

Reader's digest

DEC 2014/JAN 2015

Ho Ho Ha!

*
Funny Holiday Stories

*
Jokes to Tell Around
the Family Table

Plus

From Scrooge to Santa: A Magical
Tale of Transformation ... 79

CONFESSIONS OF A UPS HANDLER

From **CRACKED.COM** ... 124

THE EPIC JOURNEY OF A P.O.W.'S RING

An **RD ORIGINAL** ... 90

GIFT BOOKS FOR THE FINICKY

By **THE EDITORS** ... 58

**IT'S FUNNY
WHAT YOU
REMEMBER**

By **JANE SMILEY** ... 136

**THE DAY I
STARTED LYING
TO RUTH**

From **NEW YORK** ... 114



Removable bookmark brought to you by **GEICO**

What's green
and never goes
out of style?

The money you could save with GEICO.
See how easy it is to save today.

GEICO[®]

geico.com | 1-800-947-AUTO (2886) | Local Office



Some discounts, coverages, payment plans and features are not available in all states or all GEICO companies. GEICO is a registered service mark of Government Employees Insurance Company, Washington, D.C. 20076; a Berkshire Hathaway Inc. subsidiary. GEICO Gecko image © 1999-2014. © 2014 GEICO.



Contents

DECEMBER 2014 • JANUARY 2015



Humor

- 79 ... AND TO ALL A GOOD LAUGH!**
Our hilarious look at the most wonderful time of the year—plus a grab bag of jokes to make your spirits bright. **ANDY SIMMONS**

My Most Unforgettable Character

- 86 FROM SCROOGE TO SANTA**
How playing Radio City's Santa made Charles Edward Hall a better man. **WITH BRET WITTER**

Connections

- 90 THE EPIC JOURNEY OF A P.O.W.'S RING**
A ring traded in a WWII prison camp comes home.
KENNETH MILLER

First Person

- 98 GRIPPED BY KINDNESS**
You can change someone's life just by lifting her suitcase.
HILARY PARKINSON
FROM *QUEST FOR KINDNESS*

Health

- 100 DIAGNOSE THIS**
A patient must rely on her own wits to challenge her doctors.
HEIDI JULAVITS FROM *HARPER'S MAGAZINE*

Good News

- 106 SAVING BÄRLE, THE CIRCUS BEAR**
The extraordinary story of her dramatic rescue. **ELSE POULSEN**
FROM THE BOOK *BÄRLE'S STORY*

Personal Essay

- 114 THE DAY I STARTED LYING TO RUTH**
A cancer doctor on losing his wife to cancer.
PETER BACH FROM *NEW YORK*

Culture

- 124 CONFESSIONS OF A UPS HANDLER**
What we know about your cargo that you don't. **SARA OHLMS**
AS TOLD TO **ROBERT EVANS**
FROM *CRACKED.COM*

Book Bonus

- 128 NOT MY FATHER'S SON**
Zak Ebrahim rejected his father's hatred to become a force for peace.
FROM THE BOOK *THE TERRORIST'S SON*

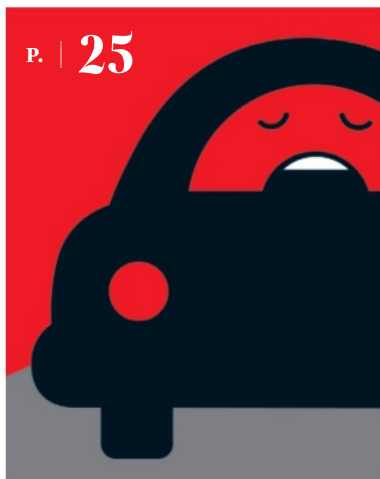
Slice of Life

- 136 IT'S FUNNY WHAT YOU REMEMBER**
Over coffee with a long-lost friend, Jane Smiley learns a lot about herself—and about life.



4 Editor's Note

6 Letters



READER FAVORITES

- 18 Life in These United States
- 28 100-Word True Stories 
- 35 Faces of America 
- 36 Points to Ponder
- 60 All in a Day's Work
- 76 News from the World of Medicine
- 112 Laughter, the Best Medicine
- 122 Photo of Lasting Interest
- 127 Laugh Lines
- 144 See the World ... Differently
- 148 Humor in Uniform
- 149 Word Power
- 152 Quotable Quotes

Everyday Heroes

10 **Saved from the Jaws of a Wolf** NICK HEIL

13 **Ultimate Customer Service** MEERA JAGANNATHAN

VOICES & VIEWS

Department of Wit

15 **Operation: Store Return**
Jonathan Goldstein on shopping with his mother. FROM THE BOOK *I'LL SEIZE THE DAY TOMORROW*

Words of Lasting Interest

20 **Don't Peak in High School**
Heartfelt, hard-won advice from Mindy Kaling. FROM THE BOOK *EVERYONE HANGING OUT WITHOUT ME?*

You Be the Judge

25 **The Case of the Kid in the Car**
Can a mom leave her child alone while she runs an errand?
VICKI GLEMBOCKI

Finish This Sentence

30 **The Weirdest Christmas Present I Ever Received Was ...**

Great Minds

32 **The Patron Saint of Introverts**
Susan Cain is leading a quiet revolution. BETH DREHER



P. | 76

ART OF LIVING

- 39 What Would You Do with a Dollar?**
MELISSA BATCHELOR WARNKE
FROM THEMORNINGNEWS.ORG
- Food**
- 42 How to Make Roasted Vegetables for a New Friend with a Cold**
TOD DAVIES FROM THE BOOK
JAM TODAY TOO
- Home**
- 46 Extraordinary Uses for Ordinary Things**
ALISON CAPORIMO
- 48 Memories Set in Stone**
OLIVIA JUDSON
FROM THE *NEW YORK TIMES*
- 50 Optical Illusion Decor**
ALISON CAPORIMO
- Technology**
- 52 How a Password Changed My Life**
MAURICIO ESTRELLA
FROM MEDIUM.COM
- 54 Q+A: Stay Safe Online**

- Books**
- 58 Gifts for the Person Who's Got You Stumped**

DAWN RAFFEL

- Health**
- 62 A Day in the Life of Your Skin** TERESA DUMAIN
- 66 Is Saturated Fat Bad for You?** CHRIS WOOLSTON

- 74 Why Holidays Are Healthier than You Think**
THE PHYSICIANS OF *THE DOCTORS*



-
- WHO KNEW?**
-
- 140 13 Things Rabbis, Priests & Ministers Won't Tell You**
MICHELLE CROUCH
- 142 The Underappreciated History of the Snowman**
BOB ECKSTEIN




PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW HETHERINGTON, FEATURING ROCKETTES CHRISTINE WALSH AND KARILYN ASHLEY SURRETT. SET STYLIST: EYAL BARUCH



Editor's Note

Starstruck by Santa



WALKING MY DAUGHTERS TO SCHOOL, I could barely contain my excitement. “Guess who I’m going to meet today, girls. Santa Claus!” He’s dashing, he’s all knowing. He can fit down chimneys and make someone’s dreams come true. The embodiment of humor and good cheer, Santa is the ultimate *Reader’s Digest* celebrity hero, and I was not going to miss the chance to meet him. I was amused by the skip in my step. I mean, I get why a kid would be dazzled: The guy knows when she’s been bad or good! But I’m a grown-up. Why was I so excited?

“Wow, Mommy. Cool,” said Olivia. “Ask him if he’s real, and tell me what he says.”

Later that morning, the actor who stars in New York’s *Radio City Christmas Spectacular* emerged from his dressing room, and the photo set went quiet. My mouth went dry. I fumbled over my words. I felt silly, but there I stood, starstruck by Santa Claus. “I have to ask you a question from my daughter,” I said.

We talked. We took a few pictures. We shared stories of children he’s met and people he’s helped (see “From Scrooge to Santa,” page 86). Then I got it. Santa is a hero because once a year, he does the extraordinary. Santa is magic. And magic is hope.

“You tell Olivia”—he paused a beat, that twinkle in his eye—“that I’m as real as Olivia is. And that the more she believes, the more my magic grows.”

This guy.

R



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.



CERTIFIED HEART HEALTHY BY THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION



CERTIFIED HEART HAPPY BY YOU



Over 40 Campbell's® Healthy Request® soups are certified heart healthy by the AHA.

Campbell's.



M'm! M'm! Good!®

While many factors affect heart disease, diets low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease.

Letters

COMMENTS ON THE OCTOBER ISSUE



Sole Survivor

From the descriptions of the survivors' lives afterward, it is clear that some, if not all, suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. As a PTSD sufferer, I felt my heart break as I read of the challenges they faced and the ways in which their lives were derailed. Please spread the word that while the love of family and friends is important, ongoing professional help is also essential in such extreme cases.

THERESA ROGERS, *Crockett, California*

Can We Talk About Talking?

I was saddened to read in your Editor's Note that *RD* will be cutting back to ten issues per year. I understand the rationale behind the change, but I would happily have paid a modest increase to continue the 12-issue regimen. The important thing is: Keep 'em coming!

BOB KEAY, *Reading, Massachusetts*

I've been an avid *RD* fan since I was eight, maybe earlier. Unfortunately, holidays and summer months are

my favorite times to read magazines. I urge you to rethink your new frequency plan.

KELLY PETERS,
Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

The Storm & the Tide

This article about the University of Alabama was outstanding. It reminds me of when Notre Dame students helped Elkhart, Indiana, recover from the Palm Sunday tornado outbreak in 1965. Both universities produced compassionate, community-minded students.

JOHN NELSON, *Montrose, Colorado*

It has been a long time since an article has moved me this much. Thanks to the author for focusing on the positive picture that love, compassion, and service paint for humanity. This story will remain with me forever.

AL RICKERT, *Louisville, Kentucky*

“Always Go to the Funeral”

Folks should remember to contact the survivors after the funeral. When all the friends and family have left and things have settled down, they will appreciate being remembered.

PEGGY JOYNSON, *Sun City West, Arizona*

Deirdre Sullivan’s advice from her father is similar to that from baseball great Yogi Berra. He said, “You should always go to other people’s funerals; otherwise, they won’t come to yours.”

CHARLES HEBLER, *Baltimore, Maryland*

The Pope Who Burns with Joy

I recently had the pleasure of meeting Pope Francis. It is an experience I will never forget. He greeted all the disabled (myself included) individually and asked us to pray for him. He is the Pope the church has needed.

LAURA GALBO, *Dongan Hills, New York*

Word Power for Babies

Great story. Years ago, my friend’s son was a D student. After my friend started taking him to the library every day, his son became an honors student and went on to college and graduate school.

R. B., *via e-mail*

News from the World of Medicine

While I’m sure the information presented in “Cynical? You’re Raising Your Dementia Risk” is probably accurate, I imagine most cynical people will doubt these findings. Does anyone else see the irony?

SUSIE SUTTON, *Derby, Kansas*

ARE
YOU A
POET?

By popular demand: the **Reader’s Digest Poetry Contest!** Dazzle us with your best poem,

15 lines or fewer. One grand-prize winner will receive \$500 and be published in our June issue. Additional winners will receive \$100.

No purchase necessary to enter or win. Contest begins November 11, 2014, and closes January 30, 2015. Open to U.S. residents ages 18 and over. Void where prohibited. For entry and more details, including official rules, visit rd.com/poetry.

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, jokes, and funny 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. We regret that we cannot acknowledge or return unsolicited work. **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.

Are You Protected Online?

Did You Know:

- One person has their **identity stolen every 3 seconds** in the U.S. and an average of **\$4,930** is lost per identity theft incident ^{1,2}

Protect Yourself:

- Use complex passwords
- Avoid unsecure WiFi
- Don't click suspicious links
- Get proactive digital, online, and personal data protection

In today's digital world, you need a comprehensive solution that will protect against the full range of risks posed by identity thieves and cyber criminals.

Your personal information should be kept personal. Find out how MetLife Defender helps proactively monitor and protect you against the full range of identity theft threats.

Visit metlifedefender.com
or call 855-693-3637 for your **30 day free trial***
Use code RDHOLIDAY14 to receive **15% off**

*When you enroll in MetLife Defender, you will begin your 30 day free trial membership. If you don't cancel your membership within the 30 day free trial period, you will be billed a monthly or annual fee, depending on the membership plan you choose. You may cancel your membership at any time by calling us at 1-855-693-3637.

MetLife Defender™ 

Protection for Your Digital Life

¹Pascual, Alphonse and Sarah Miller. (2014, February). 2014 Identity Fraud Report. Javelin Strategy. ²(2013, June 18). Identity Theft/Fraud Statistics. U.S. Department of Justice. MetLife Defender services are provided by a third-party not affiliated with MetLife by agreement with MetLife Consumer Services, Inc. MetLife Defender is not insurance. MetLife Defender services are subject to the terms and conditions of the MetLife Defender End User Agreement. © 2014 MetLife, Inc. – All Rights Reserved. © 2014 Peanuts Worldwide LLC. L1014393837[exp1015][All States][DC]

Comprehensive protection for your digital life with MetLife DefenderSM

- Identity Theft & Personal Data Protection
- Health Data Protection
- Financial Data Protection
- Online Child Safety



MetLife Defender proactively protects the information you share online, so you can keep your personal data *personal*

Visit metlifedefender.com today for a 30-day free trial and use code **RDHOLIDAY14** to receive your 15% off or call 855-693-3637

MetLife Defender 
Protection for Your Digital Life




EVERYDAY HEROES



In the deserted Canadian backcountry,
strangers rescue a cyclist in trouble

Saved from the Jaws of a Wolf

BY NICK HEIL

 ON A BRIGHT, warm July afternoon, Mac Hollan, 36, an elementary school teacher, was cycling along Route 1 in Canada's Yukon, midway through a 2,750-mile bike tour from his home in Sandpoint, Idaho, to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska.

His riding companions, Gabe Dawson and Jordan Achilli, both 36, had stopped to make a minor bicycle repair, but they had encouraged Mac to carry on, figuring they'd catch up with him soon. They were each hauling some 30 pounds of camping gear, clothing, and extra food, so nobody was moving very fast. As Mac pedaled

along alone, he thought fondly of his wife and two young daughters at home. He hoped to show them this beautiful place someday.

Then Mac heard panting behind him. Man, that's a big dog! he thought. But when he looked to the side, he saw instantly that the canine wasn't a dog at all, but a timber wolf, quickly catching up with him.

Mac's heart jumped. He reached into his handlebar pack to fish out his can of bear spray. With one hand on the bars, he fired the spray at the wolf. A bright red cloud enveloped the animal, and to Mac's relief, it ➤➤

*Becky and Paul
Woltjer's RV
became a rescue
vehicle last
summer.*



fell back, snorting and shaking its head. But a minute later, it was by his side again. Then it lunged at the back of Mac's bike, tearing open his tent bag. He blasted the wolf a second time, and again, it fell back, only to quickly resume the chase.

Mac was pedaling hard now. He waved and yelled at passing motorists but was careful not to slow down. He rounded a bend in the road to see a steep uphill climb before him. He knew that once he hit the hill, he'd be easy prey. Mac imagined the wolf's teeth tearing into his forearm as he tried to fend the animal off.

PAUL AND BECKY WOLTJER were driving their RV down Route 1 on their way from Pennock, Minnesota, to Alaska. They didn't think much of it when they saw two cyclists stopped on the side of the road. A bit later, they spotted what they, too, assumed was a dog loping with immense strides alongside a man on a bike. As they got closer, they realized the dog was a wolf.

Mac heard a large vehicle rumbling

up behind him. He pulled in front of it as the wolf was bearing down, just a dozen yards away now. The Woltjers veered around the cyclist, then abruptly stopped in front of him. Mac jumped off his bike and dashed for the back door of the RV. It was locked. He ran around to the passenger door, but it was locked, too, so he began to clamber through the open window. Paul quickly unlocked the door, and the frightened man dived in, slamming the door behind him.

Becky looked out the back window and saw the wolf standing over Mac's bike as if it were a kill. Shortly after, the animal ran off.

A few minutes later, Gabe and Jordan rolled up. Mac emerged from the RV and hugged Gabe. "I thought I was going to die," Mac told him.

Mac retrieved his bicycle, and the three men resumed their road trip, agreeing to keep in one another's sight line. A few miles down the road, Mac pulled over and cried.

"The rest of the trip was amazing, but I had to let that emotion out." **R**

**READER
HERO**

THE CLEANUP MAN

The sight of a man wandering the streets, quietly putting trash in a large burlap sack, might make you suspicious. You wouldn't know that, despite fighting schizophrenia, this man is extremely intelligent and thoughtful. With no thanks or recognition, Charles Bambauer—my brother, my hero—contributes to our world.

DYAN BOUDREAU, *Cumming, Georgia*

To nominate your hero, e-mail the details and your name and location to heroes@rd.com.

Ultimate Customer Service

BY MEERA JAGANNATHAN

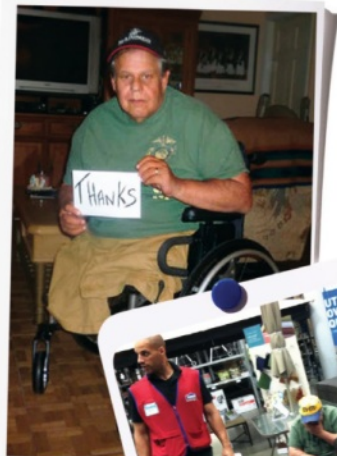
AT LOWE'S Home Improvement in Staten Island, New York, last summer, Michael Sulsona, 63, and his wife, Frieda, 60, were searching for an enclosure for their garbage can. Frieda pushed Michael down the aisles in an old wheelchair. Michael, a former Marine who'd lost both legs above the knee in the Vietnam War, was still waiting for a new wheelchair from the Department of Veterans Affairs two years after requesting it.

In the lawn-supplies aisle, a bolt on a rear wheel on the chair snapped. Sal, a store employee, saw the event and called over his coworkers David, Marcus, and Souleymane to help. (Lowe's declined to disclose the last names of the men or make them available for interviews.)

"Sal told me, 'You're not leaving till it's like new,'" says Michael.

The men went to work on the chair, staying well past closing time to dismantle and reassemble it. When it didn't seem sturdy enough, they adjusted it further. "You guys are incredible," Michael told them when it was done.

"It was our honor," they replied.



The Lowe's workers "re-stored my faith in people," says Michael, above.

Two days after Michael posted his story on a website dedicated to Staten Island news, the VA called to tell him that a new wheelchair was on the way. Hundreds of strangers had already offered to buy Michael a new wheelchair, but he asked that instead they contribute to a nonprofit foundation that helps wounded veterans.

"[The men] felt like they were just doing their job," says Steve Salazar, a Lowe's spokesman. But the Sulsonas think the Lowe's employees far exceeded their responsibilities.

"These were the type of people we fought for," says Michael.

R

ADVERTISEMENT

New Year, New You

Get a fresh start on your healthy resolutions with the tips and products you need to have your best year yet



Get a
FREE
\$5.00 Gift Card!
with purchase*

**RITE
AID**

Purchase one of the featured products at Rite Aid for a limited time and get a **FREE gift card** from Reader's Digest!

Sponsored by:

Mucinex
Mucinex in. Mucus out!

 **greatcall.**

**OXI
CLEAN**

**RITE
AID**
PHARMACY

With us, it's personal.

*Receive a free \$5 Rite Aid Gift Card when you purchase any featured product in the New Year, New You promotion at Rite Aid between 11/11/14 and 1/07/15. Send in your original Rite Aid receipt to: Reader's Digest Attn: Marketing Department, 750 Third Avenue, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10017. Include your name, address and phone number. Must be U.S. resident, 18 yrs. or older. One (1) gift card per household. Offer good while supplies last or until 1/07/15, whichever comes first. Date/time of request determines who receives gift card. Gift card is subject to issuer restrictions. Reader's Digest not responsible for lost, late, damaged, misdirected, incomplete, incorrect, illegible, postage due requests/mail. No post office boxes allowed. Allow 8 weeks for shipping.

VOICES & VIEWS

Department of Wit

Operation: Store Return

BY JONATHAN GOLDSTEIN

FROM THE BOOK *I'LL SEIZE
THE DAY TOMORROW*



JONATHAN
GOLDSTEIN
*is an author
and a radio host.
His work has
appeared
in the New York
Times and GQ.*

10:15 A.M., SATURDAY

I open the front door, and my mother hands me four cases of yogurt. All strawberry. She doesn't notice flavors. Coffee, vanilla, blueberry—they don't mean a thing. I ask her how much I owe her, and she tells me that with the coupons and how she used them on double-down day, she actually made money off the purchase. I tell her I don't see how such a thing is possible, and she explains that the yogurts were a buck apiece and her coupons were for 75 cents. Doubled, that's \$1.50.

"I make 50 cents off each one I buy," she says.

She's excited because she has a project for the two of us: a defective shirt that needs exchanging. She got it from a clothing store near my house that's been around for decades. When I was a kid, my mother would take me there to buy shoes, making me take my pants off first ➤➤

for some reason, right in the aisle, before trying them on.

“What’s wrong with the shirt?” I ask.

“It’s missing a sleeve,” she says. “How can I let your father leave the house like that? No way.”

It should be said that my father has left the house in worse: green corduroy vests, T-shirts advertising aquarium supplies, ties intended for novelty use only. If it were handed to him as he was getting out of a shower, I’m sure my father would figure out a way to wear a bridge chair.

I asked how a missing sleeve might have escaped her notice during the purchase. She doesn’t remember. She bought it a long time ago.

“How long ago?” I ask.

She doesn’t really get the question. Life for my mother isn’t exactly a chronological unraveling. She was visiting me. I’m around the corner from the store. It’s just a clever thing to return it now—killing two birds with one stone. She looks at the bag and thinks for a moment.

“Five years,” she says.

This kind of operation is what my mother lives for. It will be a challenge, a battle of wills—a game of chess, but with yelling. I remember as a kid watching her open three

bottles of tahini, one after the other. She wasn’t satisfied with the hermetic popping sound the caps made—it was too muted. She liked a pop that was more emphatic, a pop that cried, “I have not been sprinkled with hemlock.” She returned all of them to a grocery store she’d

chosen, not because she’d bought the tahini there but because of its proximity to our house. The store didn’t sell tahini. I’m not sure they even knew what it was.

To be honest, it isn’t that my mother exerts Clarence Darrow-like powers of persuasion; it’s that she has no shame. None at all. As an adult,

I seem to have taken on the extra shame she has no use for. I don’t like to draw attention to myself. If a waitress gets my order wrong, I keep my mouth shut. If a bus driver goes past my stop, I just get off at the next one. Scenes aren’t my thing. But even now, no matter where I go with my mother, there are always the inevitable spectacles. Just the thought of her getting all froth-mouthed about the one-armed shirt—it was enough to make me queasy.

10:40 A.M.

At the store, my mother heads to the cash register and pulls the article of clothing out of the crumpled bag.

“
*This is the kind
of challenge
my mother
lives for. A
game of chess,
with yelling.*”

"It's missing a sleeve," she says to the saleswoman.

"It doesn't have sleeves," the saleswoman says. "It's a poncho."

"A pon-cho?" my mother repeats, as though it's a foreign word—which, in her defense, I guess it sort of is.

You'd think that would be the end of it, that my mother would accept the fact that we live in a universe where such a thing as a poncho exists, and we would leave. But this is not to happen. "I don't care what it is," she says evenly. "It's factory-defective. My husband can't wear it."

I thought of my father, a man very big on tucking in clothes, packing the bottom of the poncho into his pants, belting up, and heading out for an evening on the town looking like Fatty Arbuckle.

The saleswoman refuses to give a refund, so my mother asks her to get the manager, and the woman disappears behind a row of suit jackets.

10:50 A.M.

As we wait, I remain by my mother's side, standing there in this way I developed as a kid. It's a posture that's meant to convey filial loyalty

peppered with a touch of what Vietnam vets call the thousand-yard stare.

I imagine the saleswoman conferring in the back room with the manager, a bedraggled, shiny-jowled man, as he stares at my mother through a security cam, watching with a look of recognition that quickly turns to panic.

10:55 A.M.

The saleswoman returns, immediately offering store credit.

That's a mistake. Weakness.

"So you can unload socks on us?" my mother asks. "We need more socks like we need rickets."

Desperate to defuse the situation, I grab a baseball cap off a nearby shelf and hand it to my mother. Reluctantly, she gets it for me with her credit.

"Lucky for you my boy needs a hat," she says. "Walk around in it. Make sure it isn't too tight around the temples."

As we leave the store together, my new cap on my head, I feel about ten years old.

"I'll hold on to the receipt," my mother says. "Just in case." **R**

I'LL SEIZE THE DAY TOMORROW, COPYRIGHT © 2014 BY JONATHAN GOLDSTEIN, IS PUBLISHED BY PENGUIN GROUP (USA) LLC, PENGUIN.COM.



A SMALL CORRECTION

I saw this sign posted once; it said: "Blasting Zone Ahead."

Wow ... shouldn't that read: "Road Closed"? **BRIAN REGAN**

Life

IN THESE UNITED STATES



MY HUSBAND AND I were relaxing on lounge chairs on a Jamaica beach, half listening to a couple walking ankle deep in the clear water. The woman was extolling the beauty of the island when suddenly she let out a scream.

“Oh!” she shrieked. “There are fish in here!”

JANET DAVIS, *Quakertown, Pennsylvania*

THIS CLASSIFIED AD speaks volumes: “Wanted to buy: playpen, cradle, high chair; also two single beds.”

MATTHEW COLE, *Plant City, Florida*

NONE OF MY GRANDSONS share my corny sense of humor. When the family is eating lasagna, I say, “Lean over your plate, boys. You’ll get less-on-ya.” I say to the ten-year-old,

"Don't yell through the screen; you'll strain your voice." And when I took another grandson to the zoo, I asked, "Do you know why that snake's not pressed against the glass? He doesn't want to be a windshield viper."

They'll probably laugh later.

HOMER ADAMS, *Nashville, Tennessee*

SCENE: A secondhand movie exchange ...

Me: Do you have the DVD of *Sharknado*?

Clerk: Is that a documentary?

