FROM THE BOOK *YOU ARE NOT SPECIAL*

LET ME TELL YOU about a recent student of mine. We'll call him Jack. He's a quiet boy, our Jack, self-possessed, responsible enough generally, amply courteous, eminently likable. In my normative-level senior literature class, he was attentive and receptive but disinclined to push himself. He found a comfortable pace and stuck with it. The snarky might be tempted to condemn him as undistinguished, B-/C+, just another kid—any of these tantamount, in the current climate, to pretty heavy condemnation. More and more of late, I find myself compelled to defend kids like Jack, even to other teachers, some of whom seem to hold in a museum-lit shrine an image of the Ideal Student to which they expect all those of the flesh-and-blood variety to aspire. Anything short of that is a disappointment, a personal affront, a sign, even, of a deficient character. Superlative



achievement and a whole salad bar of laurels should be everyone's goal, they, too, seem to believe, and learning is what happens along the way. Students like Jack can become invisible. In fact, many seem to prefer it that way.

Through the year, Jack ambled along at about three-quarters speed. Over the first few months, I waited for signs of ignition. When he handed me a sub-mediocre paper as the last of the autumn leaves were skittering down the street, I deemed it reason for a sit-down. We had a pleasant talk.

He agreed he could be doing better, acknowledged he had it in him, said he recognized the benefits of working hard; cause enough, I thought, for cautious optimism. We parted pals. But nothing changed. A nudge here, a prod there, even a mild remonstrations or two ... nothing. Fair enough, I thought. A student, particularly a senior, is allowed to govern his own engagement, to deem my class not his bag. As long as something is. I left him to his own recognizance.

But across a long and mild winter came evidence of nothing from our Jack in the way of bags, no bag in any direction. Spring eased in—nary a whiff of fervor regarding anything.

Then in May, a new generation of leaves greening the trees, with the effect

of a revelation, I happened to learn that reticent Jack did have a passion after all ... happened to learn because he mentioned it. He had, as it turns out, a big bag, a let-the-world-go-on-without-me bag, a calling. I even liked

that he hadn't bothered to tell me about it until our time together was almost over; it was, after all, his. And it served, as far as he knew—or would at least let on—no useful purpose beyond the gratification of doing it, which he articulated poorly, which bothered him not in the least. He wasn't being coached or

spurred or assessed by an adult.

No competition awaited for which he was preparing. He'd had no special training for it; nor did it play even an oblique role, as far as I know, in any of his college aspirations. The pleasure and satisfactions were his alone and for themselves, and more than enough.

In May, I learned that Jack draws.

But it's more than that: Jack draws pictures of three dimensions. He creates detailed paper models, sculptures really, with ordinary printer paper, pencils and pens, scissors and Scotch tape. He does it purely because he enjoys it. From the Hogwarts Castle to the Statue of Liberty to a life-size, wearable baseball cap, and on and on, some no bigger than a deck of cards, some as big as a collie. Something

“
***Bliss does not
 have to be big
 and important.
 Nor must it
 bring accolades
 of any luster
 to matter.***”

strikes his fancy, he sits down and makes a model. If it takes a week, it takes a week. If the phone rings, he lets it. If the homework gets short shrift, so be it. And they are exquisite, these Jack originals. They are beautifully, masterly done. You should see them. Everyone should see them—the Fabergé eggs of paper sports cars and Millennium Falcons. On that note, though, Jack doesn't seem to care much either way. It's nice that people like them, but that's not why he does it. The fun, the satisfaction, is in the doing.

It began a few years earlier. His family was on vacation at the Jersey Shore. Time ran short at an amusement park, if I have it right, and Jack was unable to go on a ride he'd been eager to try. The family headed for the car with a crestfallen kid in tow—which, I'll point out, is a kid for you: Fun all day at an amusement park, and he's glum about the one ride he didn't get to go on. Well, thinks the parent, too bad. But, thinks the kid, I really, really, really wanted to go on that ride. Mid-mope, Jack gets back to wherever it is they're staying and, not knowing why, reaches for pencil and paper and creates a meticulously detailed drawing of the ride, a longing drawing, a demonstration of frustrated ardor. A love letter. And, he realized at the end, it came out great. It was fun to do. Time and the world had vanished. Finished, he looked at the picture. Felt a measure of pride in his handiwork. Realized sitting there that

the itch was not entirely scratched. Realized that the ride had a left side and a right and a back, so he drew them too. When he was done, there they lay on the table, four sheets of paper with drawings on them. Then he had an idea, a delighted little zing: The ride doesn't lie flat on a table. It stands upright. It has three dimensions. He went for scissors and tape.

Voilà.

Bliss does not have to be big and important. Nor must it bring one accolades of any luster to matter. Bliss is more than its own reward. And while rare is the acorn that becomes an oak tree, every oak tree, every last one, began as an acorn you could pick up and put in your pocket.

Whether Jack goes on to become an artist or an architect or an engineer or anything else directly consequent to his enthusiasm for model making does not matter. He has learned something about passion, about focus, about clearing a space in his life and doing what he does purely because he loves and believes in it. He has honed a set of abilities too. Developed standards of his own measure and sees to it that he meets them. He knows, then, the satisfactions of seeing with purpose, conceiving ideas, dedicating himself to them, and producing good work. In choosing and doing for himself, he earns his confidence and self-worth. Very good things, these, and, I hope, lifelong. **R**

BIG IDEA



If you haven't discovered your exceptional gift yet, you're in good company. Mark Twain, Alfred Hitchcock, and Cézanne all reached the apex of their talent in midlife.

The *Late* *Bloomer* Phenomenon

BY MALCOLM GLADWELL FROM THE BOOK *WHAT THE DOG SAW*

BEN FOUNTAIN WAS AN ASSOCIATE in the real estate practice at the Dallas offices of Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, just a few years out of law school, when he decided he wanted to write fiction. The only thing Fountain had ever published was a law-review article. He had tried to write when he came home at night after work, but usually he was too tired. He decided to quit his job.

"I was tremendously apprehensive," Fountain recalls. "I felt like I'd stepped off a cliff and didn't know if the parachute was going to open. I was doing well at the practice of law. And my parents were very proud of me ... It was crazy."

He began his new life on a February morning—a Monday. He sat down at his kitchen table at 7:30 a.m. He made a plan. Every day, he would write until lunchtime. Then he would lie down on the floor for 20 minutes to rest his mind. Then he would return to work for a few more hours. "I treated it like a job. I did not procrastinate," he says. His first story was about a stockbroker who

uses inside information and crosses a moral line. It was 60 pages long and took him three months to write. When he finished that story, he wrote another—and then another.