LYNETTE COMBS, *Norfolk, Virginia*

RECENTLY, I WOKE UP to find that two of my car's tires had been stolen. When the police officer arrived, he asked, "When were you last driving the car?"

"Last night at 11:00," I said.

"And the tires were on it then?"

JEREMY RICE, *Englewood, Florida*

A FRIEND WAS ORDERING her meal at a drive-through when she noticed she could get a side dish gratis.

"And I'll take the free wiffie also," she said.

"What?" asked the clerk.

"The free wiffie," she said, pointing to the sign.

"Ma'am, that's 'Free Wi-Fi.'"

CHRISTIE PELDO, *Yacolt, Washington*

Use your wiffie to send us a funny story about friends or family. It could be worth \$100! Go to rd.com/submit for details.

AS WE WAITED FOR A BUS in the frosty weather, the woman next to me mentioned that she makes a lot of mistakes when texting in the cold. I nodded knowingly. "It's the early signs of typhothermia."

PHIL NOYES, *Yakima, Washington*

A HOOT OF READERS

A pride of lions, a gaggle of geese ... In our September issue, we invited readers to make up other group classifications. These were a crush of our favorites:

A brace of orthodontists

RUSSELL COFER

A string of bikinis

L. M.

A sulk of teenagers

A bogey of monsters

A chord of musicians

ANDREA DEFUSCO-SULLIVAN

A slew of assassins

ELIZABETH SILVERTHORNE

A muddle of managers

STEVE SEYARTO

A lot of parking attendants

R. M.

A piddle of puppies

L. M.



Heartfelt, hard-won advice from
America's best friend, **Mindy Kaling**

Don't Peak In High School

FROM THE BOOK *IS EVERYONE HANGING OUT WITHOUT ME?*



MINDY KALING
*is a comedian,
writer,
producer, and
actress, who
is best known
for being the
creator and
star of the TV
sitcom The
Mindy Project.*

☛ **SOMETIMES TEENAGE GIRLS** ask me for advice about what they should be doing if they want a career like mine one day. There are basically three ways to get where I am: (1) learn a provocative dance and put it on YouTube; (2) persuade your parents to move to Orlando and homeschool you until you get cast on a kids' show; or (3) do what I did, which is stay in school and be a respectful and hardworking wallflower and go to an accredited non-online university.

Teenage girls, please don't worry about being super popular in high school or being the best actress or the best athlete. Not only do people not care about any of that the second you graduate, but when you get older, if you reference your successes in high school too much, it makes you look kind of pitiful, like some babbling Tennessee Williams character with nothing going on in her current life. What I've noticed is that almost no one who was a big star in high school is a big star later in life. For us overlooked kids, it's so wonderfully *fair*.

I was never the lead in the play. I don't think I went to a single party with alcohol at it. My parents didn't let me do social things on weeknights, because they were for homework—and maybe an episode of *The X-Files* if I was being good (*The X-Files*



was on Friday night), and on extremely rare occasions, I could watch *Seinfeld* (Thursday, a school night), if I had aced my PSATs or something.

It is easy to freak out as a sensitive teenager. I always felt I was missing out because of how the high school experience was dramatized in TV and song. For every realistic *My So-Called Life*, there were ten *Party of Fives* or *90210s*, where a twenty-something Luke Perry was supposed to be just a typical guy at your high school. If Luke Perry had gone to my high school, everybody would have

thought, What's the deal with this brooding greaser? Is he a narc? But that's who Hollywood put forth as "just a dude at your high school."

In the genre of "making you feel like you're not having an awesome American high school experience," the worst offender is a song: John Cougar Mellencamp's "Jack & Diane." It's one of those songs that everyone knows all the words to without ever having chosen to learn them. I've seen people get incredibly pumped when this song comes on; apparently it is an anthem of some people's

youth. Across America, there are high school couples who strive to be like Jack and Diane from that song. Just hangin' out after school, makin' out at the Tastee Freez, sneakin' beers, without a care in the world. Just two popular, idle, all-American kids, having a blast.

As it is, I find "Jack & Diane" a little disgusting. A child of immigrant professionals, I can't help but notice the frivolity of it. Why are they not home doing homework? Why aren't they setting the table for dinner? Who allows kids to hang out in parking lots? Isn't that loitering?

I wish there were a song called "Nguyen & Ari" about a hardworking Vietnamese girl who helps her parents with the franchised Holiday Inn they run and does homework in the lobby, and Ari, a hardworking Jewish boy who does volunteer work at his grandma's old-age home. They meet at Princeton Review. They study together for the SATs and AP

courses, and then, after months of studying and mountains of flash-cards, they kiss chastely upon hearing that they both got into their top college choices. This is a song teens need to inadvertently memorize.

In high school, I had fun in my academic clubs; watching movies with my friends; learning Latin; having unrequited crushes on guys who didn't know me; and yes, hanging out with my family. I liked hanging out with my family! Later, when you're grown up, you realize you never get to hang out with your

family. You pretty much have only 18 years to spend with them full-time, and that's it. So, yeah, it all added up to a happy, memorable time. Even though I was never a star.

The chorus of "Jack & Diane" is: "Oh yeah, life goes on, long after the thrill of livin' is gone."

Are you kidding me? The thrill of living was high school? Come on, Mr. Cougar Mellencamp. Get a life. **R**

“
*I had fun in my
academic clubs
and with my
friends and family,
even though I was
never a star.*

IS EVERYONE HANGING OUT WITHOUT ME?, COPYRIGHT © 2011 BY MINDY KALING, IS PUBLISHED BY THREE RIVERS PRESS, AN IMPRINT OF THE CROWN PUBLISHING GROUP, A DIVISION OF RANDOM HOUSE, INC., RANDOMHOUSE.COM.



MY HUSBAND SAID HE NEEDED MORE SPACE

So I locked him outside.

ROSEANNE BARR



MAKE
BREAKFAST
SOMETHING
TO
DREAM
ABOUT



Put **Smucker's**[®] Sugar Free Blackberry Jam in your oatmeal, and the whole morning brightens up. Explore all the pairing possibilities at smuckers.com/pairings

With a name like **Smucker's**[®], it has to be good.

Term Life Insurance

AIG Direct

Over 6 Million People
Trust AIG Direct With Their
Life Insurance Needs.

Get Your FREE Quote Today!



See what our satisfied customers have to say about purchasing life insurance through AIG Direct...

Overall Rating: ★★★★★ 5

They were very prompt and within just a few days we had our new policyTHANK YOU!

- Bwillis1004, June 2013

Overall Rating: ★★★★★ 5

The process was so easy. With my busy life, I needed a simple process. It was great!

- Lotti, August 2013

Overall Rating: ★★★★★ 5

Wonderful people. Very informative. Genuine and honest.

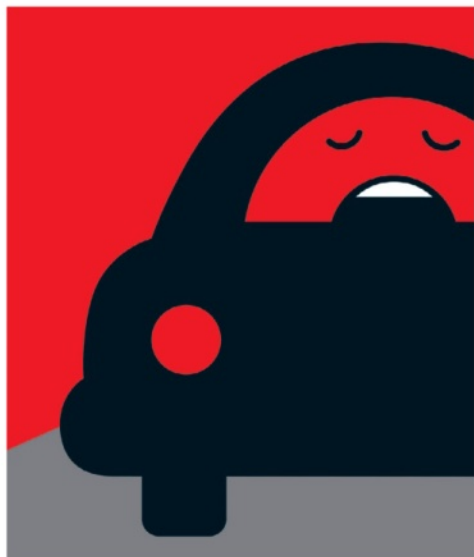
- Susan5678, May 2013



Call us at **888-543-3436** or visit us online at **aigdirect.com** to protect your family's future today!

SAVE
UP TO
70%

Agency services provided by AIG Direct Insurance Services, Inc. ("AIG Direct"), a subsidiary of American General Life Insurance Company (AGL), Houston, TX and an affiliate of The United States Life Insurance Company in the City of New York (US Life), New York, NY. CA license #0B57619 and AR license #246412. AIG Direct operates under the name of Matrix Direct Insurance Services in MA and Matrix Direct, Inc. in MD. Policies issued by AGL except in New York, where issued by US Life. Issuing companies AGL and US Life are responsible for financial obligations of insurance products and are members of American International Group, Inc. (AIG). Products may not be available in all states, and product features may vary by state. "Save up to 70%" savings comparison based on monthly premium rates as of 3/17/14 for a 10 year level term policy for selected coverage amounts, issued at each company's best published rates for a female, age 30, non-smoker. Endorsements/Testimonials present should not be construed as a recommendation to purchase or an indication of the value of any product or service. The speaker of the Endorsement/Testimonial is not affiliated with AIG Direct; nor was monetary consideration provided to the speaker. INSURANCE ADVERTISEMENT.



Does a mom deserve to be punished for leaving her child to run an errand?

The Case Of the Kid In the Car

BY VICKI GLEMBOCKI

ON A COOL May morning in 2009, Eleanor,* a stay-at-home mother of four, parked her car about 150 feet from the entrance of a Dollar Tree in South Plainfield, New Jersey. With her 19-month-old daughter asleep in a car seat, Eleanor cracked the windows, left the engine running, locked the doors, and ran into the store to pick up party supplies, leaving her child alone in the car. When Eleanor returned to the car five to ten minutes later, police officers arrested her. A security guard had noticed the child and called 911. Eleanor was charged with child endangerment and

released on her own recognizance.

Within days, a New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency caseworker arrived at Eleanor's home to investigate. The caseworker found all of Eleanor's children—including her other three, ages ten, seven, and five—healthy, happy, and appropriately dressed. They had current immunizations and were covered by health insurance. The house was clean and safe. With no signs of abuse or neglect in the home, the division narrowed its focus to the incident in question. Eleanor admitted to the caseworker that she knew what she'd done was wrong.

Two weeks later, the division filed a civil action, seeking custody of ➤

*Name changed to protect privacy

all four children. After months of interviews and random visits to Eleanor's home, the division dismissed the case on September 3. However, the division's director had already determined that, according to New Jersey child abuse law, Eleanor had been neglectful in the car incident—though she was aware of the inherent dangers, she did not exercise a “minimum degree of care” and failed “to adequately supervise the child.” As a result, Eleanor was put on the child abuse registry alongside men who'd been charged with raping their daughters.

Eleanor's lawyers, Daniel Epstein and Chris Handman, filed an appeal with the division, arguing that Eleanor should have had a hearing and claiming that the director's determination was “legally insufficient.”

Epstein explains, “She deserves a hearing in front of a judge to determine whether or not she is likely to do this again and whether she belongs on the registry.”

Was Eleanor an abusive and neglectful parent for leaving her toddler alone in the car for ten minutes? You be the judge.



THE VERDICT

The appeals court sided with the Division of Child Protection and Permanency. Since Eleanor didn't dispute the facts of the incident, there was no cause for a hearing. As for the charge, Judge Clarkson Fisher Jr. explained, “A parent invites substantial peril when leaving a child of such tender years alone in a motor vehicle that is out of the parent's sight, no matter how briefly.” Twenty states have made it a crime to leave kids in cars. While there's no law in New Jersey, a state assemblyman introduced a bill in September that, if passed, would make leaving a child under six alone in a car punishable by a \$500 fine. If the child is injured, the fine could increase to \$15,000 plus up to five years in prison. Eleanor's attorney is still fighting for a hearing. “She represents absolutely no recurring threat for this to happen again,” Epstein says. “This was a one-off mistake that doesn't rise to the level of abuse.” He petitioned the State Supreme Court to review the case. In July, the justices agreed to hear the appeal, though no date has been set. “I believe we have a strong case,” Epstein says. **R**

Agree? Disagree? Sound off at rd.com/judge.

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?

So are we - people with memory or thought processing problems.

Have you noticed a gradual decline in your memory?

Could you have mild Alzheimer's disease?

Are you between 55 and 90 years of age?

We understand that this may be a worrying time and that you might be thinking about what to do next.

If this sounds like you, consider EXPEDITION 3 - a clinical research study looking at an investigational drug for mild Alzheimer's disease. Study-related treatments and procedures will be free of charge.

Call 1-877-209-9597 to learn more and find a study center near you.



EXPEDITION 3 Study

www.memory-research.com

Your True Stories

IN 100 WORDS

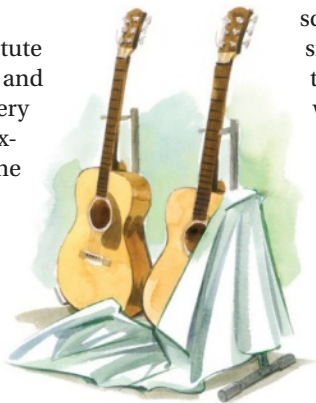
HIDDEN JOY

Coming from a destitute family, my brother and I were used to having very slim Christmases. We expected nothing more one Christmas morning, as we scooped wrapping paper from the floor. “Grab the blanket hanging over there and wrap it around your mother when she comes in here and tell her how much you love her,” my father whispered deviously. Grabbing the blanket and pouncing on our mother, we noticed two upright guitars that the blanket had been draped across. Those guitars became the sole form of expression all throughout our growing-up years—and up to this day.

BRIANNA BLANCHARD,
Springfield, Massachusetts

HER FAVORITE CAROL

Ruth was in the end stage of Alzheimer’s disease. She could no longer move nor speak, but she had always loved to sing, her husband said. At the facility’s Christmas party, we sang our favorite carols. When we got to “Silent Night,” Ruth



squeezed my hand, smiled, and then began to sing. She sang every word clearly in a beautiful alto voice. When the song finished, she grew silent again, but the smile never left her face. These moments are the reason I go to work every day.

ANDREW CARUSO II,
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

AT WAR ON CHRISTMAS

Christmas Day, 1969, Vietnam, 101st Airborne Division. On a hill somewhere around Hue, the supply chopper comes in, usually loaded with mail, C rations, ammo, and sometimes clean clothes. What is this? An ammo canister full of beef stew. We have no utensils to serve the stew, so the platoon leader uses his hand as we go through the line. When he finishes, he has stew up to his elbow! What a pleasant surprise that leaves a lasting memory.

JIM GRIFFIN, *Chickamauga, Georgia*

To read more 100-word stories and to submit your own, go to rd.com/stories. If your story is selected for publication in the magazine, we'll pay you \$100.

For a new year, a new generation of medical alert service.

GreatCall® has redefined medical alert service for the way we age today. Now you can be more active, more mobile, more independent and still get the help you need, whenever you need it.



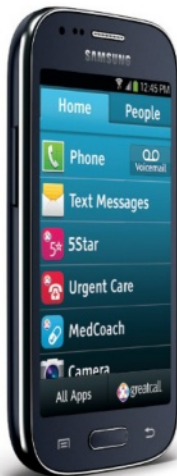
greatcall.
splash

The mobile, waterproof, one-button medical alert.



greatcall.
jitterbug5

The cell phone and medical alert all in one.



greatcall.
touch3

The smartphone with built-in medical alert apps.

No contracts. No cancellation fees. Nationwide coverage. 100% U.S.-based customer service.

Buy today and get a THREE FOR FREE Accessory Gift Set!

See in-store display for product details.



Visit greatcall.com/readersdigest or call 1-866-638-9212.

Gift set offer applies to new lines of service only, while supplies last. Offer ends 1/8/15. Gift set will arrive in 10-14 business days upon activation. The GreatCall Splash is rated IPX7, and can be submerged in up to 3 feet of water for up to 30 mins. GreatCall is not a healthcare provider and does not provide healthcare services. Seek the advice of a physician if you have questions about medical treatment. GreatCall® is a registered trademark of GreatCall, Inc. Samsung is a registered trademark of Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd. Copyright ©2014 Samsung Telecommunications America, LLC. Copyright ©2014 GreatCall, Inc.

The weirdest Christmas

Tacoma, WA

...a receipt

showing my library fines were paid off.

LISA GORNY

...a gift box full of lingerie

from my 88-year-old grandmother, with the assurance it would get her a great-grandchild.

ERIKA WALLGREN

Salt Lake City, UT

...a box of gravel

from the driveway.

JESSICA A. RUPE

...a real iPad

from my daughter, after I had given everyone an "eye pad" eye dressing from Walgreens.

MARY JANE GRANGE

...three wheels of cheese:

all the same kind from three different people.

JACK JAMES

...a loaf of bread,

wrapped like an expensive gift, from my mother-in-law.

DIANA WEBB YENSAN

 Go to [facebook.com/readersdigest](https://www.facebook.com/readersdigest) for the chance to finish the next sentence.

present I ever received was...



...luggage

in my 11th-grade school year. I think my parents were giving me a hint.

DANIELLE GERO CLOWARD

...notebook paper,

torn out of my favorite notebook, wrapped and given to me by my five-year-old sister.

ERIC BARNUM

...a gold-quilted baseball jacket

from my now ex-mother-in-law. She always sewed me replicas of what her dolls were wearing.

ELIZABETH WALLS

...a very squishy, padded, black-and-white-flowered toilet seat

from my father-in-law.

SANDY BATHE

Susan Cain is leading a quiet revolution

The Patron Saint of Introverts

BY BETH DREHER

“I HAVE BEEN waiting for a book like this my whole life.” “I’ve never felt so empowered!” “[It] gave me permission to be who I am.” Two and a half years ago, with the publication of Susan Cain’s *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking*, introverts the world over sang the praises of a book that finally got it right. (The quotes are from reader reviews on Amazon.) The enthusiasm instantly landed it on the *New York Times* bestseller list, where it remains to this day.

A lifelong introvert and former lawyer, Cain thought after *Quiet* (her first book), she’d be able to retreat and write in blissful solitude. Instead she became the founder of a movement to make the world a friendlier place for the reserved, who she estimates make up one third to one half of the population. “Our rallying cry comes from Gandhi,” says Cain, 46, in the

Rockland County, New York, offices of the company she cofounded, Quiet Revolution. “In a gentle way, you can shake the world.”

How do you describe an introvert?

An introvert feels drained after a party; an extrovert feels invigorated. In other words, an introvert recharges by being on his or her own, and an extrovert is energized by being around others. It’s a metaphor for what’s happening biologically—an introvert’s nervous system is more sensitive to stimulation.

You say, “Everyone shines given the right lighting.” What do you mean?

The exact same person can flourish depending on his or her situation. I’m really struck by that. People tell me all the time that they were doing a job and it wasn’t working, and then they switched jobs and everything



SOURCE PHOTO: AARON FEDOR

fell into place. Now I work with businesses and schools to help them understand and encourage introverts.

Do you think introverts are unfairly judged in our society?

Absolutely. Compared with extroverted leaders, quiet leaders are rarely promoted in the workplace. In schools, quiet students are penalized instead of being helped to cultivate their strengths.

What are these strengths?

Spectacularly creative people tend to be introverts because creativity usually involves being by yourself so you

can access original ideas. Another strength is leadership. Research has found introverted leaders deliver better outcomes than extroverted leaders. Introverts are more likely to use other people's ideas, which makes people feel like they're contributing. Extroverts put their own stamp on things, so others don't feel quite as engaged.

My dad is an admirable introvert. He's a doctor and a medical school professor. While colleagues played golf at conferences, he'd go to presentations, record them, and listen to them again and again. I thought, Wow, that's what I want in a doctor.

What about you?

I remember being at camp when I was four and observing that the activities we were supposed to enjoy, like getting together and singing a song, I did not find fun. I always had friends, but I liked playing one-on-one.

You say sometimes introverts should pretend to be extroverts. Why?

Psychologist Brian Little talks about stepping out of character for the sake of a "core personal project"—meaning the work or people you love. I go out and give speeches and interviews, which is not my *métier*, but I'm doing them for the sake of something I'm passionate about.

What advice can you give introverts to navigate the holiday season?

Don't accept all the invitations you get. Give yourself a social quota; decide how many functions to attend, and offer your regrets with regard to the others. For the ones you attend, you don't have to stay for the whole thing. I have a friend who always leaves after an hour and 35 minutes.

People today talk about how we're overloaded with information from our gadgets, but you've mentioned that introverts may prefer communicating electronically.

That's right. Sending a text is far less stimulating than having a conversation with someone. It allows us to connect without having to be so "on."

Plus, you get to do it on your own time. I'm an introvert, and I remember when e-mail was invented—it was the best day of my life.

I felt that way too. Introverts want to process things before they articulate them, and when you're having a conversation, you can't do that.

Describe your perfect day.

It's a mix of time with my husband

and kids and then having four hours to myself, hanging out at a café with my laptop, a latte, and a banana-chocolate muffin. I want to be out and feel the energy of other people, but I want to be in my own zone.

Your husband is an extrovert. Is that a case of opposites attracting?

Yes. Many romantic relationships are introvert-extrovert pairings. My husband is full of life—it would be impossible for him to be here without you feeling his presence. I'm not like that, so I enjoy it. But there are things we have to work out. When we're in the car, he constantly turns up the radio volume, and I turn it down.

What should parents do to support their kids who are introverts?

The first thing is to truly accept who your child is—to treasure it, delight in it. And to understand they have to travel down a longer runway than other kids do before they take off and fly. They'll get there, but they need to know you're with them and will help them. I came up with an expression to describe how I and other introverts see the world: "Love is essential; gregariousness is optional." **R**

**THE SAFEST WAY TO DOUBLE YOUR MONEY ...**

... is to fold it over and put it in your pocket.

FRANK MCKINNEY HUBBARD

Fred & Ned Mitchell

TWINSBURG, OHIO

NED: "There was a time when they said two brothers couldn't go to Vietnam, and we said the only way we'd go was together. So we went together, and we came back together."

FACES
OF AMERICA

BY GLENN GLASSER



Points to Ponder

IF EVERYONE followed through on their resolutions, the consequences for humanity would be dire: The fast-food industry would collapse, the gym would become unbearably crowded, and lifestyle magazines would have nothing left to say.

AMANDA FOREMAN,
historian, in the Wall Street Journal

MY DAUGHTER made an amazing jump in the pool the other day. I said, "You're so brave." She said, "No, I was scared." I said, "That's why you're brave. If you weren't scared, you wouldn't be brave at all. You'd just be dumb."

MARY-LOUISE PARKER,
actress, in Esquire

[E-MAIL IS] our last remnant of old-fashioned letter writing, a ritual most of us adore. E-mail's as malleable, swift, and cheap as air.

JOAN FRANK,
author, on zyzyva.org

ALLUSION to demonology when discussing mental illness is more than just sloppy cliché; it suggests that our thinking about mental health remains mired in a medieval outlook.


ALEXANDER NAZARYAN,
writer, in Newsweek

I THINK ANIMALS are better muses than human beings—they'll never fall out of fashion.

KARL LAGERFELD,
fashion designer, in Harper's Bazaar

The years between 18 and 28 are the hardest, psychologically. It's then you realize this is make-or-break, you no longer have the excuse of youth.

HELEN MIRREN, *actress, in her autobiography*

 Sign up for our daily Points to Ponder e-mail at rd.com/ptp.





Obsessive people tend not to be very good at leading happy, balanced lives ... But at the same time, obsessions are responsible for so much of human greatness ... How many people who have changed history would you describe as “chill”?

AMY CHUA, *law professor*, in *WSJ Magazine*

THE STORIES WE LOVE are filled with struggle, conflict, and failure, yet so often the stories we present to others are a highlight reel of accomplishments, perfect meals, and sunny days.

BRIAN BAILEY,

online community founder, on uncommon.cc

OUR APPETITE for watching people stumble from exhaustion soon moves from one kind of spectacle to the next, perhaps partly because we're ashamed of having enjoyed the previous one.

ADAM GOPNIK,

culture writer, in the *New Yorker*, on competitive walking

THE MECHANICS of good apologies aren't difficult to understand. A bad apology is cagey and ungenerous, an attempt to avoid taking full responsibility. Good apologies are about stepping up.

MARJORIE INGALL,

columnist, in *Real Simple*

REALLY SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE often have the ability to completely flip their mental dispositions. In many fields, it pays to be rigid and disciplined at first but then flexible and playful as you get better.

DAVID BROOKS,

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

The history of being black in America is the history of non-violence versus “fight back.” Of “wait” versus “now.” Of a turned cheek versus self-defense.

REMBERT BROWNE, *writer*, on grantland.com



Are you part of the
95% not getting
enough fiber?



Get more of the fiber you need.

Just one bowl of these Kellogg's® cereals at breakfast gives you at least 10% to as much as 50% of your daily value of fiber.

The Kellogg's logo, featuring the brand name in a red, cursive font with a sunburst graphic above the 'i'.

ART *of* LIVING

What Would You Do with A Dollar?

BY MELISSA BATCHELOR WARNKE
FROM THEMORNINGNEWS.ORG

AMERICAN DINNER-TABLE rules are simple: Don't discuss religion, politics, or money. Money is especially lewd. It makes people evil, petty, wretched. Still, we want it. We like seeing pictures of Beyoncé dancing on her yacht. On the other hand, we also bop around to "Royals" by Lorde and think, She's right—we don't want that yacht. Confused? Of course you are. But little in life is simpler, or more symbolic of possibility, than a single George Washington. So we asked a handful of creative thinkers: What's the best way to invest a dollar? ➔



■ I would travel to an American postindustrial town, find a boarded-up theater, and buy it for one dollar. Working with friends, I would rally the community together, raise money, and open it independently. This is what happened in the town of Cohoes, New York, and it can happen anywhere.

DEV AUJLA,
founder of DreamNow in New York City

■ I'd buy a (cheap!) cup of coffee for someone I admire and pick his or her brain for a half hour.

SERENA KEITH,
*director of product at
Lovely in San Francisco*

■ A single dollar will get you pretty much nothing these days, but a crowd of dollars can help a street performer make a decent living. I get down off my crate after a few hours as a living statue certain that I've brightened the day of countless passersby.

XANTHEA O'CONNOR,
*a street performer in
Perth, Australia*

■ The best investment is in trees. Bear fruit, build soil, sequester carbon,

increase biodiversity, collect solar energy, produce biomass, provide shade and habitat, protect from inclement weather ... the list goes on. Spending one dollar to buy seeds for a favorite tree or two would make your home, neighborhood, and world a better place.

STEFIN PASTERNAK,
a teacher of culinary arts in New Orleans

■ In my travels, I'd say that what people need most besides security and education is access to clean drinking water. So I'd give the dollar to a nonprofit or tech company that provides water sources to communities in need. I saw 40 to 50 people travel 25 miles hanging from a pickup truck in East Timor for water after their village was destroyed in the late '90s. A simple well with a solar-powered pump might have met their temporary needs. Wells allow the population affected—not a government or any other regulating interest—to control the water.

BEN HARRISON,
a U.S. Marine in San Diego



PROP STYLIST: ROBIN FINLAY

■ Deposit it in a federal credit union. You can support fair banking and micro loans at home for you and your neighbors. If your community doesn't have one, start one!

REV. WINNIE VARGHESE,
*rector at St. Mark's Church-
in-the-Bowery in New York City*

■ You can have more fun with four quarters than with a dollar bill. So first step: Get change. Second step: When I think quarters, I think arcade games. Unfortunately, many arcade games will consume your whole dollar, unless you go back to the classics. So I would find one of those old games priced at 25 cents a play, and I would shoot aliens until my quarters ran out.

ROBIN SLOAN,
*author of Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour
Bookstore, from Berkeley, California*

■ Buy a newspaper. Not a tabloid, but a credible source of news. It's cheap, it's informative, and staying current will help you strike up a conversation with people who could help advance your career.

ROB FRIEDMAN,
a risk associate in New York City

■ I'd invest in a packet of perennial vegetable, fruit, or herb seeds: asparagus, sorrel, rhubarb, Jerusalem artichokes, horseradish, lavender, or thyme. These are hardy, ancient,

unfussy, and unapologetically feisty edibles. Not only are you planting once and getting delicious returns on that investment for years, but some perennials, like skirret and oca and hyssop, are increasingly hard to find.

DAISY FREUND,
*senior manager of the Farm Animal
Welfare Dept., ASPCA, in New York City*

■ I would bury the dollar in the most beautiful place I could find, then create an elaborate map to the dollar. I would hope someone would discover this map years from now and have an adventure to go on.

PHILIP STOCKTON,
a filmmaker in New York City

■ Often when you go to a family-owned restaurant or bakery, you'll see above the cash register an old one-dollar bill that's proudly displayed in a frame. It's not in use, it's not even in circulation anymore, but it is an investment. It's the very first dollar that little shop ever made, a symbol of the value of investing in your own dreams and an inspiration to keep going. Investing in the human spirit ... the very best way to invest a dollar.

PATRICK MARTINEZ,
*admissions manager at Columbia
University's School of General Studies
in New York City*

Read more ways people are investing a dollar at rd.com/december. And while you're there, tell us what you would do.



How to Make Roasted Vegetables for a New Friend with a Cold

BY TOD DAVIES FROM THE BOOK *JAM TODAY TOO*

IT WAS A SNOWY DAY, and the Beloved Husband was off somewhere, and I was homesick for my hearth back in Oregon and for the friend who I liked to sit with on winter evenings, drinking wine and talking about things that really happened and thoughts we really have—a rare conversation, generally. How many times do you talk about what’s really going on with someone who will tell you what’s really going on with her?

After moving part-time to Boulder, I had almost given up hope of finding another friend like that. I had invited a woman I’d met only twice before to come share my dinner, but she lived an hour away, and it was, as I’ve said, snowing. I was sure

she wouldn’t want to come. And I wanted to let her off the hook. So I called her up.

“Don’t feel you have to come if you don’t want to. And you can wait till evening to decide.”

“Is it snowing? Really? I have a cold, and I’m in bed. I’ll worry about it later, if that’s OK with you.”

“Of course it is. And here are your choices, if you do decide to come. I’ve just been shopping, so I can give you 1) macaroni and cheese with a celery salad dressed with mustard, 2) sautéed trout with brown rice and vegetables and wasabi butter, or 3) roasted vegetables with thyme and a beet salad.”

There was a considering silence

for a moment. She was weighing the options; she was taking them seriously in a way I thoroughly appreciated.

“Won’t the trout not keep?”

“Naw, don’t worry. I’ve put it in a teriyaki marinade; it’ll only get better. Alex and I can have it tomorrow.”

More thought.

“I think,” she said—and you could tell she was really thinking about it, and the thought was really giving her pleasure, so it gave me pleasure too—“since I’m sick, not the macaroni and cheese. Too rich for a cold. I vote for the vegetables.”

“Veggies it is. If it’s not snowing too hard.”

An hour before dinner, the phone rang.

“I’m up. I’ve been in bed all day, and I feel fantastic. Looking forward to those veggies.”

I was pleased. “Don’t bring anything, OK?” I said earnestly. “Anyone who has to drive an hour in the snow to dinner is exempt.”

Chopping the vegetables and strewing them with thyme, I remembered I didn’t have anything sweet in the house. I’d meant to buy a couple of chocolate bars but forgot. I always think you should have a little bit of chocolate for dessert.

When she arrived, she was holding a bottle of

wine and a bar of chocolate. “You should have a little bit of chocolate for dessert,” she said earnestly. I smiled.

I offered her a kir framboise. “Oh yes,” she said.

You know a kir framboise? It’s a kir, which is a French aperitif made by dolloping a heart of liqueur into a glass of wine—but with raspberry liqueur, framboise, instead of the cassis usually called for. You put a small capful of the deep-red/purple stuff at the bottom of the glass and fill to the top with white wine. Delicious. And beautiful too.

I brought those out, along with a few celery and carrot sticks and a little bit of blue cheese smooched into some Greek yogurt for dip. And we curled up in the matching huge chairs Alex and I have by the fireplace, with the smell of the vegetables—fennel, carrot, celery, onion, garlic cloves, and sweet potato, all diced and mixed with olive oil and branches of thyme that I’d dug up out of the snow in the garden—filling the house.

And we talked about things that mattered: the things that mattered to her, and the things that mattered to me, and the things that mattered to us both. Love and art and solitude and companionship, and a few intellectual



back roads I was delighted to find she enjoyed.

When the vegetables had cooked so long that they were nice and browned and caramelized, we sat down to them with a little more of that rosy aperitif, and the snow came down outside, and everything was warm and kind and good.

Afterward, we had a little piece of chocolate or two, and then we said good night, and I sent her on her way (“That was a breeze getting here, even in the snow! We’ll have to do it again soon!”). As she turned

to walk to her car, she paused and said, “Those vegetables were delicious. They kept me from regretting I didn’t ask for macaroni and cheese.”

“Next time,” I promised with a laugh and waved as she drove down the snowy street. And I went inside, quite pleased, because I knew there would be a next time, and I didn’t feel sad anymore.



AND NOW, SOME DELICIOUS INSTRUCTIONS

When roasting the vegetables, use whatever you have at hand, but always remember to include onions and whole peeled garlic cloves. That night I had a couple of sweet potatoes bursting out of their papery skins. I had an ivory and emerald bulb of fennel, celery stalks, carrots, beet greens, an onion, garlic, and lots of parsley.

I chopped the onion and the beet greens, and I diced the fennel, the celery, the carrots, and the sweet potatoes—all about the same size. Chopped a handful of parsley. Peeled about a dozen garlic cloves.

I mixed all the above in a big ceramic casserole, anointed them with enough olive oil just to coat, salted with coarse salt, and then threw in about five or six branches of fresh thyme. Swooshed the whole thing together with my hands and put the dish in a 400°F oven for about an hour and a half, which is just the right amount of time to prepare a couple of drinks for a new friend and sit with her by the fire and talk about the things that matter to you both.

R

New look

Same smooth taste



We gave NESCAFÉ Taster's Choice packaging an elegant new look, but kept the same signature smooth taste you know and love.

It all starts with a **NESCAFÉ.**

Extraordinary Uses
For Ordinary Things

Winter Woes

BY ALISON CAPORIMO

■ UNFREEZE LOCKS WITH LIGHTERS

Hold the flame to your key for a few seconds. The key's warm metal will help melt ice crystals that have formed inside the lock.

■ SHOVEL WITH COOKING SPRAY

Spray your shovel with nonstick cooking spray before getting started; snow will slide right off.

■ MAKE YOUR OWN DE-ICER

Mix 1 teaspoon Dawn dishwashing liquid, 1 tablespoon rubbing alcohol, and ½ gallon warm water; pour the mixture over walkways to keep them from freezing again right away.

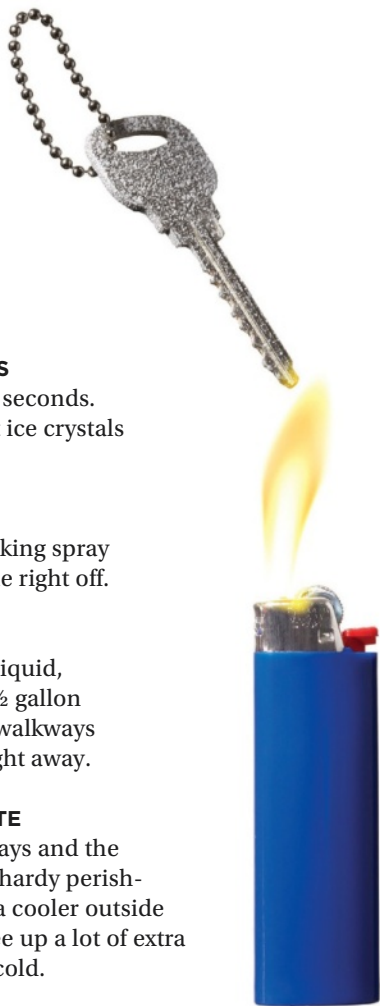
■ USE YOUR PORCH TO REFRIGERATE

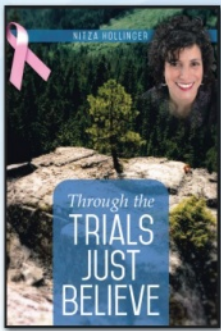
If your fridge is full during the holidays and the temperature is 40°F or below, place hardy perishables (like fruits and vegetables) in a cooler outside near the back door. Doing so will free up a lot of extra shelf space while still keeping food cold.

■ GET UNSTUCK WITH KITTY LITTER

If your tires are spinning in a pile of snow, sprinkle a healthy handful of kitty litter or birdseed under them to gain traction. **R**

Sources: *Martha Stewart Living*, *Esquire*, wisebread.com, viralnova.com, onegoodthingbyjillee.com, homeguides.sfgate.com





Through the Trials Just Believe

Nitza Hollinger

Xlibris www.xlibris.com

Hardback | Paperback | E-book | Audio Book

\$24.99 | \$15.99 | \$3.99 | \$3.99

Through the Trials Just Believe is a truly inspiring and immersive read that shows readers that when faced with trials, one must be well-grounded in what drives him or her to continue the fight to live and overcome what may seem as an unsurpassable trial. The image of the tree grounded firmly on the rock symbolizes that solid grounding point and the will to survive when the trials of life seem overwhelming. In this touching read the author Nitza Hollinger inspires and encourages the reader to face life's challenges with confidence and the determination to succeed.



The Second Coming
The Mighty Ones Of Eternity
Roué Hupsel

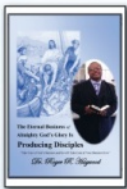
www.authorhouse.com

authorHOUSE®

Hardback | Paperback | E-book

\$27.99 | \$16.95 | \$3.99

The son of an American scholar must begin an almost impossible battle against unknown, sinister threatening powers that attack humanity in the core. In author Roué Hupsel's *The Second Coming*, you will experience a riveting tale that will take you into great adventures. This is a journey full of strange and terrifying events.



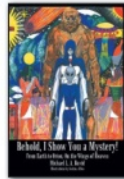
The Eternal Business of
Almighty God's Glory Is
Producing Disciples
Dr. Roger R. Hagwood

Xlibris www.xlibris.com

Hardback | Paperback | E-book

\$24.99 | \$15.99 | \$3.99

Written for people of all ages, *The Eternal Business of Almighty God's Glory Is Producing Disciples* shares how God controls man's life and directs him to the right path if he lives according to God's teachings. God's glory is evident in this book to anoint and ignite a supernatural revival.



Behold, I Show You a Mystery!
*From Earth to Orion,
On the Wings of Heaven*

Michael L. A. David

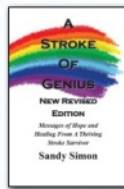
www.authorhouse.com

authorHOUSE®

Paperback | E-book

\$77.81 | \$3.99

From Earth to Orion, On the Wings of Heaven awakens readers to the bright but dangerous future author Michael L. A. David believes is around the corner, through the use of biblical passages and his analyses. This book urges mankind to better themselves, as he believes they have grown lethargic.



A Stroke Of Genius
*Messages of Hope and Healing
From A Thriving Stroke Survivor*
Sandy Simon

Xlibris www.xlibris.com

Hardback | Paperback | E-book

\$29.99 | \$19.99 | \$9.99

Starting with a disaster and leading readers through paths of paralysis and pain up to a good measure of healing; Sandy Simon's *A Stroke Of Genius* is an insightful read that provides new insight into the nature of human condition.

REMARKABLE BOOKS TO ENJOY AGAIN AND AGAIN. ORDER YOURS TODAY!

Memories Set in Stone

BY OLIVIA JUDSON
FROM THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

☛ AFTER THE MOVERS had taken the furniture and the boxes, after I had swept the floors and picked up pieces of trash, once the house was empty of everything but dust and echoes, I turned off my cell phone and took from my pocket a stone I had found in the garden several days before. Not a large stone, but a pleasing one: pale and pleasantly rough to the touch. I had selected it at the prompting of an old friend—an Italian mystic I used to date—who had suggested saying goodbye to the house with a special ritual, the ritual of the Memory Stone.

The idea is to take a stone that you like and walk through the house and gardens, projecting your memories onto it. At the end, you take the stone to an artisan and have it made into something—a key chain perhaps, or



a pendant. I wasn't sure it would work (I wasn't even sure what "working" would mean), but I had decided to try it. One of the things that scared me about leaving the house was the idea of leaving behind all the memories, the memories of 32 years, embodied there. Perhaps this offered a way to capture them, to take them with me somehow.

I started downstairs, in the room where, as a child, I used to practice the violin. It was a beautiful day—cool for August—and the light was filtering through the trees outside the windows. At first, the memories didn't come easily. I sat on the radiator, staring at the stone, but nothing happened. Just some memories of memories—images I had seen in photographs, words I had read in letters and diaries.

But after just a few minutes, that changed. Suddenly, the room was not empty: It was crowded with people I hadn't seen for years, as well as some people I had seen just the day before. Objects I had forgotten, such as the slippery foam mattress that served as a bed for friends who came

to sleep over when I was a kid, came back to mind. Our family cat—long dead—was a tiny kitten again, hiding under the radiator.

Wait: Now he's full size and stretching up to open my parents' bedroom door. In the dining room, we are sitting at dinner, and Drago, my father's Bulgarian stepfather, is annoying my mother by rolling his napkin ring across the table as a kind of game. It's winter, and we're all in the kitchen cutting up various nuts and crystallized fruits, making a feast for Christmas; it's summer—sultry, sweaty summer—and in the middle of a dinner party, another friend is sprawled on the cool tiles of the sun-room floor, trying to find relief from the heat. I'm 11, trying on my new school uniform and twirling in front of the mirror. My mother is coming upstairs to say good night, her arms outstretched to give me a hug. I have come in late for my curfew; the house is dark; I am tiptoeing up the stairs,

hoping I won't wake anybody. In the kitchen, my brother has just sliced his finger open with a knife, and there is blood all over the cheese. Now my father is dancing in close embrace with my friend Gideon; I'm sure it's the only time my father ever danced with a man. Now my father is

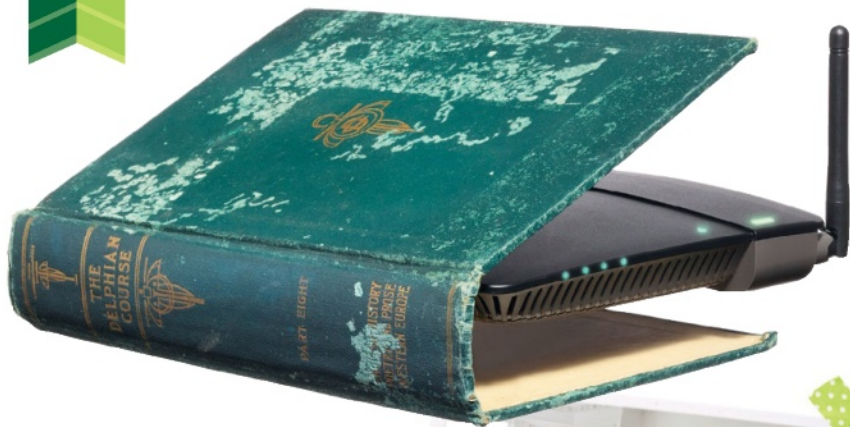
old, and I am sitting close to him on his bed, saying goodbye to him for what would turn out to be the last time.

One moment I found myself sobbing; and in another, I surprised myself by bursting into song. But mostly, the experience was

strangely peaceful. And when I emerged (amazed to find that three hours had passed), people, voices, objects, smells, tastes, sensations, and sounds from three decades had all come together in a huge collage. And my strong fear of forgetting had somehow disappeared.

It's been several months since I walked out of the house for the last time. I don't know whether this stone I have, this piece of the place, can really hold so much or that, in the years ahead, it will be able to trigger remembrances in the way that a dreamy, slow, uninterrupted walk through the house would do. But right now, as I pick it up and gaze at it, I seem to be back home. **R**

“
*Suddenly,
the room was
crowded with
people I hadn't
seen for years.*



Optical Illusion Decor

BY ALISON CAPORIMO

■ TRICKS FOR HIDING TECH

Place an unsightly router inside a hollowed-out book to keep it out of view.

■ STRIPES FOR MORE SPACE

Just as vertical stripes on clothing may make you look taller, stripes on a rug will make a room appear longer in the direction the stripes are oriented.

■ HALF-PAINT FOR HEIGHT

Paint the bottom half of walls a darker color than the top (try white) to define your room's shape.



PROP STYLIST: ROBIN FINLAY; DOUGLAS GIBB (RUG); CLIVE TOMPSETT (HALF-PAINTED WALL); CLAIRE BENOIST (BORDERS)

SEE WHY **95%** OF REVIEWERS
RECOMMEND*

**OXI
CLEAN**TM
**LAUNDRY
DETERGENT**

"WONDERFUL DETERGENT!"

Love the *fresh scent* and cleaning power of this detergent...

Grass stains are no match!"

– Reviewer, Ohio



"A MUST HAVE!"

Wow! After the *first wash* my clothes' colors look *brighter and feel cleaner!"*

– Reviewer, Minnesota



*Source: OxiClean.com. Reviews and recommendations based on approximately 443 reviews submitted as of 8/1/14. Reviewers received free product sample.

OxiClean. Lifts Out Tough, Dried-On Stains!

Find us on Facebook.com/OxiClean 

©2014 Church & Dwight Co., Inc.

How a Password Changed My Life

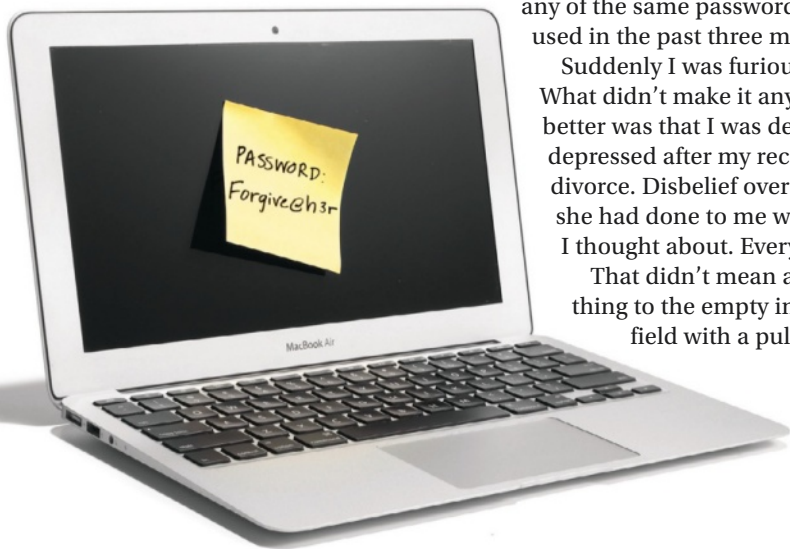
BY MAURICIO ESTRELLA FROM MEDIUM.COM

☞ I WAS HAVING a great morning until I sat down in front of my office computer. “Your password has expired,” a server message flashed on my screen, with instructions for changing it. Coming up with a new code doesn’t seem like a big deal,

unless you work at my company, where we have to change it monthly, using at least one uppercase character, one lowercase character, one symbol, and one numeral. Oh, and the whole darn thing can’t be fewer than eight characters. And I can’t use any of the same passwords I’ve used in the past three months.

Suddenly I was furious. What didn’t make it any better was that I was deeply depressed after my recent divorce. Disbelief over what she had done to me was all I thought about. Every day.

That didn’t mean anything to the empty input field with a pulsating



cursor, waiting for me to type a password that I'd have to reenter—many times—for the next 30 days. I remembered a tip I'd heard from my former boss. He'd said, "I'm going to use a password to change my life."

I couldn't focus on getting things done in my current mood. There were clear indicators of what I needed to do to regain control of my life, but I couldn't heed them.

My password became the indicator. My password reminded me that I shouldn't let myself be a victim of my recent breakup and that I was strong enough to do something about it.

I made my password *Forgive@h3r*.

I had to type this statement several times a day. Each time my computer would lock. Each time my screen saver with her photo would appear. Each time I would come back from eating lunch alone. In my mind, I wrote *Forgive her* every day.

The simple action changed the way I looked at my ex-wife. That constant reminder of reconciliation led me to accept the way things had happened at the end of my marriage and embrace a new way of dealing with my depression. As the month wore on, I felt a slow healing begin to take place. By the time my server prompted me to reset my password the following month, I felt free.

One month later, my dear Exchange server asked me yet again to reset my password. I thought about

the next thing that I had to get done.

My password became *Quit@smoking4ever*.

I quit smoking overnight.

This password was a painful one to type during that month, but doing it helped me to yell at myself in my mind as I typed that statement. It motivated me to follow my monthly goal.

One month later, my password became *Save4trip@thailand*.

Guess where I went three months later: Thailand.

Seeing how these reminders helped to materialize my goals kept me motivated and excited. While it's sometimes difficult to come up with your next goal, keeping at it brings great results.

Here is a simplified extract of what some of my passwords have been in the past two years, so you get an idea of how my life has changed, thanks to this method:

■ **Forgive@h3r** To my ex-wife, who left me.

■ **Quit@smoking4ever** It worked.

■ **Save4trip@thailand** It worked.

■ **Eat2times@day** It never worked, still fat.

■ **Ask@her4date** It worked. I fell in love again.

■ **MovE@togeth3r** It worked.

■ **Facetime2mom@sunday** It worked. I talk with Mom every week.

And the one for last month:

■ **Save4@ring** Yep. Life is gonna change again soon.

R

Q+A: Stay Safe Online

Q: A former employer's database was hacked last spring, and I found out my identity was stolen when my income tax return was rejected. What can workers do to protect themselves?

PAT D., Seattle, Washington

A: Last year, more than 13 million people were victims of identity fraud, and the number of cases rises every year. While there's no foolproof prevention method, being proactive can help you catch a problem early, giving criminals less opportunity to wreak havoc with your personal information and finances.

- Check your credit report. You can do this free once a year at each of the three major agencies: Experian, Equifax, and TransUnion. If you notice any discrepancies, notify one of the

Questions were answered by the MetLife Defender technology and cybersecurity team.



companies. Some criminals take years to start using the credit information they've acquired in a breach, so stay in the habit of checking in.

- Monitor your bank account and credit card statements for any unusual activity, and alert your bank or credit card company about a suspicious charge as soon as you can.

- If you begin receiving calls from debt collectors on bills that are not your own, someone may have opened a line of credit in your name: Order a full credit report posthaste.

- If your income tax return is rejected, contact the IRS immediately.

Q: My friend sent me an e-mail with a link to click—only it wasn't my friend, I found out, and the link wasn't real. I quickly changed my

e-mail password, but I worry—can someone still access my computer?

K. L. F., New York, New York

A: Changing your password may not be enough, as criminals use these phishing schemes to draw you to sites that can install malicious software that accesses information on your computer. To safeguard your info, scan for Trojan horses and other viruses. Scanning programs, such as McAfee, Avast!, and AVG, are available for trial and to purchase.

In the future, before you click on a link in any e-mail, hover over it with your mouse. If the URL that appears does not match the URL text in the e-mail, *do not* click on the link.

Q: I use my bank's app to access my accounts online. Is it safe to do this while traveling, if I am using a hotel's Wi-Fi, for instance?

ANN D., Ridgefield, Connecticut

A: Unfortunately, public networks at places such as hotels, airports, and cafés may not be as secure as you think. Someone can easily set up a wireless network that appears to belong to a name you trust, which gives that person the opportunity to dig through your information.

If you must use a public network, don't access sensitive information or make online purchases. Ask if your hotel can offer you a secure connection for a small fee.

Q: After the celebrity photo hack this year, I'm worried that the safety risks of using the cloud outweigh the benefits. What is the right way to approach this technology?