In his first year, Fountain sold two stories. He gained confidence. He wrote a novel. He decided it wasn't very good, and he ended up putting it in a drawer. Meanwhile, he got a short story published in *Harper's*. A New York literary agent saw it and signed him up. He put together a collection of short stories titled *Brief Encounters with Che Guevara*, and Ecco, a HarperCollins imprint, published it. It was named one of the best books of the year by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and *Kirkus Reviews* and drew comparisons with the works of Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, Robert Stone, and John le Carré. His second novel, *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*, was published to glowing reviews and received the National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction.

Ben Fountain's rise sounds like a familiar story: The young man suddenly takes the literary world by storm. But Ben Fountain's success was far from sudden. He quit his job at Akin,

Gump in 1988. For every story he published in those early years, he had at least 30 rejections. The novel that he put away in a drawer took him four years. His breakthrough with *Brief Encounters* came in 2006, 18 years after he first sat down to write at his kitchen table. The "young" writer took the literary world by storm at the age of 48.

Genius, in the popular conception, is inextricably tied up with precocity—doing something truly creative requires the exuberance and energy of youth. Orson Welles made his masterpiece, *Citizen Kane*, at 25. Herman Melville wrote a book a year through his late 20s, culminating at age 32 with *Moby-Dick*. Mozart wrote his breakthrough Piano Concerto No. 9 in E-Flat Major at the age of 21. How old was T. S. Eliot when he wrote "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" ("I grow old ... I grow old")? Twenty-three. "Poets peak young," creativity researcher James Kaufman maintains.

A few years ago, David Galenson, an economist at the University of Chicago, examined this assumption. He looked through 47 major poetry anthologies published since 1980 and counted the poems that appear most frequently. The top 11 are, in order, T. S. Eliot's "Prufrock," Robert Lowell's "Skunk Hour," Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," William Carlos Williams's "Red Wheelbarrow," Elizabeth Bishop's "The Fish," Ezra Pound's "The River Merchant's



Malcolm Gladwell is a journalist and the bestselling author of five books. He has been a staff writer at the New Yorker since 1996.

Wife," Sylvia Plath's "Daddy," Pound's "In a Station of the Metro," Frost's "Mending Wall," Wallace Stevens's "The Snow Man," and Williams's "The Dance." Those 11 were composed at the ages of 23, 41, 48, 40, 29, 30, 30, 28, 38, 42, and 59, respectively. There is no evidence, Galenson concluded, for the notion that poetry is a young person's game. Forty-two percent of Frost's anthologized poems were written after he was 50. For Williams, it's 44 percent. For Stevens, it's 49 percent.

The same was true of film and literature, Galenson points out in *Old Masters and Young Geniuses: The Two Life Cycles of Artistic Creativity*. Yes, Orson Welles peaked as a director at 25. But Alfred Hitchcock made *Dial M for Murder*, *Rear Window*, *To Catch a Thief*, *The Trouble with Harry*, *Vertigo*, *North by Northwest*, and *Psycho* between his 54th and 61st birthdays. Mark Twain published *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* at 49. Daniel Defoe wrote *Robinson Crusoe* at 58.

The examples that Galenson could not get out of his head, however, were of Picasso and Cézanne. Picasso was

the prodigy. His career as a serious artist began around age 20. In short order, he painted many of the greatest works of his career—including *Les Femmes d'Alger*, at the age of 25. Picasso fit our usual ideas about genius perfectly.

Cézanne didn't. If you go to the Cézanne room at the Musée d'Orsay, in Paris, the array of masterpieces you'll find along the back wall were all painted at the end of his career. The works he created in his mid-60s, Galenson found, are valued 15 times as highly as those he created as a young man. The freshness, exuberance, and energy of youth did little for Cézanne. He was a late bloomer.

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 Cézanne created
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The first day Ben Fountain sat down to write at his kitchen table went well. He knew how the story about the stockbroker was supposed to start. But the second day,

he says, he “completely freaked out.” He didn't have a fully formed vision waiting to be emptied onto the page. He began to collect articles about things he was interested in, and

before long, he realized that he had a fascination with Haiti. “The Haiti file just kept getting bigger,” Fountain says. “And I thought, OK, here’s my novel. After a couple of months, I thought, Yeah, you’ve got to go there, and so I went, in April or May of ’91.”

He spoke little French, let alone Haitian Creole. He had never been abroad. Nor did he know anyone who lived there. Fountain was riveted by Haiti. “Everything that’s gone on in the past 500 years—colonialism, race, power, politics, ecological disasters—it’s all there in very concentrated form,” he says. “And also I just felt, viscerally, pretty comfortable there.” He made more trips to Haiti, sometimes for a week, sometimes for two weeks. He made friends. He invited them to visit him in Dallas. (“You haven’t lived until you’ve had Haitians stay in your house,” Fountain says.)

In *Brief Encounters with Che Guevara*, four of the stories are about Haiti, and they are the strongest in the collection. “After the novel was done, I just felt like there was more for me, and I could keep going, keep going deeper there,” Fountain recalls. “How many times have I been? At least 30.”

Prodigies like Picasso, Galenson argues, rarely engage in that kind of open-ended exploration. They tend to be “conceptual,” Galenson says, in the sense that they start with a clear idea of where they want to go, and then they execute it. “I can hardly understand

the importance given to the word *research*,” Picasso once said in an interview with the artist Marius de Zayas. “In my opinion, to search means nothing in painting. To find is the thing.”

But late bloomers, Galenson says, tend to work the other way around. Their approach is experimental. “Their goals are imprecise, so their procedure is tentative and incremental,” Galenson writes in *Old Masters and Young Geniuses*.

An experimental innovator would go back to Haiti 30 times. That’s how that kind of mind figures out what it wants to do. When Cézanne was painting a portrait of the critic Gustave Geffroy, he made him endure 80 sittings, over three months, before announcing the project a failure. He would paint a scene, then repaint it, then paint it again. He was notorious for slashing his canvases to pieces in fits of frustration.

Galenson’s idea that creativity can be divided into these types—conceptual and experimental—has a number of important implications. For example, we sometimes think of late bloomers as late starters. They don’t realize they’re good at something until they’re 50, so of course they achieve late in life. But that’s not quite right. Cézanne was painting almost as early as Picasso was. We also sometimes think of them as artists who are discovered late. In both cases, the assumption is that the prodigy

and the late bloomer are fundamentally the same and that late blooming is simply genius under conditions of market failure. What Galenson's argument suggests is something else: that late bloomers bloom late because they simply aren't much good until late in their careers.