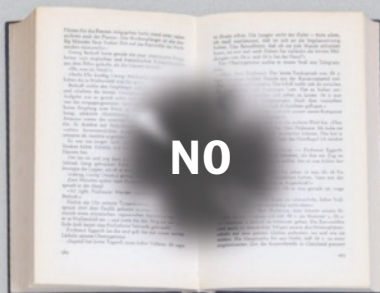
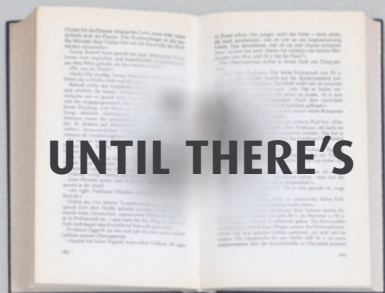
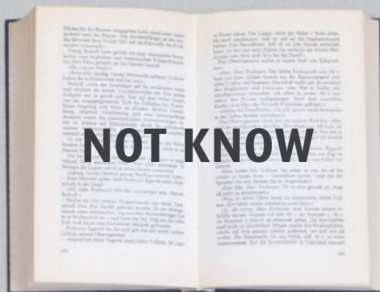
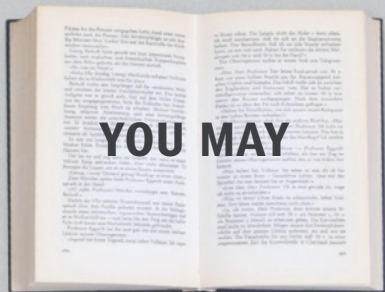
CLAIRE C., Atlanta, Georgia

A: According to reports, the recent cloud breach you mentioned occurred after password credentials were compromised. If you use cloud services and someone knows your password, that person can grab your info from anywhere. Establish safe online habits to avoid any mishaps:

- Use unique passwords for all your accounts—especially on the cloud. Passwords should consist of at least eight characters, including upper- and lowercase letters, special characters, and numbers.
- Share minimal information, and leave optional fields blank when shopping or filling out profiles online. Any clues you give hackers may help them crack your passwords.
- Clear your browser cache and cookies regularly. They may store personal data a hacker can tap into.
- Do not open e-mails from unknown sources, especially if an e-mail domain looks questionable. Suspicious e-mails can introduce a virus to your system, which can compromise your password. **R**

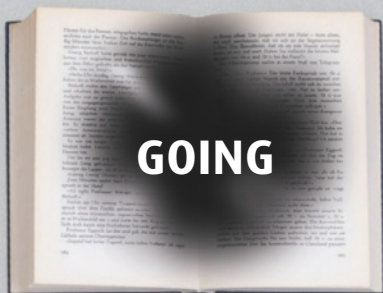
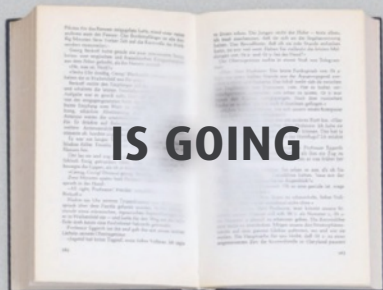
These ideas will just get you started!
Visit rd.com/cybersafety for more ways to safeguard sensitive personal information.

WITH MACULAR DEGENERATION,



ONLY PreserVision AREDS 2 contains the exact levels of clinically proven nutrients now recommended by the National Eye Institute to help reduce the risk of progression for people with moderate to advanced Macular Degeneration.*†

†Age-Related Eye Disease Study 2 Research Group. Lutein + zeaxanthin and omega-3 fatty acids for age-related macular degeneration: the Age-Related Eye Disease Study 2 (AREDS2) randomized clinical trial. JAMA. 2013 May 15;309(19):2005-15. National Eye Institute website: <http://www.nei.nih.gov/areds2/> Accessed October 2013 ©Bausch & Lomb Incorporated ®/TM are trademarks of Bausch & Lomb Incorporated or its affiliates. AREDS2 is a registered trademark of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). US/PV2/13/0051a(1).

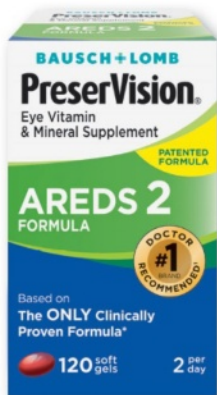


PreserVision AREDS 2. Clinically Proven Nutrients.

Ask your doctor if PreserVision AREDS 2 Formula is right for you.

To get a \$5 coupon and learn more, visit preservision.com.

*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.



BAUSCH+LOMB

Let us recommend new and classic ...

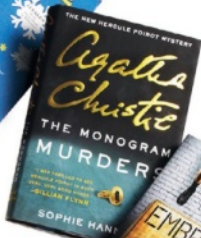
Gifts for the Person Who's Got You Stumped

BY DAWN RAFFEL

The Child of Any Age

A Treasury of Wintertime Tales edited by Noel Daniel
(Taschen, \$39.99)

This gorgeously illustrated collection of 13 classics such as “The Night Before Christmas,” “The Snow Children,” and “The Red Horse” is guaranteed to charm anyone young—or young at heart.



The President of Her Book Club

Lila by Marilynne Robinson
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$26)

In the new novel by Pulitzer Prize-winning Robinson, a young woman who's endured a harsh, transient childhood slowly finds her way toward love and faith. Few writers can match Robinson's grace.

They Came like Swallows by William Maxwell (Vintage, \$14.95)

Maxwell (1908–2000) was a longtime editor at the *New Yorker* whose own novels are a treasure: elegant, accessible, and



loved by pretty much everyone who picks them up. This luminous story of a Midwestern family, set in 1918, is ripe for rediscovery.

The Soulful Friend

***Small Victories: Spotting Improbable Moments of Grace* by Anne Lamott (Riverhead, \$22.95)**

Lamott's devoted following values the way she approaches life's bigger questions with humor, humility, and rubber-meets-the-road insights.

***A Calendar of Wisdom: Daily Thoughts to Nourish the Soul, Written and Selected from the World's Sacred Texts* by Leo Tolstoy (Scribner, \$24)**

Tolstoy (1828–1910) included quotes from the New Testament, the Koran, Greek philosophy, Lao Tzu, and Buddhist and Jewish thought, along with poetry and other writings.

Weekend Warriors (and Those Who Love Them)

***Embrace the Suck* by Stephen Madden (HarperWave, \$25.99)**

Can a 50-year-old amateur athlete survive CrossFit training? Madden's entertaining and inspiring fitness memoir is ultimately about life, love, and so much more.

Mystery Is Her Middle Name

***The Monogram Murders* by Sophie Hannah and Agatha Christie (William Morrow, \$25.99)**

During her lifetime, Christie (1890–

1976) sold some two billion books, topped only by Shakespeare and the Bible. Now bestselling author Hannah breathes new life into Hercule Poirot, who appeared in 33 novels—with the blessing of Christie's estate and the adoration of critics.

***The Maltese Falcon* by Dashiell Hammett (Vintage, \$14)**

A veteran of both world wars, Hammett (1894–1961) was blacklisted in the 1950s, but his hard-boiled novels endure. This 1929 gem features the classic PI Sam Spade.

He'll See It On-Screen, So Buy Him the Book

***Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand (Random House, \$16)**

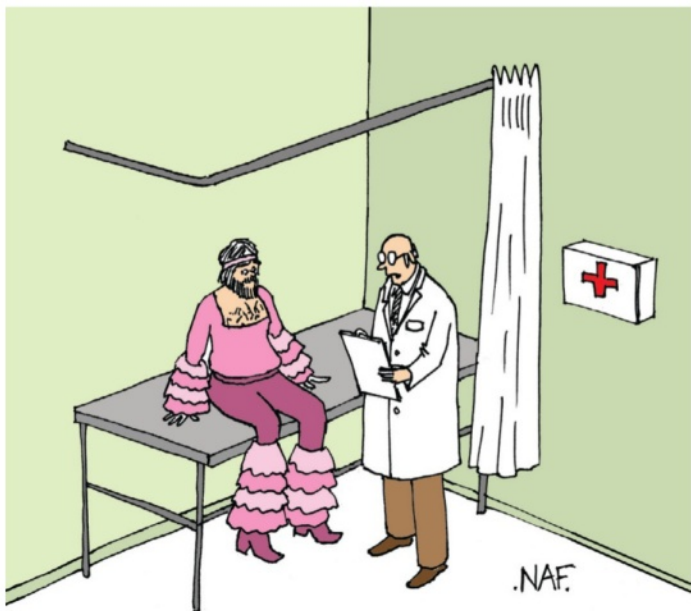
The true story of WWII survivor Louis Zamperini, based on the mega-bestseller, comes to your multiplex on Christmas Day. Spanning the 1936 Berlin Olympics, harrowing ordeals at sea, and torture in prisoner of war camps, Zamperini's life—and his resilience—is jaw-dropping. Reading the book will double the awe.

***A Game of Thrones 5-Book Set* by George R. R. Martin (Bantam, \$49.95)**

Martin's edge-of-your-seat fantasy is a hit on HBO, but the books go deeper into the machinations of the royals and warriors of the seven kingdoms. This set has more than enough sword fights, dragons, and intrigue to last till the show returns in spring. **R**

ALL IN

A Day's Work



"It turns out you're not A, B, or AB but the much rarer ABBA blood group."

AT THE AGE OF 55, I finally got my bachelor's degree and set out to become a substitute teacher. One day, a seventh grader asked if I'd been teaching long.

"Actually, I'm brand-new," I told him. "I just graduated."

Looking me up and down, he asked, "How long were you in college?"

DEBI BRIM, Indianapolis, Indiana

A FAX? YOU'RE SENDING me something via fax? What is it, an important document from 1993? From meetingboy.com

I TRIED TO EXPLAIN to a client why I couldn't help him with a project that was written in a program code that I didn't know.

"Let's say you're asking me to write something in a specific language. Now,

I'm fluent in English and Spanish, but your project is in Chinese. Since I don't understand Chinese, I'm not your best option. You need someone who is fluent in this specific language. See?"

He said he did and thanked me.

The next morning, I got a call from another developer asking, "Why is So-and-So asking us if we're fluent in Chinese?"

From clientsfromhell.net

THE OFFICE CHRISTMAS PARTY

is a great opportunity to catch up with people you haven't seen for 20 minutes.

@JULIUSSHARPE

PROFESSIONALS AT the staffing agency Robert Half International have seen a lot of peculiar résumés. Here are some favorite gaffes, followed by wisecracks from the pros:

■ Education: "I have a bachelorette degree in computers." (*The pajama party starts at 7 p.m.*)

■ Tools: "Human brain 1.0." (*We'll wait for the upgrade.*)

■ References: "My landscaper." (*A reference who will give you two green thumbs up.*)

■ Date of Employment: "2002-9999." (*She's earned her gold watch!*)

■ Experience: "Worked successfully on a team of one." (*I assume you all got along?*)

From resumania.com and Robert Half

Add "Sold funny anecdotes to Reader's Digest for \$100" to your résumé! See page 7 or rd.com/submit for details.



WHAT'S PLAYING ON WEIRD TV

Believe it or not, someone was paid to come up with these reality-TV shows:

Intercept

Watch: If you like *Cops*.

Guests would come on this Russian game show and drive off in a new car. The catch: Players pretended to be car thieves, and if they avoided the cops for 35 minutes, the car was theirs.

Source: carhumor.net

Armed & Famous

Watch: If you like TMZ.

This show had grade-B celebrities train as cops with the Muncie Police Department in Indiana. Things went downhill when Jack Osbourne and CBS were sued for wrongfully ransacking a home.

Source: cracked.com

Bergensbanen: Minutt for Minutt

Watch: If the NyQuil's gone.

Producers honored the 100th anniversary of Norway's Bergen railway by broadcasting the entire seven-hour trip from Bergen to Oslo—live. The show had neither plot nor dialogue, just a lot of shots of a lot of trees and railroad tracks. It also had a lot of viewers: A fifth of the population tuned in.

Source: wsj.com



HEALTH

Why scratching feels so good,
moisturizer is my saving grace, and
salmon is my favorite food

A Day in the Life Of Your Skin

BY TERESA DUMAIN

☞ **THREE ALARM SNOOZES**, a leg scratch, and 14 eye rubs later, you roll out of bed and plod into the kitchen to make coffee. You're totally entitled to take it slow after a tough week, but I wish you'd rub me less. I'm thinnest around your eyes. At only about 0.05 mm thick—half the thickness of computer paper—I get tiny tears in capillaries from all that manhandling, making me look discolored and older. Oy, make that 15 eye rubs.

My Favorite Shower Routine

Adequately caffeinated, you head to the bathroom to shower. As you wait for the water to warm, you give me a good scratch and then another. It always happens more this time of year. The dry air sucks moisture out through my top layer, which makes me irritated. Literally.

Dryness triggers an inflammatory response: Immune cells as well as pro-inflammatory proteins and other enzymes go wild, activating itch receptors that send signals to your brain. The result: your fingernails raking across me (not so gently, I might add). I know it feels good for a second—scratching may engage pleasure and reward centers in the brain. But if you keep at it, I'll get even more inflamed, which will cause those itch receptors to refire. And a vicious circle continues. All. Winter. Long.

As much as you want to linger under the soothing stream of water, I beg you to stop after ten minutes. Long, hot showers strip away my natural oils, as do soapy cleansers. The fact that you switched to a gentle, soap-free body wash for this time of year is perfect—it'll get rid of dirt

but leave some oils to help me stay lubricated. I'm also grateful that you skipped washing your face this morning. If I could make a PSA for this, I would: Ladies, you don't need to wash your face twice a day (especially if you have dry skin). One cleansing at night gets rid of the debris that can clog my pores. Scrubbing again in the morning may remove too much oil.

After a quick pat-down, you dip into that new jar of moisturizing ointment and start slopping it on while I'm still damp. Ahhhh. Hello, happy place. This is exactly what I need—it's thick and petroleum-based and contains ceramides. These lipids occur naturally in my top layer, but this time of year, I welcome an extra dose. They trap water molecules to help me stay smooth and dewy.

I'm Tougher than I Look

You're always doing things to "boost your immunity." If only you knew that I'm your first line of defense against germs! All three of my layers—my outer epidermis, thickest middle dermis, and bottom fatty layer—protect against invading bacteria, fungi, and other undesirables.

That's also why I'm lucky you're so diligent about moisturizing. If my outer layer gets too dry, tiny cracks can develop, which leaves me looking scaly—and you more prone to skin infections and inflammation.

But if I'm intact, I must say, I do my job well. Like right now. You decide to take your kids to story time at the bookstore—talk about a germ zone. But I handily thwart the bugs you encounter: lurking along the escalator and spread all over the toys and board books in the kiddie section. I may feel soft, but don't be fooled. I'm as tough as nails. My epidermal cells create a dry, acidic environment that's hostile to bacteria. These cells also have a secret weapon: tentacle-like appendages that seek and destroy germs. And they secrete enzymes that help foil unwanted visitors.

When you bump into a table display, it's my innermost layer of fat and collagen cells that absorbs the shock and protects your inner organs, and it's my blood vessels that bear the brunt of the jolt. Hip-check the table hard enough, and it'll break the capillaries near my top layer, causing blood to leak into the surrounding tissue and form that unsightly mark. As the hemoglobin in the blood—which gives the bruise its purplish color—breaks down over time, the bruise turns Technicolor, fading to greenish yellow and then golden brown. Soon enough, I'll be back to

normal as white blood cells finish repairing the damage.

My Big Winter Worry

I'm glad you layered a cotton T-shirt under your sweater; the wool is a little abrasive. (It can even trigger a rash if I'm feeling particularly sensitive.) And thank goodness for your gloves. That sanitizing gel you squirted on after leaving the bookstore strips my natural oils. The gloves block the harsh outdoor air and help trap whatever moisture I have left.

But if I can complain for a sec, I don't get why you skipped the face lotion with SPF 30 this morning. You moisturize anyway; it can't get any easier. Even applying a face powder with SPF would be better than nothing. Maybe you don't realize that as long as it's daylight, those ultraviolet rays are around, regardless of the weather. In winter, there can be up to twice as many UVA rays as UVB—these penetrate deep into me and contribute to cancer and most of the problems you see in your skin: the wrinkles that make you cringe, the dark spots on your hands, and the saggy neck you hate in photos. It makes me, well, crawl when you don't use sunscreen religiously.

Feed Me Well

As you pass your favorite restaurant on your way home, you decide to treat the kids to an early dinner.

Burger and fries for them; salmon and broccoli for you. You know this choice is smart for your waistline, but it does me good as well. The fish is packed with omega-3s, which can help replenish my natural oils as well as fight inflammation; the broccoli has loads of vitamin C, which my cells require to make collagen, a protein that makes me firm and supple. And thanks for skipping dessert! Sugar molecules bind to my proteins, which compromises the fibers that keep me taut. (Translation: wrinkles.)

Trust Me, Beauty Sleep Is Real

You're turning in early tonight, which is exactly what I need to do my repair work. All day long, I've been making fresh new cells and pushing up dead ones to the top to be sloughed off. This renewal process speeds up during deep sleep. In roughly a month,

my top layer will be fully regenerated. Humidifier on? Check. Face washed? Yup. Another rubdown with ointment? Love you. Now I just hope the kids let you sleep through the night. People who get uninterrupted, high-quality sleep show half as many signs of aging as poor sleepers. Good sleepers have fewer fine lines, better elasticity, and more even tone. I'll also recover more efficiently from stressors, and let's face it: I'll look more attractive. I'm the first one to say that beauty is supposed to be more than skin-deep. But I also know that when I'm healthy, you feel beautiful—and that's worth all my efforts. **R**

Sources: Chris G. Adigun, MD, dermatologist in the Research Triangle area of North Carolina; Nada Elbuluk, MD, assistant professor in the Department of Dermatology, NYU Langone Medical Center; Mona Gohara, MD, associate clinical professor of dermatology, Yale School of Medicine; Elizabeth K. Hale, MD, clinical associate professor at the Ronald O. Perleman Department of Dermatology, NYU Langone Medical Center; Brian Kim, MD, of the Center for the Study of Itch, Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis; Gil Yosipovitch, MD, director of the Temple Itch Center, Temple University School of Medicine



HOW COMEDIAN STEVEN WRIGHT SPENT HIS BIRTHDAY

- I went to a drive-in in a taxicab. The movie cost me \$95.
- I went to a museum where everything had been done by children. They had all the paintings up on refrigerators.
- I went fishing with Salvador Dalí. He was using a dotted line. He caught every other fish.
- I installed a skylight in my apartment. The people who live above me are furious.

STEVEN WRIGHT (WHOSE BIRTHDAY IS DECEMBER 6)

Who's Right?

Is Saturated Fat Bad For You?

BY CHRIS WOOLSTON

☛ SATURATED FAT—it adds creaminess to cheese and greasiness to bacon. Lately it's also been the key ingredient in a controversial debate. For decades, doctors and medical organizations have viewed saturated fat as the raw material for a heart attack and advised strictly limiting it. But newer research has some experts questioning whether we've convicted the wrong criminal.

As books and headlines embrace red meat and dairy—a June *Time* magazine cover even implored us to “Eat Butter”—Americans are left to wonder whether everything they thought they knew about nutrition was wrong. Should we make more room at the table for saturated fat?

What You've Heard

The theory that saturated fat can lead to heart disease picked up



steam in the late 1950s, when a multicountry study found that heart trouble was much more common in places where people ate a lot of red meat and dairy. By 1980, the first government dietary guidelines urged Americans to cut back on saturated fat and cholesterol by limiting cream, butter, eggs, deep-fried food, and fatty cuts of red meat.

In some circles, the message hasn't changed much. “Saturated fat is definitely bad for you,” says Penny Kris-Etherton, distinguished professor of nutrition sciences at Pennsylvania State University. “It raises LDL cholesterol, and cholesterol raises the risk of heart disease.” The latest American Heart Association

guidelines recommend that people consume 5 to 6 percent of calories from saturated fat. If you eat 2,000 calories a day, that's about 13 grams a day, or just a little more than you'd get from one Big Mac.

But Not So Fast ...

More recent evidence suggests that saturated fat may not be as bad as previously thought. In the mid-1990s, a Harvard study of more than 40,000 middle-aged men found that those who ate the most saturated fat were 20 percent more likely to suffer a heart attack than those who ate the least, but researchers chalked up much of that extra risk to a lack of fiber in high-fat diets. Earlier this year, a much-publicized paper in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, which combined the results of 76 previous dietary studies, found no sign that people who reported eating a lot of saturated fat were more likely than anyone else to suffer from heart disease. "Current evidence does not clearly support" cutting back on saturated fat to protect the heart, the authors said.

Saturated fat can boost levels of LDL cholesterol, but those bits of cholesterol tend to be big and floppy, says Peter Attia, MD, president and director of the San Diego-based Nutrition Science Initiative, a nutrition and obesity research center. This is important because it appears that small, hard cholesterol particles—

the kind not associated with saturated fat—are more likely to clog arteries. (Genetics plays a big part in the size of cholesterol particles. And ironically, some research indicates that a low-fat, high-carb diet may contribute to this kind of cholesterol pattern in people who are genetically predisposed.)

But it's still not time to break out the bacon, says David Katz, MD, founder and director of the Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center. The *Annals* study didn't mean much, he says, because many of the study subjects who cut out saturated fat replaced those calories with sugar and carbs. In other words, the study found that eating a lot of saturated fat is as bad as eating a lot of carbs and sugar—not that saturated fat is good for you.

Fat is too complicated for easy answers, Dr. Katz says. Saturated fat comes in many different varieties, even within the same cut of meat. For example, red meat contains both stearic acid, which is likely harmless, and palmitic acid, which does seem to be dangerous—it promotes inflammation, a major driver of heart disease and many other ailments.

The Bottom Line

Experts aren't ready to rewrite the saturated fat rules yet. Red meat and butter can be part of a healthy diet, but not if you eat them with

abandon. Today's most relevant nutrition lessons come from the Lyon Diet Heart Study, a landmark investigation from the 1990s that still sets the standard for dietary research, Dr. Katz says.

The randomized trial found that switching from a high-fat northern-European diet to a Mediterranean-style diet for nearly four years cut the risk of heart trouble by up to 70 percent. People were told to eat more vegetables with at least one serving of fruit every day. They replaced most red meat with fish or poultry and did away with butter and cream, instead using a spread similar to olive oil. "Your diet should emphasize vegetables, fruits, and whole

grains," Dr. Katz says. "If you want to add fat, do it with salmon, nuts, and seeds, with or without some lean red meat and dairy. Such a diet would either be low in fat or high in unsaturated fat. Either way, you'd be fine."

James Dalen, MD, dean emeritus of the University of Arizona College of Medicine, doesn't believe in strict guidelines that call for people to get a certain percentage of calories from fat or saturated fat. "We don't need to make things so complicated," he says. "Shop around the edges of the grocery store: the produce aisle, the meat and fish counter, the bakery for its whole grains. The center of the grocery store is where our diet has really changed over the years." **R**



RESPECTFUL YO MAMA JOKES

- Yo mama is so healthy, her BMI is probably exactly within the ideal range for a woman her age.
- Yo mama is so good at cooking, she should open her own restaurant. I'd be the first customer.
- Yo mama is so good at listening, she makes you feel like she's put everything aside to focus all her attention on you. That's a really great trait to have.
 - Yo mama is so generous, she just paid for everyone's meal at Applebee's.
 - Yo mama is so supportive of you and your efforts that I wouldn't be surprised if you were incredibly successful as a result.

LUCAS KLAUSS from McSweeney's Internet Tendency, mcsweeneys.net



Sweet, Sweet Addiction

Pain and Pleasure of a Tennis Playing Family

George Howard Newton

www.authorhouse.com

Paperback | E-book



\$16.95 | \$3.99

A late - comer to tennis, George Newton practiced and competed like someone addicted. Follow him as he relentlessly pursues his passion to national champion against domestic and professional challenges. The book is a fulfillment of one's most intimate dreams.



Un Año En La Vida

Del Dr. Zorro

Frederick L. Malphurs

www.xlibris.com

Hardback | Paperback | E-book

\$29.99 | \$19.99 | \$3.99



The horrific impingement of drug cartels on Calderon-era Mexico has drastically corrupted the country's socio-political condition. Here unfolds one family's extraordinary tale of action, love, honor, strength and adventure despite the constant danger and threat of the time.



Pillars Of Fire

The First Book of Eli

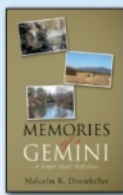
www.xlibris.com

Paperback | E-book

\$31.99 | \$3.99



Pillars of Fire sheds light on author Eli's unique perception of extra-terrestrial life and how it is immensely significant to ancient biblical scriptures and humanity's evolution. It offers insight and analysis to today's natural disasters and its biblical correlation.



Memories Of A Gemini

A Simple Man's Reflections

Malcolm K. Drumheller

www.xlibris.com

Hardback | Paperback | E-book

\$29.99 | \$19.99 | \$9.99



Memories Of A Gemini is a profound collection of verses and vignettes that reflects Malcolm K. Drumheller's experiences and views on life. With their rich imagery, these literary pieces are meant to stimulate the mind and speak to the heart.



Casting Lots

William D. McEachern

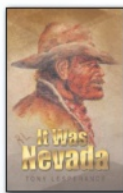
www.authorhouse.com

Hardback | Paperback | E-book

\$31.99 | \$23.95 | \$3.99



Centurion Cornelius is crucifying a little-known religious leader and two thieves. Suddenly an earthquake occurs, and Cornelius is thrown to the ground. He stands and proclaims, "Truly, this man was the Son of God." What if you could interview Centurion Cornelius?



It Was Nevada

Tony Lesperance

www.xlibris.com

Hardback | Paperback | E-book

\$34.99 | \$24.99 | \$3.99



Tony Lesperance's *It Was Nevada* is a hard hitting book following the adventures of Terry Hope. It is a wild ride through the pages of Nevada history, some true, some fictional – it is up to you to decide.

Doctor's Orders

Why Holidays Are Healthier than You Think

BY THE PHYSICIANS OF *THE DOCTORS*

■ **COCOA IMPROVES YOUR HEART HEALTH:** This sweet treat lowers LDL cholesterol and blood pressure, raises HDL cholesterol, and even improves cognitive function and memory. In 2012, the European Food Safety Authority (a group similar to the FDA) issued a scientific opinion that said consuming 200 mg of cocoa flavonoids a day can contribute to healthy blood flow. A cup made with a tablespoon of unsweetened cocoa can contain or even exceed this amount. To minimize clumping, mix powder into milk that's already warm. Add spices like cinnamon and a small amount of sugar or honey to cut the bitterness.