This is the vexing lesson of Fountain's long attempt to get noticed by the literary world. On the road to great achievement, the late bloomer will resemble a failure: While the late bloomer is revising and changing course and slashing canvases to ribbons after months or years, what he or she produces will look like the kind of thing produced by the artist who will never bloom at all.

Prodigies advertise their genius from the get-go. Late bloomers require forbearance and blind faith. (Let's be thankful that Cézanne didn't have a guidance counselor in high school who looked at his primitive sketches and told him to try accounting.)

Not long after meeting Ben Fountain, I went to see the novelist Jonathan Safran Foer, author of the

2002 bestseller *Everything Is Illuminated*. Fountain is a graying man, slight and modest. Foer is in his early 30s and looks barely old enough to drink.

"I came to writing really by the back door," Foer said. "My wife is a writer, and she grew up keeping journals—you know, parents said, 'Lights out,

time for bed,' and she had a little flashlight under the covers, reading books. I don't think I read a book until much later than other people. I just wasn't interested in it."

Foer went to Princeton and took a creative-writing class in his freshman year with Joyce Carol Oates. It was, he explained, "sort of on a whim, maybe out of a sense that I should have a diverse course load."

He'd never written a story before. "Half-way through the semester, I arrived to class early one day, and she said,

'Oh, I'm glad I have this chance to talk to you. I'm a fan of your writing.' And it was a real revelation for me."

As a sophomore, he took another creative-writing class. During the following summer, he went to Europe. He wanted to find the village in Ukraine where his grandfather had come

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from. After the trip, he went to Prague. There he read Kafka, as any literary undergraduate would, and sat down at his computer.

“I was just writing,” he said. “I didn’t go with the intention of writing a book. I wrote 300 pages in ten weeks. I’d never done that.”

It was a novel about a boy named Jonathan Safran Foer who visits a village in Ukraine called Trachimbrod, where his grandfather had come from. Those 300 pages were the first draft of *Everything Is Illuminated*—the exquisite and extraordinary novel that established Foer as one of the most distinctive literary voices of his generation. He was 19 years old.

Foer began to talk about the other way of writing books, where you honed your craft, over years and years. “I couldn’t do that,” he said. He seemed puzzled by it. It was clear that he had no understanding of how being an experimental innovator would work. “I mean, imagine if the craft you’re trying to learn is to be an original. How could you learn the craft of being an original?”

If you read *Everything Is Illuminated*, you end up with the same

feeling you get when you read *Brief Encounters with Che Guevara*—the sense of transport you experience when a work of literature draws you into its own world. Both are works of art. It’s just that, as artists, Fountain and Foer could not be less alike. Fountain went to Haiti 30 times. Foer

went to the Ukrainian village just once.

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**Late bloomers’
stories are love
stories, and
this may be why
we have such
difficulty with
them.**



Ben Fountain did not make the decision to quit the law and become a writer all by himself. He is married and has a family. He met his wife, Sharon, when they were both in law school at Duke. When he was doing real estate work at Akin, Gump, she was becoming a partner in the tax practice at Thompson & Knight. They got married in 1985 and had a son in April 1987. In 1989, they had a second child, a daughter.

Fountain had become a stay-at-home dad with a rigorous writing regimen.

“When Ben first did this, we talked about, generally, ‘When will we know that it really isn’t working?’ and I’d say, ‘Well, give it ten years,’” Sharon recalls. “It takes a while to decide whether you like something or not,”

she says. And when ten years became 12 and then 14 and then 16, and the kids were off in high school, she stood by him because she was confident that he was getting better. She was fine with the trips to Haiti too. "I can't imagine writing a novel about a place you haven't at least tried to visit," she says.

Sharon was Ben's wife. But she was also—to borrow a term from long ago—his patron. If you are the type of creative mind who starts without a plan and has to experiment and learn by doing, you need someone to see you through the long and difficult time it takes for your art to reach its true level. Cézanne, too, had an extraordinary list of patrons, which included his father, the banker Louis-Auguste.

This is the final lesson of the late bloomer: His or her success is highly contingent on the efforts of others. Louis-Auguste didn't have to support Cézanne all those years. He would have been within his rights to make his son get a real job, just as Sharon

might well have said no to her husband's repeated trips to Haiti.

But she believed in her husband's art, or perhaps, more simply, she believed in her husband, the same way Louis-Auguste must have believed in Cézanne. Late bloomers' stories are invariably love stories, and this may be why we have such difficulty with them. We'd like to think that mundane matters like loyalty, steadfastness, and the willingness to keep writing checks to support what looks like failure have nothing to do with something as rarefied as genius. But sometimes genius is anything but rarefied; sometimes it's just the thing that emerges after 20 years of working at your kitchen table.

"Sharon never once brought up money, not once—never," Fountain says. She is sitting next to him, and he looks at her in a way that makes it plain that he understands how much of the credit for *Brief Encounters* belongs to his wife. His eyes well with tears. "I never felt any pressure from her," he says. "Not even covert, not even implied." **R**

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DID YOU KNOW ...

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Savvy entrepreneurs have always sold people the same thing: dreams

Why America Loves a Con Man

BY JAMES SUROWIECKI
FROM THE *NEW YORKER*

CON ARTISTS ARE GREEDY hucksters who sell us possibilities that never come true. But Americans have a soft spot for them. The phrase *confidence man* was popularized in an 1849 *New York Herald* article detailing the arrest of William Thompson, a man of “genteel appearance” who for months had been approaching strangers on the street and somehow persuading them to trust him with their watches until the next day. (Needless to say, they never got the watches back.) Almost immediately, a play titled *The Confidence Man* debuted; Thompson was soon bragging that he was “a great man in the eyes of the world.” In the decades that followed, the con artist became a classic American antihero.



Robert Redford
and Paul Newman
in 1973's *The Sting*

The curious thing, as the University of Pennsylvania historian Walter McDougall writes, is that “far from despising flimflam artists as parasites or worse, American popular culture habitually celebrates rascals as comedic figures.” Think of the movies of W. C. Fields and the Marx Brothers; think of *The Sting* and *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*. Even bleaker depictions, like David Mamet’s, get us to admire the dexterity with which con artists persuade people to part with their money.

It seems that con artists, for all their vices, represent many of the virtues that Americans aspire to. Con artists are independent and typically self-made. They don’t have to kowtow to a boss—no small thing in a country in which people have always longed to strike out on their own. They succeed or fail based on their wits. They exemplify, in short, the complicated nature of American capitalism, which, as McDougall argues, has depended on people being hustlers in both the positive and the negative sense. The American economy wasn’t built just on good ideas and hard work. It was also built on hope and hype.

In the 19th century especially, the line between crook and businessman

was fuzzy. Take the building of the American railroads, which both spurred industrialization and laid the foundation for a truly national economy. When the Central Pacific Railroad (the western spur of the transcontinental railroad) was built, the four men

who started it, including Leland Stanford, set up an outside construction company in which they were the sole shareholders, and they used that company to milk the Central Pacific for millions of dollars in excess construction costs. The building of the Union Pacific Railroad led to the same kind of self-dealing and pocket lining and reckless overbuilding, while railroad

financiers like Jay Gould made enormous sums via stock schemes and dubious takeovers. The result was one of the biggest cons the country has ever seen, with huge losses for investors and a fortune for the moguls. Still, we ended up with a national transportation system.

In the 20th century, the relationship between commerce and con artistry became subtler. Never mind the out-and-out scammers, from Charles Ponzi to Bernard Madoff, or the long history of questionable behavior on Wall Street. Entrepreneurs have skills that are very much

“
Steve Jobs’s
scripting
and endless
rehearsals of
presentations
are straight
from the
con artist’s
playbook.”

like those of the con men. To raise money to start a business, you've got to sell an imagined future—a dream. Before building a single car, Henry Ford had to persuade his major supplier to take stock in lieu of cash because he didn't have the money to pay for thousands of dollars' worth of parts.

As the sociologist Alex Preda writes, "Talent for persuasion is key: After all, the public must be convinced to part with their money on the basis of the simple promise that an idea will yield profit in the future." Successful entrepreneurship involves hucksterism, the ability to convince investors and employees that they should risk their money, their time, and their effort on you. Like a con artist, you're peddling optimism. As Mel Weinberg (the model for Christian Bale's character in *American Hustle*) put it in Robert Greene's book *The Sting Man*, "It's my philosophy to give hope ... That's why most people don't turn us in to the cops. They keep hopin' we're for real."

In a dynamic economy, getting people to wager on unknowable (and

often unlikely) futures is essential. The greatest business icon of our era, Steve Jobs, was legendary for his "reality-distortion field," which allowed him to convince people that improbable outcomes were not just possible but also certain. Jobs's endless rehearsals for his public presentations and his scripting of every moment for maximum effect—these are all straight from the con artist's playbook. So, too, is the sense of conviction he projected. In Weinberg's words, "Before you sell a deal, you have to live the deal. You have to believe in it because if you don't believe in it, you can't sell it."

Of course, the fundamental difference between entrepreneurs and con artists is that con artists ultimately know that the fantasies they're selling are lies. Steve Jobs, often enough, could make those fantasies come true. Still, that unquantifiable mélange of risk, hope, and hype provides both the capitalist's formula for transforming the world and the con artist's stragem for turning your money into his money. Maybe there's a reason we talk about the American Dream. **R**

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GIVE THE KID A BREAK

The World Wide Web is 25, which is why it can give advice on beating any video game but had problems making sense of health care for a little while.

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Life is improving for most people on this planet: Leading philanthropists deliver good news about global poverty



Myths About the World's Poor

BY BILL AND MELINDA GATES

FROM THE GATES FOUNDATION 2014 ANNUAL LETTER

BY ALMOST ANY MEASURE, the world is better off now than it has ever been. Extreme poverty has been cut in half over the past 25 years, child mortality rates are plunging around the globe, and many of the countries that have long relied on foreign aid are now self-sufficient.

So why do so many people seem to think things are getting worse? Much of the reason is because they're in the grip of three deeply damaging myths about global poverty and development. But the belief





*Africa ascends:
Kids play at a
primary school in
Dakar, Senegal.*

that the world is getting worse isn't just mistaken—it's also detrimental. It stalls progress and blinds us to the opportunity we have to create a world where almost everyone has a chance to prosper.

1 Poor Countries Are Doomed to Stay Poor

Incomes and other measures of welfare are rising almost everywhere. Take Mexico City. In 1987, when we first visited, most homes lacked running water, and we saw people trekking to fill up water jugs; it reminded us of rural Africa. The guy who ran Microsoft's Mexico City office would send his kids back to the United States for checkups to make sure the smog wasn't making them sick.

Today, the city is mind-blowingly different, boasting high-rise buildings, cleaner air, and new roads and bridges. You still find pockets of poverty, but when we visit, we think, Wow, most people here are middle-class—what a miracle. You can see a similar transformation in Nairobi, New Delhi, Shanghai, and many other cities. In our lifetime, the global picture of poverty has been completely redrawn. Since 1960, China's income per person has gone up eightfold. India's has quadrupled, Brazil's has almost quintupled, and tiny Botswana, thanks to shrewd management of its mineral resources, has seen a 30-fold increase. A new class of middle-income nations that barely existed

50 years ago now includes more than half of the world's population.

This holds true even in Africa. Since 1998, income per person has climbed by two thirds—from just over \$1,300 then to nearly \$2,200 today. Seven of the ten fastest-growing economies from the past half decade are in Africa.

We are optimistic enough that we're willing to make a prediction: By 2035, there will be almost no poor countries left in the world. Yes, a few countries will be held back by war, political realities (such as North Korea), or geography (such as landlocked states in central Africa). And inequality will still be a problem. But every country in South America, Asia, and Central America (except perhaps Haiti)—and most in coastal Africa—will be middle-income nations. More than 70 percent of countries will have a higher per-person income than China does today.

2 Foreign Aid Is a Waste

We worry about this myth. It gives leaders an excuse to cut back on aid—and that would mean fewer lives saved and more time before countries can become self-sufficient. Foreign aid is a phenomenal investment. It doesn't just save lives; it also lays the groundwork for lasting, long-term progress.

Many people think that foreign aid is a large part of rich countries' budgets. When pollsters ask Americans



Melinda Gates meets women and children in Dedaaur in central India, January 2013.

what share goes to aid, the most common response is “25 percent.” In fact, it is less than 1 percent, or about \$30 billion a year. The U.S. government spends more than twice as much on farm subsidies as on international health aid; it spends more than 60 times as much on the military.

One common complaint is that aid gets wasted on corruption, and some of it does. But the horror stories you hear—where aid helped a dictator build palaces—come mostly from a time when aid was designed to win Cold War allies rather than improve people’s lives. The problem today is much smaller. We should try to reduce small-scale corruption, but we can’t eliminate it, any more than we can

eliminate waste from every business or government program. Many people call to end aid programs if one dollar of corruption is found. However, four of the past seven governors of Illinois went to prison for corruption, and no one is demanding that the state’s schools or highways be closed.