■ **CAROLING CALMS:** Singing can reduce stress hormones and boost oxytocin, the "love" hormone that promotes feelings of trust and bonding. Swedish research published last year found that certain aspects of

singing make people adopt a calm breathing pattern, like that associated with yoga. Singing in a group can improve self-esteem and increase feelings of social belonging, which can ward off loneliness. Even if you're not apt to belt Christmas tunes door-to-door, sing along with your kids or your partner to a holiday radio station while you run errands or drive to visit family.

■ **SHOPPING BURNS CALORIES:** Hoofing it at the mall for an hour can burn 200 to 300 calories, depending on your size; what's more, it's time you're not on your duff. Too much sitting increases your risk of everything from type 2 diabetes to cancer. The more "incidental" fitness—stringing holiday lights, rummaging in the basement for decorations, bustling around the kitchen while preparing holiday dinners—you can squeeze into your day, the better off you'll be.

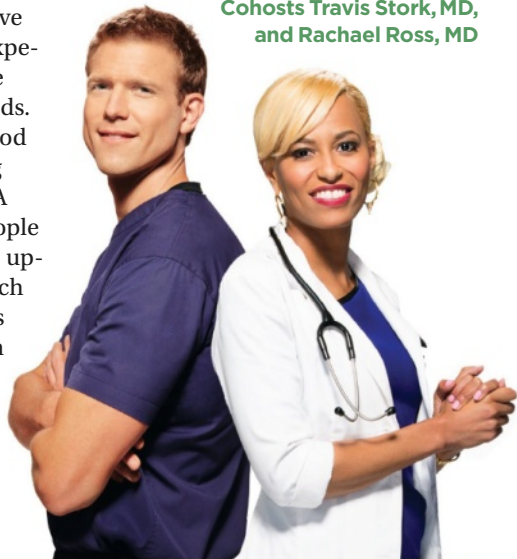
■ **WRITING HOLIDAY CARDS CAN PROMOTE GRATITUDE:** Instead of treating holiday cards as a chore, consider each one an opportunity to write a personal note expressing how much the recipient means to you. One study found that people who jotted down what they were thankful for each week felt more optimistic about their lives, exercised more, and even had fewer visits to physicians than people who wrote down things that annoyed them or neutral events.

■ **GIFTING AN EXPERIENCE BOOSTS HAPPINESS:** Studies have found that spending money on experiences increases happiness more than shelling out for material goods. Now new research shows this mood lift can come from simply making your list (and checking it twice): A 2014 Cornell study found that people who merely anticipate making an upcoming experiential purchase, such as ski lessons, report higher levels of happiness than those who plan to buy, say, a new tech gadget.

■ **PEPPERMINT EASES DIGESTIVE DISTRESS:** A 2011 Australian study found that peppermint soothes

pain-sensing fibers in the colon, which can reduce inflammation related to irritable bowel syndrome. Though a yummy seasonal treat, candy canes fall short of the healing doses used in clinical studies; researchers recommend consuming peppermint-oil capsules to tame your tummy. But there are other science-backed reasons to enjoy a candy cane. Sniffing peppermint can cut cravings, lower the amount of calories people consume, and increase focus and attention behind the wheel, studies show. **R**

Cohosts Travis Stork, MD,
and Rachael Ross, MD



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





NEWS FROM THE

World of Medicine

BY KELSEY KLOSS

Back Pain Myth

Grandpa was wrong—stormy skies didn't make his lower back ache. Australian researchers studied 993 primary care patients for a year, comparing the weather when patients noticed acute back pain with weather reports for a week and a month before the onset of pain. Patients commonly believe weather affects back pain, but the study showed that painful episodes were not associated with factors such as temperature and precipitation.

A Microwave That Counts Calories?

Someday you might pop your plate into a countertop gadget and press Count instead of Cook. General Electric Global Research has developed a prototype that emits enough microwave energy to estimate calories in food—without heating it up. Microwaves have different signatures when they travel through fat, carbs, or water, which could

allow this technology to calculate how much of each is in your food. Researchers hope to release a counting device in the next few years.

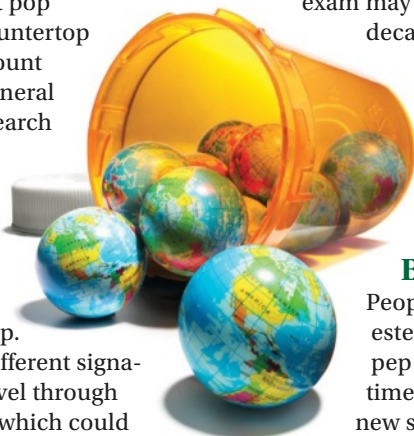
Eyes: A Window to Alzheimer's Disease

Researchers used special technology to examine participants' retinas for deposits of amyloid beta, found in plaques that build up in the brain and contribute to degeneration in Alzheimer's patients. Based on participants' PET brain scans, researchers found that amyloid levels in the eye correlated with those in the brain. This means a simple eye exam may detect Alzheimer's

decades before patients have symptoms and could help monitor disease progression.

When Optimism Backfires

People with low self-esteem don't want a pep talk during hard times, according to a new study in the *Journal*



PROP STYLIST: LISA EDZALV FOR BERNSTEIN & ANDRIULLI

of Personality and Social Psychology. In a series of experiments with young adults, researchers discovered that participants with low self-esteem found “positive reframing”—encouraging people to see the glass as half full—far less helpful than did people with high self-esteem. Participants with low self-esteem preferred supporters who just acknowledged that their situation was difficult.

Blame Parents for Teens’ Distracted Driving

Parents can distract their driving teens, even when they’re not in the vehicle. In a recent study of more than 400 teens presented at an American Psychological Association meeting, 53 percent of those who talked on the phone while driving said they did so to chat with parents. Others said they used phones on the road because they saw their parents do so. Ask your kids if they are driving when they call or text. Tell them to get in touch when they’re off the road.

Screens to Eliminate Reading Glasses

UC Berkeley, MIT, and Microsoft researchers recently introduced a prototype that can make a digital screen correct a user’s vision. A filter is clipped onto a phone, tablet, or other device, and the user downloads software to input his or her individual prescription. The filter then interacts with the screen to

re-create the corrected vision that glasses would offer. The inventors estimate that the technology could be on the market within about five years. They expect the filter would be available for less than \$20, and the software would cost just a few dollars.

Why Older Adults Are Early Birds

In a recent study in the journal *Psychology and Aging*, researchers gave young adults (ages 19 to 30) and older adults (ages 60 to 82) memory tests paired with unrelated words and photos at different times of the day. Young adults had a zero percent distraction rate regardless of the time. Older adults had an 11 percent distraction rate in the afternoon, while those tested in the morning had only a 7 percent distraction rate. The difference is big enough to make early hours optimal for seniors to tackle difficult tasks like doing taxes.

Music Can Make You Mighty Strong

Researchers from Northwestern and Columbia Universities and France found that people who listened to bass-heavy music reported feeling more powerful than those who listened to the same tunes with a reduced bass level. They also generated more power-related words in a word-completion task. Deep bass sounds are associated with dominance (think James Earl Jones as Darth Vader). **R**

Feeling More Forgetful?



Missing appointments or birthdays?

Having trouble remembering conversations?

If you've noticed changes in your memory over the last year and are wondering if it is a normal part of aging or something more serious, you may be interested in a clinical research study.

TO PARTICIPATE, YOU MUST:


- Be between 50 and 85 years of age
- Have had memory problems for at least one year
- Have someone in your life that can attend study visits with you and help you follow study requirements

TO LEARN MORE CONTACT:

1-844-602-0202

www.ApecsResearchStudy.com





Our hilarious look at the most wonderful time of the year—plus a grab bag of holiday jokes to make your spirits bright

...and to all a
**Good
Laugh**



BY ANDY SIMMONS



THE HOLIDAY SEASON officially starts on the last Friday of November, when the first shopper is trampled at Walmart. But the holidays really begin on December 26, the day after last year's Christmas, when your child formulated a gift demands wish list in preparation for the next haul.

For example, one seven-year-old girl wrote this list, to which her dad added his thoughts.

● **“Black, light blue, green, purple, and pink North Faces.”**

Five North Face jackets at 100 bucks each? Dream smaller. That is apparel meant for serious outdoorsmen who dangle from belayed ropes on the south face of K2. The outdoorsiest we get is when we roll down the window at the Wendy’s drive-through.

● **“A new radio.”** Done. I’ll throw in my old Betamax collection as a stocking stuffer.

● **“\$1,000.”** You want cash? Clear the spiders out of the attic. I’ll give you three bucks for it.

● **“A light-up Razor scooter that is the color blue.”** “Dad, for Christmas, can I get hit by a car?”

● **“A new canape that glows up.”** So, like, a glowing miniature crab cake with a toothpick in it? I could maybe do that.

● **“A pet puppy border collie with a peace sign collar and a leash.”** Do you see any borders in this house that need patrolling, apart from the

bathroom door when Daddy is having his alone time? No.

● **“A black rist bange.”** I don’t know what this is, but done.

DREW MAGARY, from deadspin.com

Of course, gift giving may not be everyone’s strong suit.

One year, my father gave Mom a DVD. In and of itself it wasn’t a bad gift, except a) it was a rental, and b) we didn’t own a DVD player.

AMY MARSHALL HODGES, Canton, Michigan

Santa’s a pro, which is why kids bypass parents and appeal to him:

● “Dear Santa, Please text my dad. He has my whole list.”

● “Dear Santa, Sorry for what I did in the past, and thank you for the Christmas letter—I love it. But what I want for Christmas is \$53 billion dollars.”

● “Dear Santa, How are you? I’m good. Here is what I want for Christmas: http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0032HF60M/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1410271945&sr=8-1”

Sources: wgna.com and someecards.com

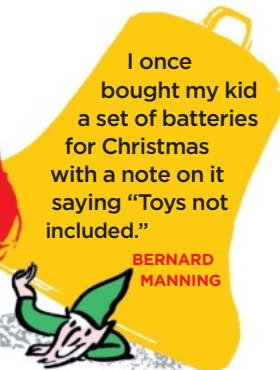


When you stop believing in Santa Claus is when you start getting clothes for Christmas.



This mall Santa seems insulted that I put down that protective paper before sitting on his lap.

@CONANOBIEN



I once bought my kid a set of batteries for Christmas with a note on it saying “Toys not included.”

BERNARD MANNING

What happens when kids' letters arrive at the North Pole? Does Kringle and Co. sell the data to online marketers? We read the fine print on Santa's website:

● **Santa's Privacy Policy:** At Santa's Workshop, your privacy is important to us. What follows is an explanation of how we collect and safeguard your personal information.

● **Why Do We Need This Information?** Santa Claus requires your information in order to compile his annual list of who is Naughty and who is Nice and to ensure accuracy when he checks it twice.

● **What Information Do We Collect?** We obtain information from the unsolicited letters sent to Santa by children all over the world listing specific items they would like to receive for Christmas. Often these letters convey additional information, such as which of their siblings are doodyheads. The letters also provide another important piece of information—fingerprints. We run these through databases maintained by the FBI, CIA, NSA, Interpol, MI6,

and the Mossad. If we find a match, it goes straight on the Naughty List.

● **What Do We Do with the Information We Collect?** Sharing is one of the joys of Christmas. For this reason, we share your personal information with unaffiliated third parties: the Easter Bunny, the Tooth Fairy, and Hanukkah Harry.

LAURENCE HUGHES,
from McSweeney's Internet Tendency

The gift list is done, and there's a nip in the air—time to get your gaudy on!

My daughter and I took the long route through the neighborhood to admire the Christmas decorations. One yard contained a trove of lights, ornaments, elves, carolers, trimmings ... in short, it was a mess. My daughter summed it up perfectly when she announced, "It looks like Christmas threw up."

CECILLE HANSEN, *Seattle, Washington*

Do you hear what I hear? That's right; music is filling the air! Have you downloaded



the latest holiday album? It had them boogying in the streets of Bethlehem centuries ago!

The Little Drummer Boy's Greatest Hits:

Includes the songs "Pum Pum Pum Pum," "Rum Pum Pum," "Ba Rum Pum Pum," "Rum Pum Pum Ba Rum Pum Pum," and special bonus track "Pum Pum Pum, Ba Rum Pum Pum."

Source: someecards.com

Hope you like schmaltzy, sentimental holiday movies because that's what will be playing on cable 24/7 for the entire month. In case you've forgotten these films you've seen only 47 times, some brief reviews:

- **How the Grinch Stole Christmas:** "Crimes against Who-manity"
- **A Christmas Carol:** "Bob, Marley"
- **Elf:** "A Christmas Ferrell"

Source: fwfr.com

Next, the tree. Note: The real trick isn't picking the right pine. It's getting it inside your home. But with our 15-point plan, you'll be trimming in no time.

- 1) Cut the cords that bind the tree to the roof of your car. Allow them to snap back and strike you in the eye.
- 2) Curse.
- 3) Slowly pull the tree toward you.
- 4) Wobble under its weight for a few seconds, then fall down.
- 5) Curse.
- 6) Stand up and notice the fresh scratches in the roof of your car.
- 7) Curse.

- 8) Drag the tree to your front door. Spend 15 minutes figuring out how to open the door while simultaneously getting the tree through it.
- 9) Drag the tree away from the door so that you can enter with the tree facing in the right direction.
- 10) Once inside, fill the tree stand with water.
- 11) Knock all the water out of the tree stand because you forgot to wait to fill the tree stand until after putting the tree in it.
- 12) Curse.
- 13) Your tree should now be in the stand. Notice the fallen needles that have reduced your tree to half the size it was when you bought it.
- 14) Down seven cups of eggnog to settle your nerves.
- 15) Slur your curses.

You're not home free yet. Much more can go wrong!

Securing Christmas lights to the tree can be a production. One year, when we finally stood back and flicked on the light switch, I noticed that a branch obscured our prized angel ornament. I grabbed the pruning shears, mounted a stool, and snipped once, and the lights went out. My husband quietly said, "You don't have your glasses on, do you?"

LYNN KITCHEN,
Parksville, British Columbia

Your Christmas tree has practically become a member of the family:

The needy, spoiled, flamboyant side that knows when it's time to go:

"All that time spent selecting and decorating, and a week after [Christmas], you see the tree by the side of the road, like a mob hit. A car slows down, a door opens, and a tree rolls out."

JERRY SEINFELD

Let's relax and read Christmas cards! Far more than just holiday greetings, they allow you to finally see what your accountant's family looks like.

We once received a card with a photograph of a family in costumes and masks. No name, no text, no return address. We never did figure out who sent it.

GLYNIS BUSCHMANN,
Yuba City, California

Would you like to learn how to write a boastful, overly intimate holiday news-letter? Our indispensable how-to guide can help, illustrated with real quotes.

● Open strong with a passive-aggressive



You know you're getting old when Santa starts looking younger.

ROBERT PAUL

What do you call that period five minutes after the gifts are opened? Christmess.

I am sick and tired of people wishing me a Happy HondaDays! It's like they totally forget that some people celebrate Toyotathon!

@WHATWOULDDODOO

How much did Santa pay for his sleigh? Nothing; it was on the house.

One Christmas, my grandfather gave me a box of broken glass. He gave my brother a box of Band-Aids and said, "You two share."

STEVEN WRIGHT

Did you hear about the bald man who got a comb for Christmas? He'll never part with it.

Why did the Christmas light bring his entire family to the bar? Because when one goes out, they all go out.



attack on a loved one: “[This year is] barreling to a close as Deborah spends yet another Saturday at the wine shop.”

● **Brag about any new job developments—especially if you don’t deserve them:** “I got promoted this year to VP ... shows how little they really know about my past!!!”

● **Be creative! Even good news can be delivered so the reader cringes:** “[My wife has] felt almost every negative feeling you can have during a pregnancy—nausea, fatigue, rashes, arthritis, sciatic nerve pain, hip pains, and strong emotional conditions.”

● **If you want to cement your status as least favorite distant cousins, just write the most dreaded words in the English language:** “We thought it would be cool if we shared what’s going on as a PowerPoint presentation.”

BRANDON SPEKTOR

Sources: gawker.com, worstchristmasletters.blogspot.com

There are those who live by the credo that it is better to give than to receive. These people are, of course, fools. Still, without them, we wouldn’t get as many presents.

An ad spotted in a newspaper: “Congratulations George B. for pleasing 15 women for an entire day! We were all exhausted and very satisfied.”

The next day’s ad: “Our sincere apology to George B. Our intentions were to thank him for a generous holiday shopping trip, which he

arranged. Any inappropriate innuendos were unintentional.”

Source: clamorly.com

Wait, we all know that presents are not what Christmas is all about. (Actually, they are. But for argument’s sake, let’s pretend they’re not.) Let us pause while these children remind us about the story of Christmas:

What animals were there when baby Jesus was born?

“There was a donkey, a sheep, and a cow there as well as Mary and Joseph. It sounds quite crowded.”

HANNAH, AGE SEVEN

What gifts did the three wise men bring? “They brought Jesus presents of gold, frankincense, smurr, and silver. But I think he would have preferred wrestling toys.”

JAY, AGE FIVE
From the *Daily Mail*

OK, enough pretending. Give us the presents already!

Scene: Christmas morning, and I’m opening my gifts.

Dad: “Open that one next, sweetie.” (He points to a box, which I open. Inside is one of those obnoxious singing-and-dancing robot Christmas trees. I’m a bit shocked, as I had pointed out how much I hate these things when we went shopping the week before.)

Me: “Uh, weren’t you listening when I said I thought these were the most annoying things ever?”

Dad: "I know, I know. But ... open that one next."

(This time he points to a long, heavy package. I open it up to reveal a sledgehammer.)

Me: "Is this for what I think it's for?"

Dad: "And you thought I wasn't paying attention!" From notalwaysrelated.com

Even the family pet takes part.

My First Toy

My first toy
Has wood for me to claw
My first toy
Has string for me to bite
My first toy
Has a hole for me to hide in
My first toy
Is called, "Oh, dear God, no!
My guitar!"
My first toy
Is the best toy of
them all.

**FRANCESCO
MARCICULANO,**

from the book *I Knead My Mommy, And Other Poems by Kittens* (Chronicle Books)

The gifts are opened, the egg-nog consumed, and your kid has begun a demands wish list for next year. If you're feeling woozy, it may be because you've

contracted at least one of these seasonal maladies:

- **Pay Saks Disease:** A mania for buying gifts and abusing credit lines, followed by a compulsive urge to carry ten shopping bags at once.
- **Seasonal Affect Disorder (SAD):** An exaggerated emotional response (typically shrieking and air-kissing) triggered by seeing insignificant acquaintances at annual parties.
- **Gift-aphasia:** Loss of memory that causes the accidental recycling of gifts back to the same people who gave them to you last year.

BOB MORRIS, from *New York Observer* **R**



Nothing's as mean as giving a child something useful for Christmas. **KIN HUBBARD**

My husband's idea of getting into the Christmas spirit is to become Scrooge. **MELANIE WHITE**

What did Adam say on the day before Christmas? "It's Christmas, Eve!"

Keep your friends close, your enemies closer, and receipts for all major purchases. **BRIDGER WINEGAR**

Charles Edward Hall got the part of a lifetime when he was cast as Scrooge in the *Radio City Christmas Spectacular*. What happened next surprised everyone—especially him.

FROM *Scrooge*
TO
Santa

BY CHARLES EDWARD HALL WITH BRET WITTER

TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS AGO, when I was a young man in New York City, I had no Christmas spirit. I wasn't a humbug or a bad person. I didn't hate Christmas. But I was like many people: too busy to really celebrate it. Too determined. I wanted so badly to be a Broadway actor that I didn't have time for anything else. Every morning, I woke up at 5 a.m., bought a loaf of day-old bread at Penn Station, and lined up at the actor's union near Times Square with a thousand other



*The spirit of
Santa is real,
Hall says. "All
you have to do
is believe."*

people in hopes of landing an audition for three or four available parts. That was my job, every day, for three years—even at Christmas.

And then I was chosen for a part. A great part. I was chosen for one of the greatest parts in the history of Christmas: Ebenezer Scrooge. And it was in a big, wonderful show called the *Radio City Christmas Spectacular*.

I also had to play one scene as Santa Claus—the worst possible part, I thought, because Santa was so ... good. So boring. But that was OK. I was so happy, I ran all the way back to my apartment and yelled to no one in particular, because I was living in a tiny room and sleeping on a single mattress with all my possessions in a milk crate: “I made it! I’m somebody! I’m Ebenezer Scrooge!”

I worked on my Scrooge. I scoffed. I raged. I felt fear when the ghosts came, and anger, and relief, and sadness, and regret. Near the end of the show, when Scrooge begs the Ghost of Christmas Future for another chance, I got down on my knees, and I cried real tears. When I was growing up, my father was an alcoholic, and my mother cried herself to sleep every night. Until that moment, I had never admitted to myself how hurt and angry and powerless that made me

feel. I guess I wanted that second chance too.

But nobody cared. Don’t get me wrong. Critics loved the show, and the audience cheered, but nobody ever wanted to come backstage to meet Ebenezer Scrooge. No, they wanted to talk to Santa Claus.

Ebenezer Scrooge was just a character. As soon as I walked off the stage, he was gone. But Santa: He was real. It didn’t matter if he was in the play for only a few minutes or a few scenes, like he was the following year. People knew Santa Claus. He was part of their lives.

And they loved him.

I’m not talking about just children. Parents would gasp when they saw me in my costume. Strangers would smile. One time, a news reporter broke down in tears when I walked into the studio. “I can’t believe I’m talking to Santa Claus,” she said.

Another time, a friend asked if her son-in-law could meet me. He’d been wounded in Iraq. (This was later, after I’d been playing Santa for 20 years.) When the young man arrived, he had a huge scar on the side of his head. His wife had to hold him steady as he struggled through the door. But when he saw me, the soldier took three huge steps and, without a word, hugged me so tight, and for so long, that I almost

“

If I could wear a Santa suit all the time, I would never be angry or mean. I’d be a better person every day.

couldn't breathe. That time, I was the one who cried.

I thought, He knows I'm not the real Santa, right? It dawned on me only later that maybe, in those moments, I really was Santa after all.

I know, I know. That sounds crazy, right? But it's true. Scrooge was written out of the *Christmas Spectacular* after only four years, but I've been Santa Claus for almost three decades and more than 4,000 performances, and spending that much time as someone changes you. When you love a person, you can become that person and see the world the way he or she sees it. It happened to me during a show, when the stage curtain malfunctioned, and I had to improvise for an audience of 6,000 people. Suddenly, I found myself sitting with one little girl and talking with her about her life and asking her not just what was on her list but what she truly wanted for Christmas.

It also happened one cold winter day when I was out on the street in my normal clothes, just Charlie Hall, and saw an older woman slip and fall on some ice. Before I knew what was happening, I'd helped her up and offered to take her wherever she wanted to go. I noticed only afterward that she was probably homeless and that she needed my help more than I had realized. She took me to a church.

As I was taking off my beard one

night, I said to my stage manager, "I wish I could wear this Santa suit all the time. If I did, I could never be angry or mean. I'd be a better person every day."

It was only a passing thought, but it has stuck with me ever since. Santa Claus is the best part of me. He's not just the role I play; he's my role model. Scrooge may have unlocked the pain of my childhood, but Santa opened my heart to something better: a childlike wonder. He showed me goodness and joy. He said, "Look at the world, Charlie. Really look at it. And smile. Because there's magic all around you. All you have to do is believe."

Twenty-eight years ago, I wanted so badly to be successful. I wanted to win Tony Awards and play important parts. I wanted to be rich and famous, sure, but more than that, I wanted to be admired for my work. I wanted to be good—but not good in the moral sense. I wanted to be good at my job.

I wanted to be Scrooge because Scrooge was interesting. Ebenezer Scrooge, I thought, would make me a better actor.

Instead, Santa Claus made me a better man. **R**

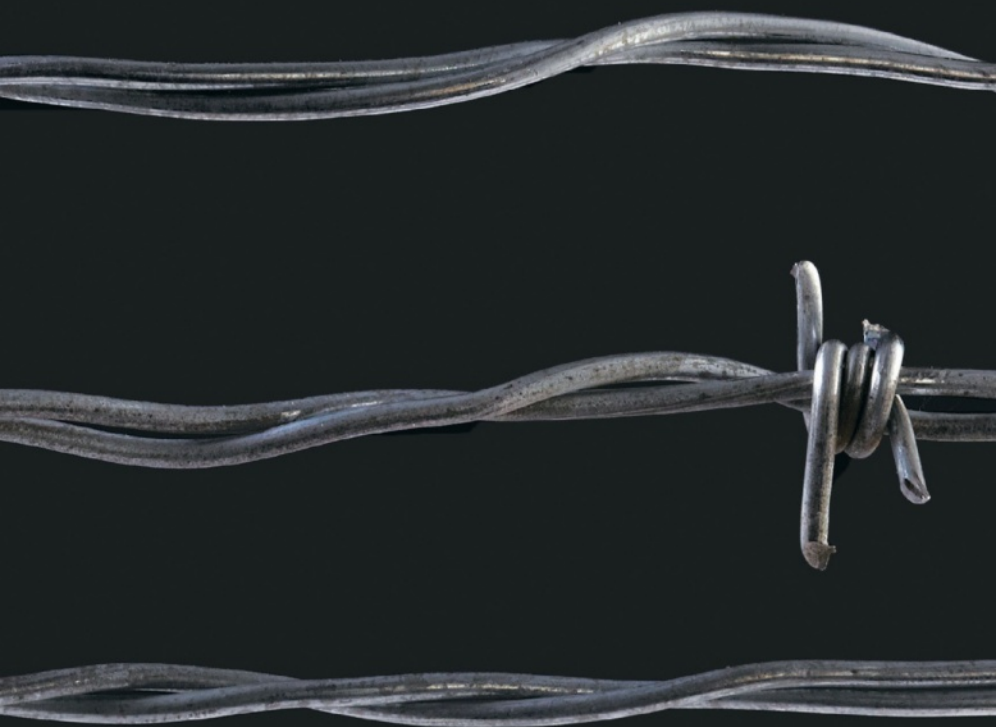
Charles Edward Hall has been Santa Claus in the *Radio City Christmas Spectacular* since 1987. His first book, *Santa Claus Is for Real: A True Christmas Fable About the Magic of Believing*, a family-friendly fictional version of a year at the show (featuring the real Santa!), is on sale now.



THE EPIC JOURNEY

A gold ring is swapped for chocolate in a World War II prison

*David C. Cox's original
aviator ring, at left, courtesy
of David C. Cox Jr.*



OF A P.O.W.'S RING

camp. Seventy years later, it makes its way back home.

BY KENNETH MILLER

The Italian soldier on the other side of the fence held what 2nd Lt. David C. Cox craved with every cell in his body—two chocolate bars. It was March 1945, and both men were captives in the German POW camp Stalag VII-A. The prisoners were segregated by nationality, but the aching hunger didn't discriminate. Inmate rations consisted mainly of bug-infested soup and black bread adulterated with sawdust. In Cox's compound, U.S. soldiers and airmen milled about, as gaunt as scarecrows in their tattered uniforms. On the other side of the barricade,

skeletal captives from other countries huddled against the chill.

The Italian P.O.W. pointed at the aviator ring on Cox's right hand; he wanted it in exchange for the chocolate. The American officer glanced down at the ring and flashed back to the moment his parents had given it to him: on the day he'd graduated from flight school and got married. Tall and fair-haired, the son of a lumbermill owner from Greensboro, North Carolina, Cox had been president of his senior class and finished two semesters of college before dropping out to join the Army Air Forces. He copiled huge B-17 Flying Fortresses on missions over Germany and occupied France. In May 1943, he won a Distinguished Flying Cross for helping to steer his burning plane back to England after a raid in which half of his ten-man crew were killed. That July, however, a Nazi rocket blew his bomber out of the sky.

Cox bailed out over a village in southeastern Germany, where he

landed in a rose garden and was captured by a passing patrol. He wound up at Stalag Luft III, a P.O.W. camp reserved for Allied air force officers. The prisoners were adequately housed and fed; they spent much of their time playing sports, putting on theatrical performances, and digging secret tunnels under their barracks. Only after 76 Allied prisoners fled through one of those excavations did the terror begin. The rest of the men were confined to quarters; when a colonel in Cox's barracks protested, a guard shot him in the throat. Shortly afterward, 50 captured escapees were machine-gunned in the yard, on Hitler's direct orders. All but three of the escapees were eventually recaptured.

As the tide of the war turned toward the Allies, the prisoners' hopes rose. But on the frigid evening of January 27, 1945, as the men in Cox's compound performed *You Can't Take It with You*, an officer stepped onstage to announce, "The goons have just given us 30 minutes to be at the front

gate. Get your stuff and line up!" The P.O.W.s joined tens of thousands of others on a great forced march, in the middle of Germany's coldest winter in 50 years. They walked all night and for the next two days, through a howling blizzard. Those who fell were shot or left to freeze. The survivors, crammed into cattle cars, with buckets serving as toilets, rode for another two days; more men died along the way.

Finally, the prisoners arrived at Stalag VII-A, near the Bavarian town of Moosburg. Designed to hold 10,000 inmates, the camp now packed 80,000 into barracks and tents. After two months, Cox, like most of his comrades, was close to starvation; at 26, he felt weak and frail. A few extra calories might keep him from collapsing for a little while longer.

Cox twisted the ring on his finger. He thought of his mom and dad, his wife, Hilda, and the love and dreams that were alloyed in the golden band. Then he tugged it off and thrust it through the fence.

TO COX'S OLDEST SON, David C. Cox Jr., the tale of the lost ring was as central to his father's identity as the replica that he wore in its place. "My siblings and I heard the story several times," recalls David Jr., now 68 and

a retired medical-equipment executive. "He'd take off the ring and show it to us. I'd put it on, and it would be way too big for me. He told us those chocolate bars were the best thing he'd ever eaten."

After George Patton's 14th Armored Division liberated Stalag VII-A in April 1945, the elder Cox made his way back to North Carolina. He reunited with Hilda—a petite, warm-hearted blonde—and David Jr. was born nine months later. Another boy, named Brad, and a girl, Joy, followed. David Sr. started a tire-retreading equipment business with his

“
Cox twisted
the ring on his
finger. Then he
tugged it off and
thrust it through
the fence.”

younger brother and soon grew rich. There were big houses and tail-finned cars, barbecues and cocktail parties. Outwardly, he seemed the picture of *Mad Men*-era success. But those closest to him saw something darker.

Aside from rare moments of tenderness, David Sr.'s parenting style was harsh and distant. Each morning, he would roust the children from bed as the guards had done, barking, "Raus!" After work, as David Sr. retired to the sofa with a Tom Collins cocktail, Hilda would warn the kids to leave him in peace. At dinner, if they failed to clean their plates, he'd remind them in detail of his own privations.

By the time David Jr. was a teenager,



David C. Cox Jr.'s memorabilia honors his father's World War II service.

his father's drinking had become a serious problem. David Sr. would launch bitter tirades at his wife and kids or withdraw into himself, muttering about the civilians he'd killed in carpet bombings. At work, he picked so many fights with colleagues and employees that his brother eventually forced him to sell his share of the firm. He invested the proceeds in another business, which failed, leaving him and Hilda almost broke. In retrospect, it seems likely that he was suffering from what's now known as PTSD—but the diagnosis didn't exist yet, and his offspring knew only that they found him insufferable.

The gulf widened when Hilda (a former chain-smoker) developed emphysema and David Sr. refused to stop lighting up around her. "She's the one who's sick, not me," he'd growl.

After Hilda died, in 1984, David Sr. passed the replica ring—by then too small for his finger—on to his eldest son, then in his 30s, who wore it with a mixture of pride and sorrow. A few years later—around the time David Jr. caught the ring in a sliding door, breaking it nearly in half—the old man began having trouble finishing sentences. He was diagnosed with dementia.

In 1993, David Jr. reluctantly moved his father to an assisted-living facility near his home in Raleigh. By then, David Sr. could barely speak, aside from the words *no*, *right*, and *you're late*. But he could communicate through shifts in intonation and facial expression—and David Jr. was astonished to discover that his dad was saying, "I love you. I enjoy your company. Please don't leave me alone."

David Jr. visited almost every evening. "I got to like him," he marvels. "I started to see what I'd been missing."

When David Sr. died of a stroke at age 75, in September 1994, David Jr. was holding his hand. "It was a privilege to walk him through that door," he says.

NINETEEN YEARS later, in July 2013, Mark and Mindy Turner went to dinner at a neighbor's house in the village of Hohenberg, Germany. The Turners had moved to Hohenberg from Kansas when Mark, 45, got a job as a civilian air-traffic controller at the U.S. military base in nearby Ansbach. Their neighbor, Martin Kiss (pronounced "Kish"), was in his mid-60s, tall and white-haired, with a square face and a gentle manner. He worked as a master church painter, and the American couple—along with their mothers and Mark's aunt, who were visiting—were eager to see his studio.

Martin's wife, Regina, served a hearty meal on the back deck, and then everyone trooped in to inspect the artwork, which included religious paintings, elaborate wood-and-plaster crucifixes, and a portrait series. When the tour was done, Martin vanished into another room and came back holding a small plastic box. "I have

something else I'd like to show you," he said.

He opened the box to reveal a gold ring, decorated with an airplane propeller, wings, an eagle, and the letters *US*. Then he shared some personal history. He'd grown up, he explained, in what was then Communist Yugoslavia (now part of Serbia), where his family had run a small inn on the Danube River. In 1971, he immigrated to West Germany to become an artist. Before he left, his grandmother presented him with the ring, which had been given to her as payment for room and board by a Russian

“*Martin came in holding a small plastic box. “I have something I’d like to show you,” he said.*”

soldier heading home from the war. Martin's *oma* hoped it would bring him luck; if not, it might be good for a few deutsche marks.

Martin said he'd worn the ring for some time but later kept it in a jar so it wouldn't be damaged while he worked. He'd wondered for years about its origins. From the design and inscription, "Mother & Father to David C. Cox Greensboro, NC. 10-4-18-42," he knew it must have belonged to an American soldier, but he had no idea how to track down the owner.

"Can you help me find this man or his children?" asked Martin. Mark promised to try, and he shot photos of the ring before leaving Hohenberg.

BACK HOME, after about 20 minutes online, Mark and Mindy had found a master's thesis—written in 2005 by someone named Norwood McDowell—on the wartime experiences of Cox and one of his squadron buddies. The tale of the ring and the chocolate bars was told in four sentences.

Mark e-mailed him, asking whether he knew the whereabouts of David C. Cox's family. McDowell responded that he was David Jr.'s son-in-law; the thesis, he explained, was based largely on David Sr.'s diary, which had remained in the family after his death. He then forwarded Mark's e-mail to his father-in-law. David Jr. saw the message when he sat down at his desk the next morning. "I got chills," he recalls. "I said, 'This can't be possible.' I felt like I was dreaming."

More e-mails flew back and forth. For verification, photos of the original ring and the replica were exchanged electronically. David Jr. explained to Mark that the numbers in the inscription referred to his father's birth date and the year he received the ring. He sent a note to Martin Kiss (with the help of Google Translate), offering to pay the value of the gold in the ring.

Martin refused to accept even

reimbursement for postage. "It's not my ring," he later told reporters.

The package arrived two weeks later. On August 16, David Jr. gathered a small crowd in his living room—his sister, his wife and daughters, their husbands and children, and three members of the press. (His brother had died in 1999 of alcoholism, a disease that had claimed several of his kin.) As he tore the paper off the box, his hands were shaking. At last he lifted out the ring. "It's beautiful," his sister exclaimed, her eyes tearing.

"I thought, The last time my father held this, he was trading it away," David Jr. recalls. "I wish it had been returned when he was still alive, so I could say, 'Pop, look what you got!'"

After the guests cleared out, David Jr. stashed the ring in a safe place beside its replica. He takes them out from time to time to show to visitors. "I plan to keep them in the family," he says. "I hope they go from generation to generation, along with the stories."

David Jr. also intends to visit Martin Kiss and the Turners someday and to express his gratitude in person. "If I ever go over to Germany," he vows, "I'm definitely going to take them some chocolate." **R**

* * *

ANALYZE THIS

If you study statistics in school,
what are the odds that you'll need it later?

MYQ KAPLAN, comedian

**Taste
of Home**
Cooking School

ALL-NEW
FROM THE EDITORS
OF **TASTE OF HOME**

Online

 *You'll have fun while learning our best kitchen shortcuts, cooking secrets, home-style recipes and so much more!* 

—**Catherine Cassidy,**
Editor-in-Chief, *Taste of Home*



AT LAST! Now you can enjoy the fun of learning from the **Taste of Home** Cooking School chefs right in your own home!

That's because America's #1 cooking magazine is introducing an ALL NEW Online Cooking School!

Choose from exciting new online courses including:

- **Weeknight Dinners in 30 Minutes or Less**
- **Like Mom used to Make: Comfort Food Classics**
- **Lazy Day Cookin': Slow Cooker Favorites**
- **Fit and Fabulous: Everyday Healthy Cooking**
- **Cook Smart: Tips, Tricks & Techniques from the Test Kitchen**

Go to **TOHCookingSchool.com**

Get **\$5.00 OFF** Your First Course. Use the code **RDCOOKS**



I can tell you this:
You can change someone's
life just by lifting her suitcase

Gripped *By* Kindness

BY HILARY PARKINSON FROM QUEST FOR KINDNESS

I WAS JUST OUT OF college, only three days into a graduate year in England, and I was dragging a heavy backpack and suitcase through the London Underground. I was also crying uncontrollably. As I struggled to get the suitcase up another flight of steps, I was struggling to understand how my life had fallen apart.

The day before, my uncle had informed me that I was never to speak

to him, his wife, or my two cousins again. Earlier, I had made a silly, joking remark. It was never meant to hurt my aunt's feelings, but it did. I spent the evening in an ugly blue telephone booth, weeping as I spoke to a family friend who lived in England.

The most foolish part was that I did not immediately call my parents. As a 22-year-old who had been raised to respect and trust adults, I believed

my aunt and uncle when they said I'd ruined the relationship between themselves and my family. Today, as a 38-year-old, I know this was ridiculous. Their reaction was all out of proportion. But at the time, it was as if I had razed everything my family had built.

When I left the phone booth, I went back to a silent house with three closed bedroom doors. I did not sleep. In the morning, I heard everyone get up and leave for work and school; no one knocked on my door. When it was quiet, I wrote a note of apology and left it in my uncle's bedroom. I dragged my bags the mile to the train station. When I got into London, I had to take the Tube to the Angel underground station to get to my family friend's house.

I was familiar with the Tube, but at the time, it was a tube of endless white tiles. I was exhausted. Coming to England seemed like a bad decision. Worst of all, no elevators were working. Crying yet again, I tried to lift my suitcase up the stairs.

Suddenly in my slog there were hands. No one said anything, but each time I faced another set of steps,

a hand would grip the suitcase handle and lift it. At the top of the steps, the hand would let go, and I'd pull the suitcase to the next set. And just as I was about to struggle again, another hand would materialize.

It happened several times. I never looked up, because I could not stop crying. I do remember thinking through the haze of grief that each hand looked different, that many different people helped me, without asking or saying anything. They just helped, right up to the top of the last flight of stairs that exited the station. I couldn't look up. I wasn't able to say thank you.

I went on to have an amazing year studying in England, and I made some friendships that continue to sustain me. But that was the last time I saw or spoke to any of those four family members. Yet when I think about that terrible loss in 1998, I remember those strangers' hands. They were there when I needed them, and even now, they pull me through the sadness of that memory. I think of them as I ride the Metro in DC today, and I watch the commuters and tourists surge by, just in case someone needs a hand. **R**

COPYRIGHT © 2010 BY HILARY PARKINSON. QUEST FOR KINDNESS (JULY 22, 2010). ALICIABESSETTE.COM.

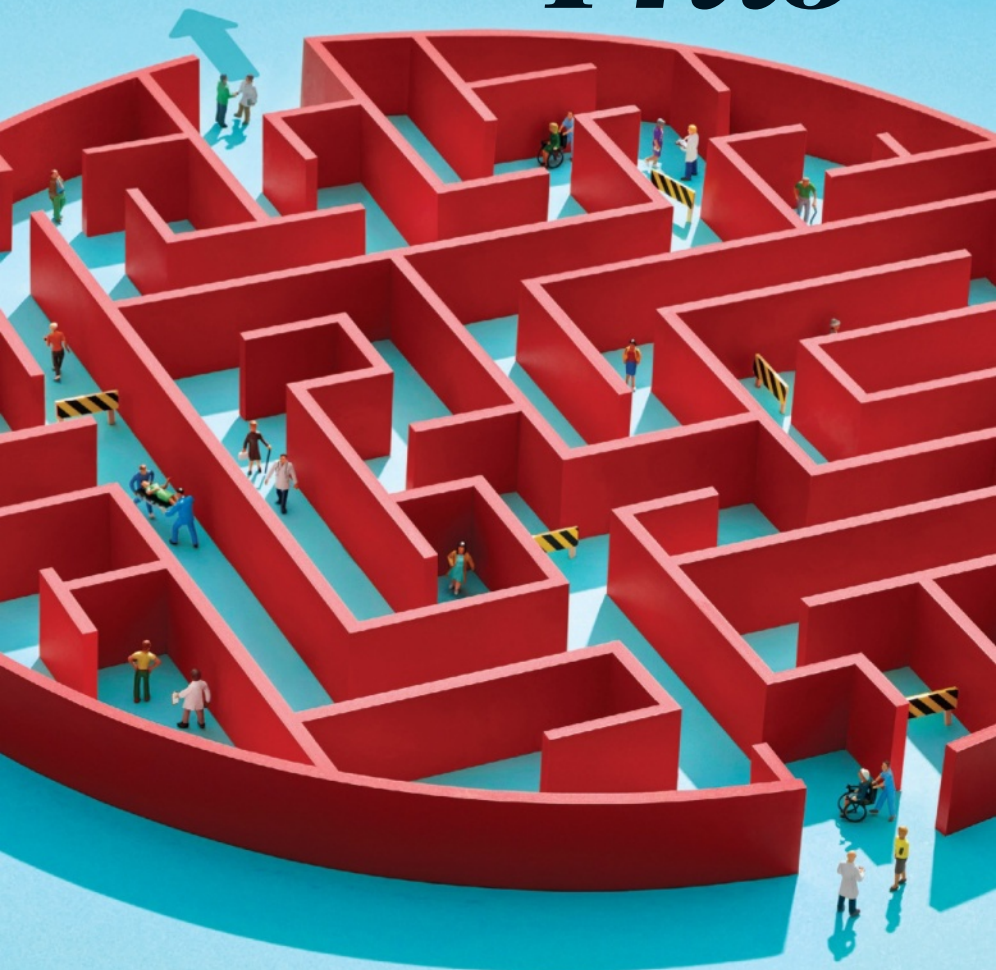


THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DEATH AND TAXES ...

... is that death does not get worse every time Congress meets.


WILL ROGERS

Diagnose This



Three experts. Three completely different opinions. A patient relies on her own wits (and a bit of trickery) to challenge her physicians.

BY HEIDI JULAVITS FROM *HARPER'S MAGAZINE*



THE PATIENT, a 44-year-old female, has ringing in the right ear. The doctor asks a few follow-up questions. Do you suffer from migraines? Yes. Are you dizzy? Not dizzy. What she feels more resembles occasional motion sickness.

The doctor looks in the patient's ear. "You may be in the very early stages of Ménière's disease. Don't look it up online," she says, not joking. "Let's schedule a hearing test."

As the receptionist processes the patient's co-pay, the patient Googles "menieres disease" on her phone. Bilateral hearing loss is involved, as are "severe, incapacitating, unpredictable" vertigo that can last for hours and tinnitus that "disturbs your sleep." The disease is likely to cause stress, anxiety, and depression. Had the patient—who until six months ago had never been sick in her life—not recently been misdiagnosed with interstitial cystitis, an incurable inflammation of the bladder lining, about which an online sufferer quoted her doctor as saying, "It won't kill you, but it will make you wish you were dead," she might have panicked. As she'd done the last time she'd been given a living death sentence by a medical expert, she might have wept as she walked home through the park.

Because she knows better, she does none of these things.

THE SELECTIVE HEARING of doctors, according to Leana Wen and Joshua Kosowsky in their book *When Doctors Don't Listen: How to Avoid Misdiagnoses and Unnecessary Tests*, is the result of "cookbook medicine." It trains doctors to follow "recipes." They explain as follows:

If the patient has “chief complaint A,” then ask about risk factors 1, 2, and 3. If present, then do a workup with tests I, II, and III. If negative, then diagnoses x, y, and z can be ruled out, so consider additional tests IV, V, and VI.

Doctors, they conclude, are listening, but not to your entire story. They

scenario. A middle-aged, overweight man with chest pain? That’s a heart attack until proved otherwise.”

Wen and Kosowsky compare cookbook medicine to a detective who solves a murder by focusing on a single suspect in order to prove he or she is not the murderer. The detective



She does not want to anger the doctor by appearing to think she knows more than he does.

are listening for a “chief complaint” in order to activate a diagnostic protocol.

Wen and Kosowsky examine the case of an out-of-shape 48-year-old man who, while moving heavy boxes, experienced tightness in his chest. The man went to the ER. At the mention of chest tightness, the triage nurse activated the “chest pain pathway.” He was trussed up in electrodes. This seemed unnecessary to him, given that the tightness was subsiding, but he decided to heed their advice, even though he’d be paying out of pocket for some tests. The patient received an EKG, a chest X-ray, and multiple blood draws. A stress test the next day proved inconclusive. He was deemed out of shape and released.

Said this man’s ER doctor: “We know that very few, if any, of these patients will ultimately turn out to have heart attacks. But we always have to think about the worst-case

expends all his or her resources on proving the innocence of the suspect. Meanwhile, the real murderer is still running around, causing more harm.

AFTER CONFIDENTLY reassuring herself that she does not have a disease—Ménière’s—that afflicts less than half a percent of the population, the 44-year-old patient keeps Googling. She discovers that a man incorrectly diagnosed with Ménière’s turned out to have a temporomandibular joint (TMJ) problem. The patient grows excited.

Because she does not want to anger the doctor by appearing to think she knows more than the doctor does, she makes no mention of the discoveries she’s made online. She does mention her latest symptoms, nausea and the inner-ear pressure. Then she says, as neutrally as possible, “I awake each morning with a tight jaw. My neck

is sore. My tooth aches." The doctor doesn't seem interested in her jaw, neck, and tooth. She says, "Nausea and ear pressure are consistent with Ménière's." She gives the patient a hearing test. The patient passes. The doctor says, "Come back in six months; if your hearing has worsened, we can be pretty certain that you have Ménière's."

The patient breaks doctor-patient etiquette and forthrightly says, "Is it possible this is a TMJ problem?" The doctor says, noncommittally, "It's possible. But I don't treat TMJ." She does not suggest a doctor who does. The patient asks for a recommendation; the doctor mentions the name of a nearby institute. "You can look it up online," she says.

IN 2000, Rita Charon founded the Program in Narrative Medicine at Columbia University. It has become a required part of the Columbia Medical School curriculum. Students must enroll in a seminar on literature, visual arts, philosophy, or creative writing during the spring semester of their first year. "The more I learned in a rigorous way how the novel worked," Charon, who has an MD and a PhD in English, told me last year, "the better my doctoring became." The act of close-reading a text—or studying a painting or a film—she maintains, equips students to become "better perceivers of multivalent scenarios."

Charon cites her own clinical prac-

tice as a way to honor the subjective report. The usual entry point to doctor-patient interrogation is "So what brings you here today?" Charon says to patients, "I need to know a great deal about your body, health, and life. Please tell me what you think I should know about your situation."

Research shows that the more compassionate the doctor, the better the health outcomes. According to an article in *Becker's Hospital Review*, higher degrees of empathy correlate with fewer medical errors and improved satisfaction for doctors, nurses, and patients.

THE 44-YEAR-OLD patient narrates her situation to anybody who will listen. These stories could help identify her illness. The girlfriend of a friend in London has ear ringing that's alleviated by osteopathic neck treatments and craniosacral massage. This same friend's friend suffered from ringing, sound sensitivity, nausea, and dizziness and was helped by something called vestibular therapy. A friend in Maine without health insurance says that he, too, was often debilitatingly nauseated. His wife watched a video on YouTube of the Epley maneuver, a gentle back-and-forth twisting of the head; she performed the move on her husband, and his nausea disappeared.

At a dinner party, the patient is introduced to another possible diagnosis. Her dining mate's mother suffered from labyrinthitis. The symptoms

match hers. Labyrinthitis, she learns online, can be caused by a virus. The patient remembers that she had a head cold before her ear problems started.

She makes an appointment with a highly recommended ear doctor. He has no openings for two months. In the meantime, she decides to see her GP. When speaking to this doctor, she can be a little wordier with her presentation. She is entertaining and engaging but hews to the salient facts. The doctor listens. He waits until she's finished talking. Then he thinks. Then he speaks. He says it sounds like she has labyrinthitis. That it takes a long time for the inner ear to recalibrate. That her symptoms should subside in a month or so.

The patient is still nauseated and her ear is still ringing, but it's amazing how much less scared she feels just because someone listened to her. Whether or not the GP's diagnosis is correct, his prognosis comes to pass. Within three weeks, she is completely better. She decides to keep her appointment with the reputable ear doctor. She's simply curious: What will he conclude from her story?

IN THE WEEKS before she visits the highly recommended ear doctor, the patient thinks about how naming is a useful way for doctors to identify a collection of symptoms that prove otherwise a puzzle. To name a collection of symptoms is to give the patient what she believed, until

recently, she most wanted when she went to a doctor: a firm diagnosis.

But patient-centered care requires the patient to be a highly active co-detective. It requires that she relinquish the need for the kind of clear answer she's come to expect when she goes to a doctor's appointment. This confident diagnosis is so very hard to give up. Though I—the 44-year-old patient in this story—know better, I still go to doctors, desperately believing in their authority. I want my future narrative to be predictable based on a time-tested treatment for my recognized problem. But bodies don't work that way. Doctors shouldn't be expected to work that way either. Patients need to be reeducated too.

How might acts of collaborative diagnosis emerge? It might start with doctors acknowledging the increasingly informed patient base. A patient's Internet findings, even if wrong, are not irrelevant. The search is how the patient articulated her suffering to herself. I can imagine a time in the near future when the doctor says not, "So what's bothering you today?" but rather, "Tell me about your search terms."

THE PATIENT finally attends her appointment with the highly recommended ear doctor, male. Not a listener, either, this ear doctor. Brusque and in a hurry. But the patient is asymptomatic now. Stakes are low.

She tells her story again. She omits

her visit to her GP and his diagnosis, but she does mention the first ear doctor and the Ménière's diagnosis. The doctor says, "This doesn't sound like Ménière's."

After listening (sort of) to the patient's symptoms, of which she stresses the nausea was most debilitating of all, the ear doctor proclaims that the patient has a TMJ issue. The patient is secretly delighted. This means she wasn't totally off base when she discovered TMJ to be one possible explanation.

She asks what one does to treat TMJ, though of course she already knows. The doctor recommends a mouth guard worn at night and ibuprofen for the neck and jaw soreness. "What about physical therapy?" the patient asks. TMJ specialists swear by it, as do patients.

"I don't usually send TMJ patients to physical therapy," the doctor says. "Physical therapy doesn't really help." She considers pulling up on her phone the many expert opinions—issued by doctors every bit as reputable as this one—that contradict this doctor's belief about physical therapy.

Then she remembers her most debilitating symptom. The nausea. She asks the doctor, "So does TMJ explain the nausea?"

"No," the doctor says. "TMJ doesn't cause nausea."

"But that was the most debilitating

of my symptoms," says the patient. The doctor doesn't respond.

"Is it possible," the patient says, "that I had labyrinthitis, and also a persistent if mild case of TMJ? Is it possible that my symptoms were caused by two simultaneously occurring problems?"