Critics also complain that aid keeps countries dependent on outsiders’ generosity. But this argument focuses on the most difficult cases still struggling for self-sufficiency. Here is a list of former recipients that have grown so much that they receive little aid today: Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Costa Rica, Peru, Thailand, Mauritius, Botswana, Morocco, Singapore, and Malaysia.

Critics are right to say there is no

definitive proof that aid drives economic growth. But we know that it drives improvements in health, agriculture, and infrastructure, which correlate strongly with long-run growth. Look at what aid has accomplished: A baby born in 1960 had an 18 percent chance of dying before her fifth birthday. For a child born today, it is less than 5 percent; in 2035, it will be 1.6 percent. We can't think of any other 75-year improvement in welfare that even comes close.

3 Saving Lives Leads to Overpopulation

For more than two centuries, people have worried about doomsday scenarios in which food supply can't keep up with population growth. But this anxiety has a dangerous tendency to override concern for the humans who make up that population. Letting children die now so they don't starve later isn't just heartless—it doesn't work. And countries with the highest death rates are among the fastest-growing populations in the world: Women there tend to have the most births.

When more children survive, parents decide to have smaller families. Consider Thailand. Around 1960,

child mortality rates started going down. In the 1970s, after the government invested in a family-planning program, birthrates started to drop. Over two decades, Thai women went from having six children on average to two. Today, child mortality rates there are almost as low as they are in America, and Thai women have an average of 1.6 children.

This pattern of falling death rates followed by falling birthrates applies for most of the world. Saving lives doesn't lead to overpopulation—just the opposite. Creating societies where people enjoy health, prosperity, fundamental equality, and access to contraceptives is the only way to a sustainable world.

More people, especially political leaders, need to know about the misconceptions behind these myths. Contributions to promote international health and development offer an astonishing return. We all have the chance to create a world where extreme poverty is the exception rather than the rule and where all children have the chance to thrive. For those of us who believe in the value of every human life, there isn't any more inspiring work under way today. **R**

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DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE CELL PHONE WEDDING?

The ceremony was fantastic, but the reception was terrible.

Laugh Lines

THERE'S AN OLD SAYING ...

A penny saved is a penny that will sit around in a jar for five years.

@KEATINGTHOMAS

I think the expression "It's a small world" is really a euphemism for "I keep running into people I can't stand."

BROCK COHEN

If you can't beat them, arrange to have them beaten.

GEORGE CARLIN

Don't cry over spilled milk. By this time tomorrow, it'll be free yogurt.

STEPHEN COLBERT

A watched pot never boils, but it does get paranoid.

LESLEY WAKE

If truth is beauty, how come no one has their hair done in a library?

LILY TOMLIN

Where there's a will, there's a relative.

RICKY GERVAIS



WHO ? KNEW

13 Things Homeschoolers Won't Tell You

BY MICHELLE CROUCH

1 Yes, the largest subset of us is Christian. But we've also got plenty of granola-crunching hippie types; growing numbers of Jewish, Latino, and military families; and parents who don't like what their local schools have to offer. So ditch the stereotypes.

2 In some states, you need a high school diploma to teach your children at home, your curriculum must be approved, and you have to test your kids regularly. In others, you don't even have to notify anyone that you're homeschooling.

3 Unfortunately, there are homeschooling parents who aren't teaching their kids. Some grown homeschooled children have spoken out about educational neglect. One Virginia teenager said that at age 16, he didn't



know South Africa was a country and couldn't solve basic algebra problems.

4 Our kids aren't unsocialized outcasts who never leave home. Most of us spend at least several days a week out of the house with—shock!—other people. We coordinate proms, classes, sports teams, choirs, and clubs with other homeschooled children in the area.

5 Luckily, we're not on the hook to teach our children everything. Many of us use online classes, hire tutors, or send our kids to co-ops to be taught by former teachers.

6 Our firstborn almost always get a better education than our younger kids. Why? The truth is that some of us have trouble keeping up with everything.

7 Some homeschoolers have formal lesson plans, report cards, and even a bell to start the school day. On the opposite end of the spectrum: unschoolers. They have no curriculum and no textbooks unless the child asks to use them.

8 We're having more fun than you. On a school day, we'll make cookies to practice fractions and visit a museum to learn about history. And we still have time for field trips, some of them to other countries.

9 Public school systems get less money if they have a high number of homeschooled students, so a growing number of districts are recruiting us to enroll in certain classes, borrow materials, and use school services. The reason behind it all: They want to get back a portion of that lost per-pupil funding.

10 Educating your own child can be a burden. Every day I worry that I'm not good enough.

11 I may forget what grade my children are supposed to be in. With homeschooling, if they're doing great at math, they can be several grades ahead. And if they're struggling in a subject, they fall behind.

12 Why do public school parents always ask about socialization? Sitting quietly at a desk all day does not seem very social to me.

13 The best part about homeschooling? I get to spend time with my kids and be there for the a-ha moments when they learn something for the first time. **R**

Sources: Homeschooling mothers Nancy Carter of Mashantucket, Connecticut; Dena Dyer of Granbury, Texas; Kris Bales of Ringgold, Georgia, who blogs at weirdunsocializedhomeschoolers.com; Heather Bowen of Lumberton, North Carolina, who blogs at frugalhome-schoolfamily.com; Julie Anne Smith of Richland, Washington, who blogs at spiritualsoundingboard.com; and Laura Huber, author of *The ABCs of Homeschooling*; former homeschooling mother Vyckie Garrison; Richard Medlin, PhD, psychologist at Stetson University in DeLand, Florida; Milton Gaither, PhD, professor of education at Messiah College in Grantham, Pennsylvania, and author of *Homeschool: An American History*

When Scientists Experiment on Themselves

BY REGINA NUZZO

METHODICAL MINDS apparently share a compulsive need to discover the truth—personal comfort be damned. When Sir Isaac Newton had a theory about how the eye perceives color, he tested it by sticking a darning needle into the back of his eye socket and poking around until he saw colored circles. German Nobel Prize winner Werner Forssmann performed the first cardiac catheterization surgery—on himself. Here, the wacky self-experiments of six modern researchers and how their findings might change our medical care.

Stomachful of Bacteria

As a young doctor in Australia in the 1980s, Barry Marshall was convinced that stomach ulcers were caused not by stress or spicy food but by bacteria. To prove his point to the skeptical medical establishment, Marshall gulped down a cup of cloudy broth teeming with *Helicobacter pylori* bacteria. Within a week, he was vomiting daily. Tests showed that his stomach lining was inflamed, which indicated an ulcer could be developing. After a round of antibiotics (his wife insisted he stop the experiment early), the infection disappeared.