"It's possible," says the doctor. The patient senses the doctor getting miffed.

"Well," she says, trying to leaven the tone, "thank you for telling me I don't have Ménière's disease! That never sounded like the right diagnosis to me."

The doctor responds, not unsarcastically, "I'm glad I could give you the diagnosis you wanted."

As she leaves, the patient feels angry and condescended to, but why? He gave her the diagnosis she wanted. But she really wanted reassurance that visits to doctors won't always require her to feign respect for supposed expertise while silently knowing that there are many other testimonies that contradict his or her opinions.

She recalls a question she was asked by the first ear doctor who thought she might have Ménière's. "Before the ringing started, what did it used to sound like in your ear?"

The patient couldn't remember. Now the irony of this failure strikes her. She should try to hear what she's previously ignored, to register what the absence of illness sounds like. She stops on the sidewalk. She closes her eyes. She listens. **R**

For 13 years, a polar bear endured abuse and near starvation in the tropics. Here, the extraordinary story of her rescue and recovery.

Saving Bärle, The Circus Bear

BY ELSE POULSEN

FROM THE BOOK *BÄRLE'S STORY*



IN A SOUTH-FACING SLOPE in northern Canada, chunks of snow roll down the hummock from an underground disturbance. When the surface finally erupts, out pops the head of a female polar bear. She inhales through her nose and exhales through her mouth.

Four months earlier, the bear had given birth to twins. Delicately furred, they tucked into her belly for warmth and food. She licked her cubs to keep them clean, nudging them back into place when they squirmed away.

At four weeks, they could hear, and

at five weeks, their eyes opened fully. By their sixth week, they were trying to walk. Soon it was time for a move—the space was too small and cramped, as the cubs trampled all over their mother and each other.

The female emerges from her den

BÄRLE



**CRAMMED
IN A
CAGE**

Gentle Giant

**SEARING
HEAT**

for the first time in eight months. She slides down the knoll on her belly, then rolls onto her back, wiggling in the snow to clean her fur. In seconds, two little heads pop from the crater. The cubs try to scramble down the hill, until, giving up control, they tumble like balls into their mother.

BÄRLE'S LIFE could have begun this way. It's thought that she was born and raised on the west bank of Hudson Bay in 1984. Records suggest she may have been sent to Germany in 1986 through the Manitoba Polar Bear Export Program. Developed by

biologists, conservation officers, and government officials, the program was dedicated, in large part, to relocating orphaned cubs to facilities abroad. In Germany, Bärle (pronounced "bear-la") ended up with animal trainer Fredy Gafner. Shortly after 1990, Gafner took his bear show to the Mexican Suarez Brothers Circus.

For 13 years, Bärle and six other polar bears (Alaska, Royal, Willy, Masha, Boris, and Kenny) were forced to perform pantomimes of human behaviors: walking upright while climbing stairs, dancing to music, and playing with balls. Bärle was denied not only the ability to run, swim, and climb but also the chance to

find a mate, raise young, and hunt. She endured mental and physical pain—trainers whipped the bears on the face, head, and hindquarters—as well as a sweltering Caribbean environment hostile to her polar-bred sensibilities.

Over five million years, polar bears have evolved to handle extreme cold.

They can overheat when the temperature rises above -4°F, forcing them to plunge into the ocean or lie on their backs on a frozen surface—options unavailable to Bärle. Heat's effect on a polar bear is dramatic. While humans sweat to stay cool, bears don't. They must pant to cool off, so the hotter it is, the more

“
Bärle looked older than her 18 years, yet a cub-like innocence shone through her expression.”

frequent the panting. A polar bear's normal respiration rate is between ten and 30 breaths per minute, with 30 being the high end after exertion. The suspected rate for the circus bears? Sixty, while lying still. As a result, they were dehydrated and scrawny.

When not performing, Bärle and her peers were warehoused in a trailer divided into seven 64-square-foot metal cages. They had to lie diagonally if they wanted to rest on their bellies, curl up into a C shape to lie on their sides, or put their feet against the wall to lie on their backs. Animal investigators documented temperatures as high as 113°F next to their cages.

Bärle would likely never have been

rescued had it not been for Ken and Sherri Gigliotti, a Canadian couple. In 1996, the Winnipeg residents took a wedding anniversary trip to Cozumel, Mexico, where they visited the Suarez Brothers Circus. They were shocked by the polar bears' appearance and conditions, so they brought home a circus program and shared it with the *Winnipeg Free Press*. When the newspaper published the photos later that year, it triggered an international outcry. "We were told some of the bears came from Churchill, Manitoba, and we are from Winnipeg," said Ken, explaining why they were determined to bring evidence of the bears' suffering back to Canada. "That made it personal to us, and we were appalled that these magnificent animals could be so out of place and so far from home."

SOON AFTER the *Free Press* story appeared, Debbie Leahy, then director of Captive Animal Rescue and Enforcement at People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, began investigating the Suarez Brothers Circus. She watched the bears perform several times, and once she received a behind-the-scenes tour. During each visit, the bears were panting and filthy. The stench of urine filled the tent, and flies were everywhere. "It was horrifying," Leahy said.

Leahy devoted herself to the bears' rescue. She inspired government officials, community leaders, zoo directors, veterinarians, and celeb-

rities to advocate for them. In 2002, the Manitoba government passed the Polar Bear Protection Act, which stipulated that only orphaned cubs under two years of age were eligible for zoo placement and that to be considered, zoos must satisfy strict standards.

Due to mounting pressure from interest groups, complaints from the public, and regular visits from USDA inspectors, the Suarez Brothers Circus chose to abandon its seven polar bears in Puerto Rico. On November 5, 2002, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officially seized custody of the animals, and two weeks later, preparations were made for their transit.

In mid-November, the bears, known as the Suarez Seven, were airlifted out of the Caribbean. A FedEx plane deposited them at zoos across the United States; Detroit, Bärle's new home, was the final stop. As an animal-behavior expert who had studied bears for a decade, I had been given the task of her rehabilitation. I went with my colleagues from the Detroit Zoo to the airport, where we took possession of the crate containing Bärle.

After our van arrived at the zoo, our team piled out of the vehicle. A gurney was wheeled near the loading dock, and the back doors of the van were opened. When all was in place, we reentered the van and surrounded the crate. On the count of three, we heaved our cargo—weighing 400 pounds—and slid it forward to the gurney. Bärle's conduct caught me off



Bärle teaches her nine-month-old cub, Talini, to swim in 2005 at the Detroit Zoo; Talini still lives there today.

guard: There was no huffing, jaw snapping, or crouching in a corner, which seemed out of character for a bear. Thinking about her life, I realized that probably the only reprieve she got from her trainers was while she was traveling. In her crate, she couldn't get hit or hurt. Maybe that's why she was so calm. But if her crate offered her the only refuge she'd known in her 13 years, would we be able to coax her out of it and into her new quarters?

We wheeled the crate from the loading dock and into the quarantine area—where she would be spending the next 30 days—and pushed one end of the crate to rest on the entrance of her enclosure. While my colleagues chained the crate onto the enclosure fence to secure it for Bärle's exit, I began interacting with her, hoping to demonstrate we were harmless. In my years of rehabilitating wildlife, I

had learned a valuable lesson: First impressions count. I take no chances with charm; I buy my way in. With Bärle, I had grapes—sweet, juicy grapes.

I crouched in front of her, and we locked eyes. Like humans, bears communicate using a combination of words (in their case, sounds that have specific meaning) and body language.

I pushed a grape through the crate's metal mesh and held it up to her nose. Never taking her eyes off mine, she gently held the fruit with her lips and then intentionally dropped it, with what seemed to be a smile. I've experienced this behavior before with bears and interpret it as politeness. A bear may not want or need what I'm offering but will take it if it wants the interaction to continue. If annoyed, it will refuse the object, refuse to make eye contact, and express aggression with paw slamming or huffing.

I didn't know if Bärle had ever tasted grapes before. Her diet in the circus had consisted largely of old bread, lettuce, carrots, and cheap dog food. I offered her a second grape, which she took with her lips and ate. Her smile hadn't waned. It didn't matter to me if she ate the fruit or not; my objective was to show her we could be

trusted so that she'd feel comfortable enough to leave the crate.

BÄRLE'S FACE was a curious wash of age and youth. She was a small bear with a head no bigger than mine. Her fur was a mess. The long guard hairs were broken or missing, her undercoat was matted, and bald spots revealed flaky black skin. Her facial muscles had atrophied, giving her the sunken appearance of an abused bear. She looked older than her 18 years—in captivity, polar bears can live until their late 30s—yet a cub-like innocence shone through her expression. The complexity of it and her radiance drew me in.

Michelle Seldon, associate curator of mammals, told me the crate was locked in place. "It's time," she said. I tossed a trail of grapes from the crate to a room where a straw nest awaited. I stepped out of the enclosure and locked the door, and we lifted the slides between the enclosure and the crate.

Bärle stayed seated. I called her name. One ear rotated in my direction. She inhaled, assessing her environment. She took one step, then another over the threshold. Fighting to con-

tain our delight, we slowly closed the slides behind her. For us humans, this moment was deeply moving. Some staff members had tears in their eyes; we were shutting the door on Bärle's circus life forever.

No doubt she had detected the drop in temperature, the grapes, and straw so fresh, you could smell its sweetness. Bärle feigned interest in the grapes. Then she moved forward, gaining speed down the hall to the straw. She approached it cautiously, first mouthing and smelling it, putting a paw in, then mowing her belly through it, and finally falling over in a full-body roll-and-rub dance. With straw caught in her dreadlocked coat, she fell asleep. Like relieved parents, we turned out the lights and softly closed the door.

*Over the next decade, Bärle thrived in her new habitat—a four-acre tundra enclosure with an outdoor cave, two pools, and wood-chip beds. The area was already home to seven other polar bears, and Bärle became close to a male named Triton. On November 22, 2004, she gave birth to a female cub named Talini. In 2012, Bärle died at the age of 27 from liver cancer. **R***

BÄRLE'S STORY, COPYRIGHT © 2014 BY ELSE POULSEN, IS PUBLISHED BY GREYSTONE BOOKS LTD., GREYSTONEBOOKS.COM.



HISTORY LESSON FOR KIDS

Before there was Facebook, it was truly touching and thoughtful if someone remembered your birthday.

@HELYTIMES

Laughter

THE BEST MEDICINE



IT'S NEW YEAR'S EVE, and the restaurant is hopping—revelers, band, overworked waiters. Wending his way through the crowd is a drunk, staggering back to his seat. Spotting an attractive woman sitting alone, he says, “Pardon me, miss, did I step on your feet a few minutes ago?”

“Yes,” she says testily, “you did.”

“Good! I knew my table was around here somewhere.”

HOW DO YOU DROWN a hipster? Throw him into the mainstream.

Submitted by **JESSE REHN**,
Green Bay, Wisconsin

A CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST had twin boys—one was an optimist; the other, a pessimist. Just to see what would happen, on Christmas Day he loaded the pessimist’s room with toys and games. In the optimist’s room, he

dumped a pile of horse droppings.

That night, the father found the pessimist surrounded by his gifts, crying.

“What’s wrong?” the father asked.

“I have a ton of game manuals to read ... I need batteries ... and my toys will all eventually get broken!” sobbed the pessimist.

Passing the optimist’s room, the father found him dancing for joy around the pile of manure. “Why are you so happy?” he asked.

The optimist shouted, “There’s got to be a pony in here somewhere!”

FINALLY—WARNING LABELS we can really use:

Google: “Warning! You may find more than what you’re looking for.”

Apple computers: “Warning! High Smug Advisory.”

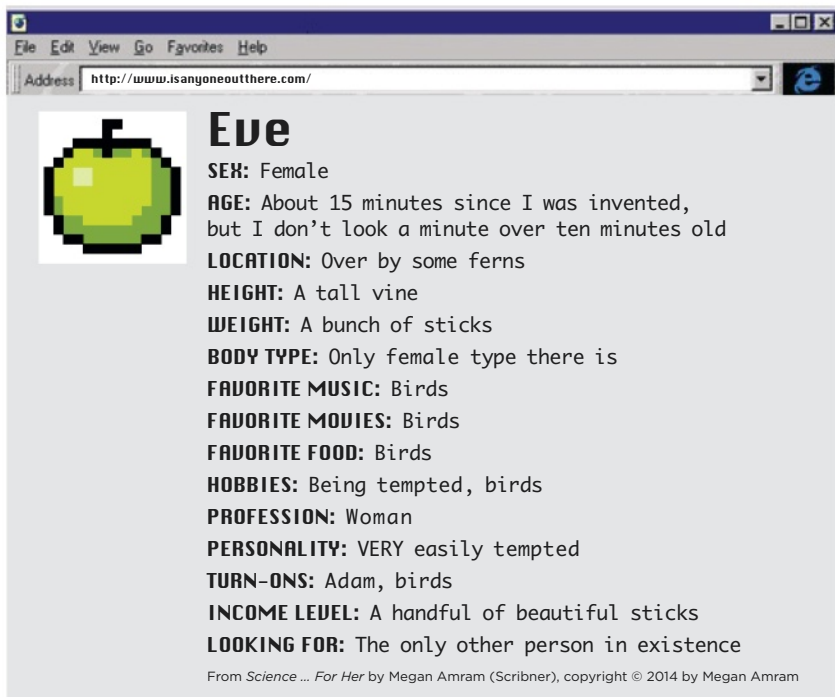
Wikipedia: “Warning label does not exist. Would you like to create warning label?”

Match.com: “Contents may just be settling.”

From gcfl.net

ALERT! You may make money if you send us a funny gag. Go to page 7 or visit rd.com/submit for details.

THE FIRST DATING PROFILE ...



Eve

SEX: Female

AGE: About 15 minutes since I was invented, but I don't look a minute over ten minutes old

LOCATION: Over by some ferns

HEIGHT: A tall vine

WEIGHT: A bunch of sticks

BODY TYPE: Only female type there is

FAVORITE MUSIC: Birds

FAVORITE MOVIES: Birds

FAVORITE FOOD: Birds

HOBBIES: Being tempted, birds

PROFESSION: Woman

PERSONALITY: VERY easily tempted

TURN-ONS: Adam, birds

INCOME LEVEL: A handful of beautiful sticks

LOOKING FOR: The only other person in existence

From *Science ... For Her* by Megan Amram (Scribner), copyright © 2014 by Megan Amram

A cancer doctor on losing his wife to cancer

The Day I Started Lying To Ruth



BY PETER BACH
FROM *NEW YORK*

*The author
and his wife
on vacation*

THE VARIOUS STREETLIGHTS IN BUENOS AIRES

are considerably dimmer than they are in New York, one of the many things I learned during my family's six-month stay in Argentina. The front windshield of the rental car, aged and covered in the city's grime, further obscured what little light came through. When we stopped at the first red light after leaving the hospital, I broke two of my most important marital promises. I started acting like my wife's doctor, and I lied to her.

I had just taken the PET scan, the diagnostic X-ray test, out of its manila envelope. Raising the films up even to the low light overhead was enough for me to see what was happening inside her body. But when we drove on, I said, "I can't tell; I can't get my orientation. We have to wait to hear from your oncologist back home." I'm a lung doctor, not an expert in these films, I feigned. But I had seen in an instant that the cancer had spread.

PET scans are like that, radioactive tracers that travel around the body and measure how much work different cells are doing. And cancer cells are very active workers. The scans are like the ground seen from the air at night. When there is no cancer, they look like Idaho, all quiet. Really bad news looks like downtown Chicago or Phoenix.

We pulled into the garage; our tires squeaked on the floor. Ruth was silent. I was silent. I knew. She didn't.

My wife was dead eight months later.

IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG for those films to be examined and interpreted by doctors at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, the hospital where I've been a doctor for more than a decade and where Ruth had been treated when her breast cancer had first been diagnosed, three years earlier, in 2008. Only a few minutes after we parked the car, the phone in our Argentine apartment rang. It was the oncologist.

Ruth and I sat next to each other on the couch, each with a handset. The oncologist used words that were all too familiar to me—*metastasis*, *emergency radiation*, *focusing on "quality of life," not cure*. Technical jargon sneaked into my questions as Ruth's name disappeared from them. "Could she develop cord compression?" I asked. Then her voice: "What's that?"

Ruth's doctor never made us wait. No gentle approach, no euphemism obscuring the truth, no gingerly poke and quick retreat from the scary thing over there. He filled in many answers to unspoken questions. "There's a

lot we can do.” “This is manageable.” “You might have many years.” But then circling back. “It can’t be cured anymore. Our goal now is to try to slow down the cancer and give you as much quality of life as we can.” To paraphrase, the films meant Ruth was going to die.

Ruth appeared just as healthy in that moment as on the day I had first met her at the Baltimore Symphony, 17 years earlier. As beautiful too. But as I glanced over at my dear wife, I saw the people I have cared for over many years on the tenth floor of Memorial Sloan Kettering, where our breast cancer patients go. Ones emaciated, ones yellow from liver failure, ones full and bloated with anasarca fluid ballooning their extremities. Some Ruth’s age, many of them older. Ruth was 46.

I realized that I now had a secret we couldn’t discuss. I could clearly see her future. Where she would end up. What she might ultimately look like. How she might suffer with me standing helplessly by her side.

Her oncologist snapped me out of it as he started to talk about the back pain she had been experiencing in more detail, telling us we had to get

her to New York. Soon. And, *zing*, I switched into doing mode. A lot had to happen, and Ruth and I set about making our lists.

Her doctor told us not to panic, because treating her cancer was not necessarily urgent. The spine was another matter. Because of where the cancer was, her spine could shift, even slightly, and that might take away her ability to walk or even to control her bowels. She needed to get home.

Four hours after Ruth landed at JFK, she was scheduled for surgery. After it was finished, our slow summer began. Ruth had pains. “Like

a fist twisting my intestines,” she’d say. “Like a mule jumping on my spine.” I’d ask, “How do you know?” and she’d laugh. One month passed, she got stronger, and a scan showed that the vertebral bodies were finally free of cancer. The treatment had worked. Ruth had been propped back up after she had teetered.

The cancer wasn’t gone, but it had been eradicated from the one place it threatened her in the moment. Then her doctor started her on a hormonal pill, a common first step in many cases for women whose cancer is fueled by estrogen.

I realized that I now had a secret we couldn’t discuss. I could clearly see her future ... How she might suffer with me standing helplessly by her side.

WE WENT BACK to our lives. We focused on the small things. Went to the beach. She would have good days and bad days, just as long as we kept having days. When Ruth recovered from her surgery and radiation, she went back to work at her bank.

Then, in early autumn, Ruth's doctor sat us down to tell us that the treatment was no longer working. A decision was made: Ruth would stop the hormone pill, which was mild, and get much more toxic treatment with chemotherapy instead.

When Ruth's breast cancer was first diagnosed, friends would routinely comment to us along the lines of "It's so good Peter knows so much about this disease." But others disagreed, imagining I suffered more from my knowledge. Whether I was better or worse off I kept filing away as some pointless academic debate. But in the lobby of my hospital, I knew the answer: My knowledge was too clear-eyed. I couldn't pretend for another day or hour or minute that there were good days ahead.

FOR THE NEXT MONTH, Ruth set about her business, as if taking fistfuls of pills was just something that anyone does in the normal course of their lives. She continued working at her job, in large part, she explained, because she enjoyed it but also because she was sure she would die if she stopped going. She didn't mean it metaphorically.

Then, in mid-November, she had a new complication: intense abdominal swelling. We went to see a specialist. On his screen was a CT scan of Ruth's abdomen. I didn't need a radiologist to help me with those images. I have looked at thousands of similar scans in my career.

In the seat next to me was the woman I loved, my effulgent bride. To her right were her photo negatives, a series of images showing the insides of a dying cancer patient. Much of the liver was no longer liver but was just cancer instead. And the swelling was due to fluid slowly collecting around her abdominal organs.

Ultimately, when the bloating got to a point that Ruth couldn't really get around, the doctors started removing the liquid. It's a procedure called paracentesis that I've performed many times. A small catheter is put through the wall of the abdomen and into the abdominal cavity where the fluid is located, and then the fluid is drained through tubing into vacuum bottles.

The first time that Ruth had the procedure, my heart leaped at what I saw. When the fluid started to flow, it was obvious it was opaque, like lymph fluid, which would have meant that the lymph channels were obstructed and she could have a shunt put in, a meter-long silicone tube that goes into the abdominal cavity, then is tunneled up under the skin, over the collarbone, and then back into the circulatory system above the heart. It's

a serious procedure with serious risks, but from that moment, I wanted that shunt and nearly insisted it be put in.

I envisioned the nutrient-, electrolyte-, and calorie-enhanced fluid that doctors had been gradually removing instead flowing back into her bloodstream and then magically reconstituting her. She'd gain back the 20 pounds she had lost in the past month. Her cheeks would fill out. Her wedding ring would stop slipping off her thinned finger.

So her doctors put in the shunt, right after Christmas, and she nearly died. Once all the fluid from her abdomen hit her bloodstream, her platelets—cells critical for clotting—started consuming themselves. Each morning, the doctors would come in bright-eyed, announcing the plan, which was always the same: see if the platelets went back to normal.

Ruth would ask all the questions while I sat very quietly in the room, listening, not out of politeness but because I knew what was happening. I knew that the doctors would head back into the hallway en masse, and out there they would really talk, the susurrus of their conversations slowly drifting back into our room. They would say exactly what I would: that treatment options were exhausted. That chemotherapy was no longer working, or, in doctor parlance, that Ruth had “failed” chemo. Her breast cancer was now as aggressive as lung or pancreatic cancer. She was terminal.

After several days of the same routine, we went home, with the shunt, just in time for New Year's.

OVER THE NEXT TWO WEEKS the shunt worked in that it kept her belly trim, but Ruth got weaker anyway. My fantasies about weight gain and renewed energy never came true. Ruth's liver had failed; the fluid, after all, had been from that. One day she stumbled on the stairs and told me it was nothing. Then she stumbled the next day and dismissed my concerns when I gasped. Then the whites of her eyes, the sclera, turned yellow. I didn't manage it well.

We were sitting at a coffee shop when the light caught her just right, and I saw it. I tried for a few moments to just keep talking about whatever topic we had randomly landed on, but I discreetly texted a friend of mine from college, also a doctor, in medicalspeak to share the terrible news—*scleral icterus*.

I couldn't hold it in anyway. “Your eyes are yellow,” I blurted out.

She was completely stunned—and panicked. “Why?” she asked. And then something totally unexpected—“What do they do about it?” I seized on this, my escape hatch from having to talk about her liver failing. I said I didn't know; we'd have to ask. Another lie.

The yellowing, first of the whites of the eyes, later of the skin, is like the check-engine light turning on. The yellowing itself is irrelevant; it means

bad things are happening inside. It meant her brain would soon become addled with toxins that at one time her liver could have cleared easily. She was near the end.

The next morning, I took the dog out. Like a cheating lover, I went just around the corner from our apartment building, took out my cell phone, and made a brief call.

"I can't give her chemo," her doctor said. "She's too sick. I can't do it. It would kill her."

"Yes, I know," I told him.

"OK, thank goodness, you know."

We both paused. "One of us has to be the grown-up," I finally said.

He agreed. "But I really don't want to have to tell her there are no more treatments."

"I know. Maybe we won't have to."

When we went to see him later that day, Ruth couldn't get out of her wheelchair to sit on the exam table, so her doctor wheeled up next to her in his office chair. He told her he thought it was best to wait another day for chemo. You might call it a lie, but it was really a feint, leaving open a possibility that was not possible. I sat there, a silent participant in the conspiracy.

Ruth wasn't buying it. A little slumped in her chair, propping herself

up on its arms, she slowly asked those questions no one should have to ask. "How will I die?" "Will it hurt?" "Will my son remember me?"

Our house was full of friends that Saturday. Ruth spent the day on the couch, and in the evening, she told our boy that the doctors just couldn't

make her better and that she was going to die. But that he was going to be OK, and so was I. She told him where he would always be able to go to be with her and that she promised to always be with him everywhere.

On Sunday she slipped into sleep. Sunday night I held her, and I told her it was OK to go, and on Monday she died in my arms. Her last words were "I love you."

NO GHOST ROSE from her body. No ethereal phosphorescent spirit. But it helped to realize that her departure from our lives and from humanity had no relation to what happened next, when the funeral home people arrived. The methodical sequence of gurney unfolding and white bag unzipping. It had nothing to do with her or her vitality. That didn't fit into any bag.

The weeks passed, then the months. I don't remember much of it.

Some days I was nearly paralyzed. Other times I felt this strange disso-

“**I can't give her chemo,**”
her doctor said to me one day.
“**She's too sick.**”
I can't do it.
It would kill her.”

ciative euphoria, like maybe I was playing a game with house money. I had stopped seeing patients when Ruth became sick, and as the months went by after she died, I just never put myself back on the schedule. After a while, other work filled in the gap. I think I could do it again someday, but I'm in no rush to be in those halls, looking at scans, reading over platelet counts.

Our life together was really gone, and carrying on without her was exactly that, without her. I was reminded of our friend Liz's insight after she'd lost her husband to melanoma. She told me she had plenty of people to do things with but nobody to do nothing with.

It turns out that Hollywood has grief and loss all wrong. The waves and spikes don't arrive predictably in time or severity. It's not an anniver-

sary that brings the loss to mind, or someone else's reminiscences, nor being in a nice restaurant where you once were together. It's in the grocery aisle passing the romaine lettuce and recalling how your spouse learned to make Caesar salad, with garlic-soaked croutons, because it was the only

salad you'd agree to eat. Or when you glance at a rerun in an airport departure lounge, and it's one of the episodes that aired in the midst of a winter afternoon years earlier that you two had passed together. Or on the rise of a full moon, because your wife, from the day you met

“
**Our friend Liz's
 insight after she'd
 lost her husband:
 She told me she
 had plenty of
 people to do
 things with but
 nobody to do
 nothing with.**

her, used to quote from *The Sheltering Sky* about how few you actually see in your entire life. It's not sobbing, collapsing, moaning grief. It's phantom-limb pain. It aches, it throbs, there's nothing there, and yet you never want it to go away. **R**

NEW YORK (MAY 6, 2014), COPYRIGHT © 2014 BY NEW YORK MEDIA INC., NYMAG.COM.