Today, ulcers are routinely treated with antibiotics, and in 2005, Marshall shared the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his work.

Flea Infestation in the Foot

When German PhD student Marlene Thielecke was in Madagascar, she noticed that a sand flea had burrowed into the bottom of her foot. She decided to leave it there to document its growth with photos and videos. Researchers were puzzled over how these parasites, known as chiggers, reproduce. Usually female chiggers release fertile eggs after they burrow

into a person's skin, but Thielecke noticed that her chigger, always covered by shoes—unlike the custom of the barefoot locals—never released eggs. Thielecke's adventurous spirit solved the puzzle: Footwear disrupts the chigger mating process—knowledge that could help those infected forestall complications.

Skin-Crawling Worms

In 2004, Britain's national bioethics committee was less than thrilled with immunologist David Pritchard's plans for an asthma therapy. That's because it involved applying a bandage teeming with hookworm larvae. So Pritchard tried it on himself. As the tiny infant worms burrowed into his arm and entered his bloodstream, they caused excruciating itching. But the hope was that they would also "turn down the volume" of patients' immune systems, easing symptoms. By showing the treatment was safe, Pritchard's research opened the door to getting permission to study it further. Current trials are testing

the effectiveness of using worms as immune-system therapy. Researchers around the world are studying parasitic worms to treat multiple sclerosis, psoriasis, celiac disease, and autism.

Billions of Body Measurements

Geneticist Michael Snyder had a big dream: to prove the power of personalized medicine. It was controversial, both ethically and technically, and too daunting for a typical volunteer. So for more than four years, Snyder



and his Stanford team have taken billions of measurements on Snyder's own body. They've analyzed everything in his blood as well as his saliva, mucus, urine, and feces. They've sequenced his entire genome and continue to take regular snapshots of his DNA activity. Snyder was surprised to learn of a genetic predisposition to type 2 diabetes—no one in his family had the disease. But after he contracted a cold virus, he watched in shock as his blood sugar climbed so high that he developed a full-blown case of diabetes. Snyder believes that his genes predisposed him, but the viral infection triggered it—a link that researchers continue to study.

Feast for Malarial Mosquitoes

It took a bold move for researcher Stephen Hoffman to develop immunity to malaria, which kills at least half a million people worldwide every year. He let a batch of 3,000 malarial mosquitoes feast on his arm. But the mosquitoes had been bathed in radiation, which weakened the parasite that causes malaria (just like the polio vaccine carries a weakened form of the virus), enabling him to

develop immunity without falling ill. The first wave of trials showed that an injectable, bite-free version of the vaccine completely protected volunteers against malaria. The vaccine is now going through final tests in the United States, Europe, and Africa.

Computer Virus In the Hand

Are medical devices we put inside our bodies vulnerable to hackers? What would happen if a terrorist wrote a virus program that could stop all heart pacemakers? To find out, British engineer Mark Gasson implanted into his hand a tiny radio frequency identification chip, not unlike the electronic tags used to track pets. Then he infected the chip with a computer virus. Sure enough, his chip not only contaminated its parent computer system but also tried to spread its virus to other chips connected to the system. In other words, our implanted devices might indeed be vulnerable. Although Gasson was not in any physical danger, in a real-life scenario, a heart patient could have been. His work paves the way to make medical devices safer for everyone. **R**



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This quiz developed by Mensa is a fun way to put your IQ through its paces

Could You Be a Genius?

BY **ABBIE F. SALNY** FROM AMERICAN MENSA



1. What is the 4-digit number in which the first digit is one fifth of the last, and the second and third digits are the last digit multiplied by 3? (Hint: The sum of all digits is 12.)

2. Jane went to visit Jill. Jill is Jane's only husband's mother-in-law's only husband's only daughter's only daughter. What relation is Jill to Jane?

3. Tabitha likes cookies but not cake. She likes mutton but not lamb, and she likes okra but not squash. Following the same rule, will she like cherries or pears?

4. In a footrace, Jerry was neither first nor last. Janet beat Jerry. Jerry beat Pat. Charlie was neither first nor last. Charlie beat Rachel. Pat beat Charlie. Who came in last?

5. What is the number that is one more than one tenth of one fifth of one half of 4,000?

6. Find the number that best completes the following sequence.

1 2 4 7 11 ? 22

7. Marian bought 4 oranges and 3 lemons for 90 cents. The next day, she bought 3 oranges and 4 lemons for 85 cents. How much did each lemon and orange cost?

8. Start with the number of total mittens lost by 3 kittens, and multiply by the voting age in the United States. What's the answer?

9. There is at least one 9-letter word that contains only 1 vowel. Do you know what it is?

10. Using all the letters each time, can you make at least 3 words from the letters *REIAMN*?



Abbie F. Salny was the supervisory psychologist for American Mensa and Mensa International for more than 25 years. Find out more about this organization for knowledge seekers at americanmensa.org.

ANSWERS

1. 1,155; 2. Jane's daughter (Jane's mother's husband is Jane's father, his daughter is Jane, and Jill is her daughter); 3. Cherries (Tabitha likes food with only two syllables); 4. Rachel; 5. 41 (4,000 / 2 = 2,000, / 5 = 400, / 10 = 40, + 1 = 41); 6. 16 (each number adds 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, respectively, to the preceding number); 7. Oranges cost 15 cents each; lemons cost 10 cents each; 8. 216 (3 kittens @ 4 mittens each = 12 x 18); 9. Strengths; 10. AIRMEN, MARINE, and REMAIN.

SCORING: Count the number of correct answers.

9 to 10: You are ready for the official Mensa Admission Test!

7 to 8: There is a good chance you qualify for Mensa.

5 to 6: Not bad—you might make Mensa.

Below 5: You must have had a bad day.

“The Dumbest Thing I Ever Did”

IT'S COMFORTING to know that even the best and brightest among us screw up. So we asked men and women at the tops of their fields—inventors, authors, athletes, entrepreneurs, academics, and more—to share their boneheaded mistakes.

Lectured the Dalai Lama

DEAN ORNISH is president of the *Preventive Medicine Research Institute*.

I had the honor of meeting His Holiness the Dalai Lama about 20 years ago when he was staying with my close friends. He was interested in our research showing that a whole foods plant-based diet could help reverse certain chronic diseases.

He said, “I eat meat sometimes. I tried eating a vegetarian diet once, but it didn't agree with my gallbladder.”

I replied, “It must have been a high-fat vegetarian diet. What were you eating?”

“Mostly yak cheese and yak butter.”

“You could try a lower-fat plant-based diet. It is the most compassionate way to eat.”

As I said this, I immediately thought, That has to be the most ridiculous and presumptuous thing

I've ever said—telling the Dalai Lama how to be more compassionate!

And then he smiled and laughed heartily and compassionately—the beautiful sounds that Jim Henson likely sampled for Yoda's laughter in *Star Wars*.

Was a Video Game Victim

CHRISTIAN RUDDER is the cofounder of the matchmaking site *OkCupid* and author of *Dataclysm*.

Many years ago at an arcade in Spring, Texas, I spent two hours in front of Time Pilot without actually playing the game. I was eight and didn't understand that my quarter had run out. And so while the game just ran itself in the same long loop, I mashed the buttons and pushed the joystick, thinking I was the master time-fighter. Only when a couple of older kids looked at me

like I was an idiot did I realize I was, in fact, an idiot. The pity of teenagers will wake anyone from any dream.

Had a Fig Newton Fiasco

APOLO OHNO won Olympic gold in 2002 and 2006 in short-track speed skating.

I blame a fellow skater. He always ate Fig Newtons the night before his race, and I was like, "That's such a good idea. I love Fig Newtons—they're delicious! I'll eat some of those!" Well, I ate a whole sleeve right before a race. Here I am—wearing this ridiculous formfitting outfit with ten minutes before my race—running around trying to find

a bathroom. I ended up missing the event. I mean, it was one or the other, right? If I win, then I gotta hang around and get my medal. I couldn't risk it. Incredible. I couldn't have just one Fig Newton. I had to have the whole damn sleeve.

An equally stupid moment came during a race in Calgary. With two laps to go and a huge lead, I stood up. I wasn't celebrating; I was just so far ahead that I began cruising. And then the crowd began cheering loudly. And I wondered, Why are they cheering so loudly? Then I found out why. A Dutch skater was on my outside. I hadn't seen him. He caught up, stuck his foot out, and beat me by 3/100ths of a second. I felt like such a jerk.

My Sleep-Deprived Spell

ARIANNA HUFFINGTON is the editor in chief of *huffingtonpost.com* and author of *Thrive*.

For much of my career, I operated under the delusion that burning out was the necessary price for achieving success. This led to my painful wake-up call. It was April 2007, and I'd just returned home from

a college tour with my daughter. We had agreed that there would be no checking of my Blackberry during the days,



which meant staying up very late at night catching up on work. The next morning, I collapsed from exhaustion and hit my head on the way down, cutting my eye and breaking my cheekbone. I wish I could go back and tell my dumb, deluded self, in my thick Greek accent, “Arianna, your performance will actually improve if you can commit not only to working hard but also to unplugging, recharging, and renewing yourself.” That would have saved me a lot of unnecessary stress and a lot of unnecessary damage to my health.

Call Me All Thumbs

GEORGE SAUNDERS *is the author of **Congratulations, By the Way: Some Thoughts on Kindness.***

I’ve never done anything dumb in my life, except nail-gunning myself in the palm that one time.

My Money Mishap

BARBARA CORCORAN *is a real estate mogul and costar of **ABC’s Shark Tank.***

My worst real estate investment was my first, a 12-unit motel with eight regular tenants. It was a dump, owned by a guy who’d inherited it from his dad—the owner of a local manure business. I grabbed the place for the full \$220,000 asking price, knowing I could make a neat 10 percent return on my money every year from the rent. But then came the surprise: When my then-husband

went to collect the rent the first time, it turned out the tenants didn’t have any money. In fact, they hadn’t paid rent in years. Lesson learned ... Check the rent receipts!

Some Trouble with Math

LAURENCE TRIBE *is a professor of constitutional law at Harvard and coauthor of **Uncertain Justice.***

The task for our tenth-grade physics exam was to figure out the total area of contact between the rubber and the road of a hypothetical bike racing down a steep hill. The next day, our teacher held my paper up as an example in front of the class. He explained that while I did all the calculations correctly, I’d made one blunder: I’d mistakenly multiplied everything by two because, as I’d written, all “bicycles have four identical wheels.”

A Quick-Trigger Finger

FRANCIS S. COLLINS *is the director of the **National Institutes of Health.***

When I was single, I received an invitation from a colleague to speak at a winter meeting in Florida. I forwarded the message to my sweetheart—my future wife—and included a steamy note about how awesome it would be to have some private beach time with her. I discovered later that I had actually hit the Reply button, when my colleague e-mailed back to thank me for the kind offer but explained I wasn’t his type. **R**

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FACES OF AMERICA

BY GLENN GLASSER



Jonathan Rasouli, MD

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

"I'll be a third-year resident in neurosurgery at Mount Sinai. I also play guitar—heavy metal. My heroes? Number one: my dad. He came here from Iran right before the revolution and pulled himself up by his bootstraps. Number two: President Obama. I appreciate someone who is able to overcome a lot of odds without losing touch. Number three: Arnold Schwarzenegger. I love his movies!"


IT PAYS TO INCREASE YOUR

Word Power

Are you smarter than a 12th grader? We've been saving up these words—from the Princeton Review's Word Smart: Genius Edition test-prep guide—for our most confident quiz takers. Turn the page for answers.

BY EMILY COX & HENRY RATHVON

- 1. umbrage** ('um-brij) *n.*—
A: resentment. B: bright sunshine.
C: utter confusion.
- 2. sobriquet** ('soh-brih-kay) *n.*—
A: nickname. B: tight bandage.
C: barbecue coal.
- 3. feckless** ('fek-les) *adj.*—
A: bold and daring. B: of clear
complexion. C: weak and ineffective.
- 4. bailiwick** ('bay-lih-wik) *n.*—
A: special domain. B: holiday candle.
C: dugout canoe.
- 5. onus** ('oh-nus) *n.*—
A: proof of residency or status.
B: burden. C: unique entity.
- 6. ductile** ('duk-tuhl) *adj.*—
A: of plumbing. B: easily shaped
or influenced. C: hard to locate
or define.
- 7. troglodyte** ('trah-glih-diyt) *n.*—
A: cave dweller or reclusive person.
B: bird of prey. C: know-it-all.
- 8. paeon** ('pee-in) *n.*—
A: fervent prayer. B: lowly worker.
C: song of praise.
- 9. sangfroid** ('sahn-fwah) *n.*—
A: snooty attitude. B: coolness under
pressure. C: French chef.
- 10. redoubtable** (rih-'dau-te-bul)
adj.—A: open to debate. B: famous.
C: formidable.
- 11. imprecate** ('im-prih-kayt) *v.*—
A: accuse. B: curse. C: pester or
distract.
- 12. modicum** ('mah-dih-kum) *n.*—
A: small portion. B: middle path.
C: daily dosage.
- 13. somnambulist** (sahm-'nam-
byeh-list) *n.*—A: sleepwalker.
B: hypnotizer. C: historian.
- 14. restive** ('res-tiv) *adj.*—
A: comfortable. B: left over.
C: fidgety.
- 15. anomie** ('a-neh-mee) *n.*—
A: arch foe. B: mutual attraction.
C: social instability.

 To play an interactive version of Word Power on your iPad or Kindle Fire, download the Reader's Digest app.

Answers

1. umbrage—[A] resentment. Why did your team take such *umbrage* at being called the underdogs?

2. sobriquet—[A] nickname. Say, Paul, how did you get the *sobriquet* Grumpy?

3. feckless—[C] weak and ineffective. In formal debate, “Oh, yeah?” is a rather *feckless* rebuttal.

4. bailiwick—[A] special domain. “Ask me anything about grammar,” the curmudgeonly copy editor said. “That’s my *bailiwick*.”

5. onus—[B] burden. “The *onus*,” Mr. Peterson barked, “is on your boys to fix my broken window.”

6. ductile—[B] easily shaped or influenced. Decisive? No. Tara’s opinions are sometimes as *ductile* as Play-Doh.

7. troglodyte—[A] cave dweller or reclusive person. I wouldn’t go so far as to call Jerry a *troglodyte*, but he’s definitely on the shy side.

8. paeon—[C] song of praise. Let us raise a toast and a rousing *paeon* to Jay and Cathy’s wedding!

9. sangfroid—[B] coolness under pressure. With unrelenting *sangfroid*, Andrea remained a pro at the poker table despite the high stakes.

10. redoubtable—[C] formidable. The pitcher shuddered as the *redoubtable* Albert Pujols strode to the plate.

11. imprecate—[B] curse. Before being banished, the witch ominously threatened to *imprecate* the town for five generations.

12. modicum—[A] small portion. All I ask is a *modicum* of cooperation with the housework.

13. somnambulist—[A] sleepwalker. For a *somnambulist*, Lady Macbeth is rather talkative.

14. restive—[C] fidgety. Peter got so *restive* during the SAT, he chewed his pencil almost to the lead.

15. anomie—[C] social instability. Apparently there’s too much *anomie* in Congress for the bill to be passed.

A STROKE OF ...

Genius originally meant “guardian spirit,” from the Latin *gignere* (“to beget, to produce”), and dates back to at least 1393. It’s related to the words *genus*, *gender*, *generation*, and even *kin*—all suggestive of birth. The modern meaning, of a person endowed with a natural ability or talent, comes from Milton’s *Iconoclastes* (1649).

VOCABULARY RATINGS

9 & below: Neophyte
10–12: Apprentice
13–15: Mastermind



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RECIPES

Novel Nutella Recipes to Try This Weekend

When it comes to the chocolate-hazelnut spread, there's *nutelling* how creative a recipe can get! Scoop up ten crowd-pleasers, including Salted Nutella Cookie Bars, which we found on a few of our favorite food blogs.

BOOKS

9 Graphic Novels Every Grown-Up Should Read

One example: Mimi Pond's funny story *Over Easy*, which takes on the counter-culture scene of 1970s California via a coffee shop and offers an original view of the birth of an artist.

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HOME

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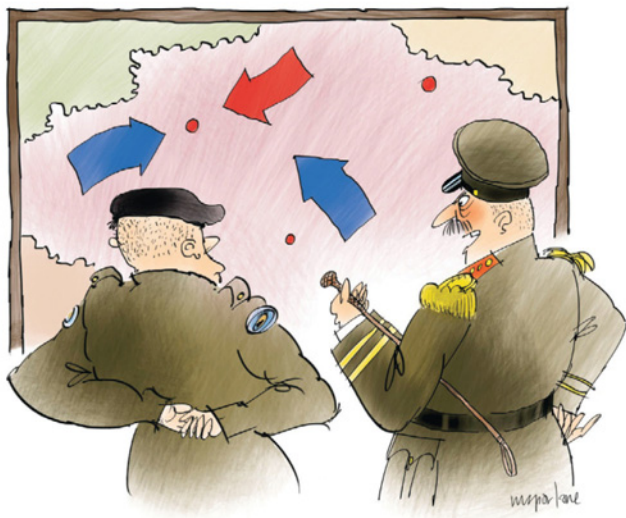
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Humor in Uniform



“How long has it been upside down?”

IT'S IMPORTANT that soldiers learn from their mistakes; otherwise, they're bound to repeat them at inopportune moments. Here soldiers share what they've gleaned from past gaffes:

- “I was cold” is not a sufficient reason for being caught in the female barracks.
- Do not communicate with officers using only Madonna lyrics.
- Do not conduct live fire exercises at the general's (unattended) jeep, even if it's parked in an area clearly marked Live Fire Zone.

- Do not attempt to shave with fire.
- Do not use 27 packs of sticky notes to label everything in the barracks so the general won't have any questions during the inspection.

From skippyslist.com

I'M CONVINCED my cockroaches have military training. I set out a roach bomb—they defused it.

Comedian JAY LONDON

Don't make the mistake of not sending us a funny military anecdote. It may be worth \$\$\$! See page 7 or rd.com/submit.

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BY GLENN GLASSER



Mike Hopkins

HOUSTON, TEXAS

"I've been to the International Space Station (ISS) once, for 166 days. Space has a smell to it. I don't know how to describe it—an ionized, metallic-type smell that's unique. When we first opened the hatch of the ISS, I commented on the scent, and the folks I was with said, 'Oh yeah, that's the smell of space.' No one told me about that."



Reader's digest

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Quotable Quotes



FAITH IS TAKING THE FIRST STEP, EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T SEE THE WHOLE STAIRCASE. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.



When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time. MAYA ANGELOU

The fundamental cause of trouble is that ... the stupid are cocksure, while the intelligent are full of doubt. BERTRAND RUSSELL, *philosopher*



Living in freedom and defending freedom are two sides of one and the same coin. ANGELA MERKEL

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living. I want to know what you ache for. ORIAH MOUNTAIN DREAMER, *poet*

Cynicism masquerades as wisdom, but it is the farthest thing from it.

STEPHEN COLBERT

THERE IS NO TERROR IN THE BANG, ONLY IN THE ANTICIPATION OF IT. ALFRED HITCHCOCK



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