Statement required by the Act of August 12, 1970, Section 3685, Title 39, United States Code, showing the ownership, management and circulation of READER'S DIGEST, published 12 times a year at 44 South Broadway, Floor 7, White Plains, NY 10601, as filed on September 30, 2014.

The names and addresses of the publisher, editor-in-chief, and managing editor are: Publisher, Mark Bernardini; Editor-in-Chief, Liz Vaccariello; and Managing Editor, Kerrie Keegan, of 750 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

The owner is Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 750 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, and the names and addresses of Bondholders, Mortgagees and other Security Holders owning one percent or more of the total amount of Bonds, Mortgagees or Other Securities are RDA Holding Co., 750 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

Annual subscription price: \$24.95.

Average number of copies of each issue during preceding 12 months, and of the single issue nearest to filing date, respectively, are as follows: Total number of copies printed (net press run) 3,757,487—3,416,764; paid distribution—sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales 166,807—140,186; paid mail subscriptions 2,888,838—2,574,503; total paid distribution 3,055,645—2,714,689; free or nominal rate distribution 253,306—242,075; total distribution 3,308,951—2,956,764; copies not distributed 448,536—460,000; percent paid: 92.34%—91.81%. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

Jim Woods, VP, Planning, Consumer Marketing

Connections

your link to values and insights each month

Adventure of a Lifetime in Alaska!

Alaska is one of the most beautiful and unforgettable places on earth. Get your FREE Official Alaska vacation guide and start planning your trip today!

TravelAlaska.com/rd.



Get Your FREE Self-Publishing Guide!

Aspiring and established authors alike use LifeRich Publishing to get their books published. Benefit from editorial, design and marketing experience, plus an abundant library of resources assembled by the editors of Reader's Digest. Get your FREE publishing guide:

www.LifeRichPublishing.com



LifeRich Publishing is a registered trademark of The Reader's Digest Association, Inc.

Online Protection For Your Digital Life

MetLife Defender is a 24/7, comprehensive solution that proactively protects you and your family against the full range of today's Internet threats including identity theft, data and credit fraud, and cyberbullying.

Get your **30 day free trial**, plus get **15% off** when you mention **RDHOLIDAY14**.

MetLifeDefender.com
855-693-3637



Protection for Your Digital Life

MetLife Defender services are provided by a third-party not affiliated with MetLife by agreement with MetLife Consumer Services, Inc. MetLife Defender is not insurance. MetLife Defender services are subject to the terms and conditions of the MetLife Defender End User Agreement. © 2014 MetLife, Inc. - All Rights Reserved. © 2014 Peanuts Worldwide LLC LD914389881 [exp0915][All States][DC]

New Year, New You

Get a FREE \$5⁰⁰ gift card when you purchase one of the featured products at Rite Aid for a limited time. For more details about how to get your free gift, visit:

ReadersDigest.com/Connections



With us, it's personal.

Mucinex
Mucinex in. Mucus out!



go to readersdigest.com/connections for more!



Photograph by Stephen Mallon
Chosen by Jeff Tinsman,

*artificial-reef program manager at the
Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife*

“The first one was shocking and looked out of place: a retired New York City subway car sinking slowly at an artificial-reef site off the Delaware coast. We look for materials that will enhance fish habitats, and subway cars are unique. They almost always land upright, and with all the door and window openings, they become condominiums for black sea bass and tautog. After 40 years on the rails, these cars have a second life in the briny Atlantic.”



PHOTO
OF LASTING
INTEREST

What we know about your precious
cargo that you don't

CONFESSIONS OF A UPS HANDLER

BY SARA OHLMS AS TOLD TO ROBERT EVANS
FROM CRACKED.COM

THE HOLIDAYS ARE COMING! It's that special time of year when we spend hundreds of dollars to show our love for family and friends—but if anyone lives farther away than shouting distance, you're going to need the help of a parcel delivery service. Of course, "parcel delivery service" is a synonym for "herds of uncomfortable, sleep-deprived people shoving too many boxes into not enough truck." I was once a seasonal package-loading zombie for UPS. Now I'm here to tell you how to make sure

that Xbox or envelope full of cash arrives in one piece. It's harder than you think.

Why Your Box Arrives Squished

You stuffed the box full of Bubble Wrap and taped the heck out of it. But please don't underestimate how this thing could get abused. These packages sit on a slide while hundreds of others push from behind. If an especially heavy package slides down on top of yours, the box can burst open or get

flattened. And I won't lie and say I've never stood on a package to reach the top of the trailer.

Many people submit claims for damages, only to have them denied because the tape on the box wasn't wide enough. If you don't package your stuff exactly according to a delivery service's rules, the handler can deny your damage claim. (This is true for both UPS and FedEx; check their websites for packaging guidelines.) Oh, and I'll give you an extra hint: Waterproof what's inside. The trailers are gigantic metal or wooden boxes that sit outside for years. Sometimes they get holes in them; when it rains, they may leak.

Have I made you paranoid that you can't ship something expensive without vacuum-sealing it in layers of Kevlar? Let me offer a quick tip: Buy a cheap plastic cooler. They're about \$10. Put the expensive item in the cooler; put both inside a box. If you don't understand why, take the cooler out back and pound on it with a baseball bat. You have a better chance of the bat bouncing up and breaking your nose than you do of breaking through that cooler.



Write "Fragile" At Your Own Risk

We know how you think: Just write *fragile* on the side of a box (regardless of what's in it) so all those strangers handling your package will take extra care! Ha, no. Each loader handles hundreds of packages an hour during a four-hour shift. No one is treating your box like a princess because you had a Sharpie and five extra seconds.

On my very first day, my supervisor took me to one of the trailers to show

me how to load. He took a light package and tossed it up to the top of a stack. He missed. He picked it up off the trailer floor and tossed it back up there. “That said *fragile* on it,” I said, scandalized. He looked at me like I was crazy. “They all say *fragile*,” he said.

So you figure you might as well mark that box anyway—can’t hurt, right? When *Popular Mechanics* shipped sensors in both marked and unmarked packages, the “fragile” boxes wound up taking more punishment.

If your shipment must arrive in one piece, you can pay more to have your goods deemed a “high value” package. Special employees put these packages in waterproof bags and load them into the trailers. They don’t go on any belts. They are hand-carried the whole way.

Crayons Get Me Every Time

I’m in my trailer for up to four hours at a time, surrounded by brown. Anything that stands out can brighten my day. So if you want your package handled a little more tenderly, give it to your small child and let him or her write on it in crayon. I’m not about to smash a package that belongs to some kid. I see all the crayon scribbles and poorly spelled adulation for Mom or Grandpa, and all I can picture is a toddler sending a beloved teddy bear to Grandma because she has only days to live. Nothing is going to happen to Teddy on my watch!

We Feel Bad for Envelopes

Much of the A-to-B movement of your precious shipment isn’t done by hand. Boxes ride belts, and every time one belt meets another, there is a chance an envelope can get stuck between them. When that happens, it’s like tripping at the head of a stampede. There’s nothing we can do for your envelope but say a quiet prayer.

If you need to send a letter, and e-mail just won’t do, put it in a box or use the U.S. Postal Service. Envelopes are their specialty, and the way things are over there right now, it’ll probably get a truck all to itself.

The Problem with Reusing Boxes

Many of you forget to remove old labels. If I happen to notice that a box has two labels, I have to guess which is right in maybe 30 seconds. I usually go with the cleaner label, as I figure it’s been through the system fewer times, making it newer. If I’m in Missouri and I see only the label that says *Arizona*, that’s where it’s going. But suppose the guy in Arizona sees only the label that says *Missouri*. Theoretically, your package could just go back and forth forever.

If you don’t like the environmental impact of buying a brand-new box every time, remove all old labels or memorize the route to your recycling center. And pick up a cooler on your way back while you’re at it. **R**

Laugh Lines

JEER IN REVIEW

The one thing I've learned from the World Cup is that Europe still hasn't mastered the haircut.

@BAZECRAZE

Dollar Tree bought Family Dollar for about \$8 billion. It would have been \$10 billion, but Family Dollar was dented.

@JOETOLYN

Boy, what a bad guy that guy is, that Vladimir Putin. Obama is really getting tough with him. Now he's wearing a much more aggressive shade of beige.

DAVID LETTERMAN

What if the whole ice-bucket challenge is just a long game to bring down the Wicked Witch of the West?

@APOCALYPSEHOW

The Olympics remind us that no matter what country we may be from, we all look dumb using an iPad as a camera.

@DCPIERSON

Can't believe the National Spelling Bee ended in a tie.

@MATTGOLDICH



Not

A boy turns his back on
hatred and violence and
becomes a force for peace

My

Father's

Son

BY ZAK EBRAHIM

FROM THE BOOK *THE TERRORIST'S SON*

ZAK EBRAHIM
*now devotes
his life to
speaking
out against
terrorism.*

November 5, 1990 CLIFFSIDE PARK, NEW JERSEY

My mother shakes me awake in my bed: “There’s been an accident,” she says.

I am seven years old, a chubby kid in Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles pajamas. I’m accustomed to being roused before dawn, but only by my father and only to pray on my little rug with the minarets. Never by my mother.

It’s 11 at night. My father is not home. Lately, he has been staying at the mosque in Jersey City deeper and deeper into the night. But he is still Baba to me—funny, loving, warm. Just this morning, he tried to teach me, yet again, how to tie my shoes. Has he been in an accident? Is he hurt? Is he dead? I can’t get the questions out, because I’m too scared.

My mother flings open a white sheet—it mushrooms briefly, like a cloud—then leans down to spread it on the floor. “Look



Zak visited his father at the Attica Correctional Facility in 1994. The house in the background is where the family stayed for a weekend on the prison grounds.

into my eyes, Z,” she says, her face so knotted with worry that I hardly recognize her. “You need to get dressed as quick as you can. And then you need to put your things onto this sheet and wrap it up tight. OK? Your sister will help you.” She moves toward the door.

“Wait,” I say. It’s the first word I’ve managed to utter. “What should I put in the sheet?”

mosque, desperate to reach him. “He’s not here,” my mother says.

The phone rings again.

This time, I can’t figure out who’s calling. My mother says, “Really? Asking about us? The police?”

A little later, I wake up on a blanket on the living room floor. Somehow, in the midst of the chaos, I’ve nodded off. Everything we could possibly carry is piled by the door. My



*My mother saw footage of the Arab gunman, and her heart nearly stopped: **It was my father.***

I’m a good kid. Shy. Obedient.

My mother stops to look at me. “Whatever will fit,” she says. “I don’t know if we’re coming back.”

She turns, and she’s gone.

Once we’ve packed, my sister, brother, and I pad down to the living room. My mother has called my father’s cousin in Brooklyn—we call him Uncle Ibrahim, or just Ammu—and she’s talking to him heatedly, clutching the phone with her left hand and, with her right, nervously adjusting her hijab. The TV plays in the background. Breaking news. My mother catches us watching and hurries to turn it off.

She talks to Ammu Ibrahim for a while longer, her back to us. When she hangs up, the phone begins ringing.

It is one of Baba’s friends from the

mother paces around, checking and rechecking her purse. She has all our birth certificates: proof, if anyone demands it, that she is our mother. My father, El-Sayyid Nosair, was born in Egypt. But my mother was born in Pittsburgh. Before she became a Muslim—before she took the name Khadija Nosair—she went by Karen Mills.

“Your uncle Ibrahim is coming for us,” she tells me when she sees me sitting up and rubbing my eyes.

Here is what my mother is not saying: Meir Kahane, a militant rabbi and the founder of the Jewish Defense League, has been shot by an Arab gunman after a speech in a ballroom at a Marriott hotel in New York City. The gunman fled the scene, shooting an elderly man in the leg

in the process. He rushed into a cab that was waiting in front of the hotel but then bolted out and began running down the street, gun in hand. A law enforcement officer from the U.S. Postal Service, who happened to be passing by, exchanged fire with him. The gunman collapsed on the street. The newscasters couldn't help noting a gruesome detail: Both Rabbi Kahane and the assassin had been shot in the neck. Neither was expected to live.

Now the TV stations are updating the story constantly. An hour ago, while my sister, brother, and I slept away our last seconds of anything remotely resembling a childhood, my mother overheard the name Meir Kahane and looked up at the screen. The first thing she saw was footage of the Arab gunman, and her heart nearly stopped: It was my father.



Nosair survived his injuries, while Kahane did not. Awaiting trial in prison at Attica, Nosair insisted on his innocence, and his wife and children desperately wanted to believe him. During this time, federal agents raided the family's home, but it would be years before they translated all his papers. Meanwhile, Osama bin Laden, unknown to most Americans at that time, was among those contributing to Nosair's legal fees. In 1991, a jury found Nosair not guilty of murder. He was sentenced instead to seven to 22 years

for criminal possession of a weapon and other charges. The family endured years of death threats, nomadic living, and poverty. Tragically, Nosair's career as a terrorist was not over yet.

February 26, 1993 JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY

I'm about to turn ten, and I've been bullied at school for years. I can't pretend it's just because of who my father is. For reasons I will probably spend my whole life trying to unravel, I seem to be a magnet for abuse. The bullies' latest trick is to wait until I've turned to open my locker and then slam my head against it and run. Whenever this happens, the principal says he wants to be "fair to all parties," so I usually get sent to detention along with the bullies. The anger and dread have made a permanent nest in my stomach. Today's a Friday, and my mother has let me stay home from school to recover from what we agree to call "a stomach bug."

I'm camped out on the couch, watching *Harry and the Hendersons*, a movie about a family who's hiding a Bigfoot-type creature from the police because the police won't understand how kind and gentle he is. In the middle of the movie, there's breaking news: an explosion beneath the North Tower of the World Trade Center. The NYPD, FBI, and ATF are on the scene, the early theory being that a transformer has exploded. The wreckage is horrific.

Later, hundreds of FBI agents comb through the rubble. They abandon the theory about the transformer when they discover remnants of the Ryder van that carried the explosives. The FBI traces the van back to Mohammed Salameh—the deliveryman who'd promised to marry my sister when she came of age—and arrests him on March 4, when he returns to the rental company to report the

ing housing the FBI in New York City.

For practical purposes, though, the WTC operation was run by the Kuwaiti-born Ramzi Yousef. He had studied electrical engineering in Wales and bomb making at a terrorist training camp in Pakistan. He entered the United States using a fake Iraqi passport and, upon being detained, played a get-out-of-jail-free card by requesting asylum. A court date was set.



My mother barely has the money to pay for my father's collect calls. I don't want to talk to him anyway.

van stolen and demand that he get his \$400 deposit back. In the months that follow, America shivers at the previously incomprehensible thought of terrorism at home, as well as at the fact that its government agencies had been caught unawares.

A startling fact emerges: My father helped strategize the attack from his cell at Attica, using visitors as go-betweens to associates back home. One of those associates was his old mentor, the Blind Sheikh, who not only encouraged the WTC plot, according to the government, but also signed off on a plan that would have been far more deadly, had it come to pass: five more bombs detonated within ten minutes at the United Nations, the Lincoln and Holland Tunnels, the George Washington Bridge, and a federal build-

And because holding cells were full, Yousef was released on his own recognizance in New Jersey, whereupon he and his team began collecting the ingredients for the bomb. Just hours after the attack, Yousef left the country.

I wish I could do more to honor the six victims than just repeat their names, but I'd be ashamed if I didn't do at least that much. Robert Kirkpatrick, William Macko, and Stephen Knapp were all maintenance supervisors at the WTC. They were eating lunch together when the bomb went off. Monica Rodriguez Smith was a secretary. She was seven months pregnant and doing clerical work when she was killed. Wilfredo Mercado worked for the restaurant Windows on the World. He was checking in deliveries. And John DiGiovanni was a salesman

who specialized in dental products—he was just parking his car.

BY THE FALL OF 1995, the government, having finally translated the contents of the 47 boxes taken from our home after Kahane's assassination, determines that the killing was part of a conspiracy and retries my father for the murder as well as for his part in the World Trade Center bombing.

My father still insists that he is innocent of everything. I believe him because—well, because I am 12 years old. My mother has doubts. My father rants to her about the conspiracy against him, and he barks orders: Write to the judge! Call Pakistan! Go to the Egyptian embassy! Are you writing all of this down?! My mother yesses him quietly.

On October 1, my father, along with the Blind Sheikh and eight others, is convicted of 48 out of 50 charges, and later he is sentenced to life plus 15 years without parole. The murder of Monica Rodriguez Smith's unborn child is considered in the sentencing.

After the new round of convictions, we see my father once—at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in New York. My mother is terrified about what will become of her and her children. Even now, my father will not admit guilt. When he goes to hug my mother, she pulls away for the first time, so repulsed that she thinks she's going to vomit. For many years, she will try to console

us by saying that we have a father who loves us. But she will always remember the visit to the MCC as the day that her own heart finally gave up.

My father is shipped off to a series of maximum-security prisons around the country. We can no longer afford to visit, even if we wanted to. My mother barely has the money to pay for my father's collect calls. I don't want to talk to him anyway. All he ever says is, "Are you making your prayers? Are you being good to your mother?" And all I want to say is, Are you being good to my mother, Baba? Do you know that she's crying all the time? But, of course, I'm too scared to say any of this. So my father and I keep having the same pointless conversations, and I twist the phone cord tighter and tighter around my hand because I just want it to stop.

My mother wants it to stop too. She demands a divorce, and we all change our last name.

We've seen my father for the last time.



After years of moving around the country and even living briefly in Egypt, the family moved to Tampa. Zak got a job at Busch Gardens when he was 18. There he made friends and came to appreciate people from all different backgrounds.

I'VE SPENT MY LIFE trying to understand what drew my father to terrorism and struggled with the knowledge that I have his blood in my

veins. It was many years before I internalized the full horror of what he did. I carried fear, anger, and self-loathing in my gut but couldn't even begin to process them.

I now understand that there's a reason that murderous hatred has to be taught—and not just taught but forcibly implanted. It's not a naturally occurring phenomenon. It is a lie. It is a lie told over and over

going to judge them based only on who they were. She listened, she nodded, and she had the wisdom to speak the six most empowering words I have ever heard: "I'm so tired of hating people."

Everyone has a choice. Even if you're trained to hate, you can choose tolerance. You can choose empathy.

To be honest, I still feel something for my father, something that I haven't



*Everyone has a choice. Even if you're trained to hate, you can choose tolerance. **You can choose empathy.***

again—often to people who have no resources and who are denied alternative views of the world. It's a lie my father believed, and one he hoped to pass on to me. But he could not fill me with hate from jail. And he could not stop me from coming into contact with the sorts of people he demonized and discovering that they were human beings—people I could care about and who could care about me. Bigotry cannot survive experience. My body rejected it.

My mother's faith in Islam never wavered, but she, like the vast majority of Muslims, is anything but a zealot. When I was 18, I told her I could no longer judge people based on what they were—Muslim, Jewish, Christian, gay, straight—and that starting right then and there, I was

been able to eradicate—some strand of pity and guilt, I guess, though it's as thin as spider's silk. It's hard to think of the man I once called Baba living in a cell, knowing that we have all changed our names out of terror and shame.

Every so often, I'll get an e-mail from the federal penitentiary in Marion, Illinois, saying that my father would like to initiate correspondence. But I've learned that leads nowhere good.

Rabbi Kahane's assassination was not just hateful but a failure as anything other than simple murder. My father intended to shut the rabbi up and to bring glory unto Allah. What he actually did was to bring shame and suspicion unto all Muslims and to inspire more pointless and cowardly acts of violence.

One of the many upsides to not speaking to my father anymore is that I've never had to listen to him pontificate about the vile events that took place on September 11. He must have regarded the destruction of the Twin Towers as a great victory for Islam—maybe even as the culmination of the work he and the Blind Sheikh and Ramzi Yousef had begun years earlier.

In April 2012, I had the surreal experience of giving a speech to a couple of hundred federal agents. The Bureau wanted to build a better rapport with the Muslim community, and the agent in charge of the campaign had heard me advocate for peace at his son's school, so there I was—feeling honored but nervous. I proceeded to tell my story and to offer myself up as proof that it is possible to shut one's ears to hatred and violence and simply choose peace.

After my talk, a handful of agents formed a line to shake my hand. The first few agents offered polite words and firm grips. The third one, a woman, had been crying.

"You probably don't remember me," she said. "But I was one of the agents who worked on your father's case." She paused awkwardly, which made my heart go out to her. "I always wondered what happened to the children of El-Sayyid Nosair," she continued. "I was afraid that you'd followed in his path."

I'm proud of the path that I've chosen. And I think I speak for my brother and sister when I say that rejecting our father's extremism both saved our lives and made our lives worth living.

To answer the agent's question, here is what happened to the children of El-Sayyid Nosair:

We are not his children anymore. **R**

THE TERRORIST'S SON, BY ZAK EBRAHIM WITH JEFF GILES. COPYRIGHT © 2014 BY ZAK EBRAHIM, IS PUBLISHED BY SIMON & SCHUSTER, INC. SIMONANDSCHUSTER.COM.



ANIMAL CRACKERS

A hen is only an egg's way of making another egg.

SAMUEL BUTLER

I am fond of pigs. Dogs look up to us.
Cats look down on us. Pigs treat us as equals.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

You know why fish are so thin? They eat fish.

JERRY SEINFELD

Their coffee-date reunion was filled with unexpected insights into memories and honesty

It's Funny What You Remember



JANE SMILEY
is a Pulitzer
Prize-winning
novelist.
Her new book,
Some Luck,
was published
this fall.

BY JANE SMILEY

A FEW MONTHS AGO, I ran across someone on Facebook whom I last saw at my high school graduation in 1967. In fact, though, the last time we interacted was in seventh grade, when he asked me to tell one of my friends that he liked her. After that, things happened as they always do—friendships shift, some kids grow up quickly and some grow up slowly, and everyone heads out into the world to make the best of himself or herself. It stunned me that this former boy should end up in my small town 2,000 miles from where we grew up, and I messaged him—we went back and forth for months about a convenient cup of coffee. This week, we finally got together. I was a minute late to the coffee shop. There was a short line, and as I joined it, I said, “———?” He turned around. I said, “I would recognize you anywhere.” And I would have. Are all faces that you know from when you were a child so imprinted that their lineaments leap out at you, distinct within whatever has shaped itself in the interim? This happened to me in graduate school. I saw a girl I had grown up with, and I recognized her by a vein in her forehead.

He bought a muffin, bought me a bagel. I cleared a table, and we sat down by the window. He said, “I have to admit,

ILLUSTRATION BY JOE MCKENDRY



I had no idea you were famous until yesterday, when I mentioned to a friend that I was having coffee with you, and she shouted, ‘Jane Smiley!’”

I laughed and said, “May I quote you?” Intermittent fame is what writers specialize in.

It became clear that I remembered him better than he remembered me. He was a bit wild in school, while I was, as he said, quiet and studious. I said, “And always at the stables. That was what I was thinking about.”

He said, “I didn’t know you did that.”

That was my first lesson: that most of your life is hidden from people you see every day, day after day, for years. I was quiet; no one gossiped about me. He was wild; everyone gossiped about him. We kept talking, leaned toward one another.

Some of our fellow students had died. We traded names. The ones we remembered had died young—in their 20s. One was a suicide. I hadn’t known about that one. Forty-five years ago, now. We talked about teachers. He didn’t remember anyone fondly. My favorite, a man I thought funny and subversive, had accused him of plagiarism. In retaliation for what I would consider a fairly routine prank, the interim headmaster of our school had written to the colleges where my

coffee companion had applied, telling them he was not a good candidate. For me, college had been a smooth escape, the first stage of my launch toward actually learning something. For him, it had been a dead end, followed by another and another. Perhaps the headmaster and his

father would have seen his fate as well-deserved punishment for being wild, thoughtless, out of control. As a parent of children now in their 20s and 30s, I was horrified at the headmaster’s vengefulness.

My companion suddenly looked me in the eye and apologized for anything he might

have said or done that hurt me all those years ago. I was taken aback—I couldn’t remember a thing, and I said so, but that was my second lesson: Everyone’s view into the past is telescopic, narrow and sharp, dark for some, light for others.

We cataloged our adventures, our educations, our offspring, our marriages, our midlife crises, the anxieties that somehow we got rid of. I am usually aware that behind every communication there is a wealth of images, insights, emotions, and memories, but sitting with this familiar face that I hadn’t seen in 47 years enriched that sense of fullness. Was it stranger that he had been to many

“
***Most of your
 life is hidden
 from people you
 see every day,
 day after day,
 for years.***”

places I have never been, and now will never go (India, Southeast Asia, South America), or that we had been in many places at about the same time (Iowa, Big Sur, my own small town)? I imagined him disappearing around a corner just as I stepped onto that street, us seeing the same things at the same time, but never each other.

Both of us have a living parent, 90 or so, and so our lives are not over, but they are at the culmination stage. I have just published the first in a trilogy of novels that reconsiders and sifts through the history of my grandparents' generation, my parents' generation, my generation, and my children's generation. My coffee mate is about to embark on a building project that will give him a job and a home for a long time to come—he has found where he wants to settle down. We are eligible for Social Security, retirement, old age, grandchildren, looking at caskets at Costco.

After an hour, we both had things

to do; time to head out. I said that I had enjoyed our chat and, "We should get together." The standard response to this remark is "Yes, we should," after which, chances are, you will never see that person again. He said, "We'll see." I was taken aback, but that was another lesson: Introspection and thoughtfulness lead to honesty with yourself, honesty with others. The impulsive boy I remembered had turned into a man who knows himself—someone who has investigated his feelings and his history, who has sought lenses for seeing what he needs to see. My lens, writing books, has done something of the same thing for me. Normally, relationships go on for years, and the friends and family members we bump against and move along with seem mostly the same as always, and maybe when they change, we don't like it. But all of a sudden, and just for a moment, I glimpsed the whole of a single life, and for that moment, I loved him. **R**



REMARKABLE TIMING

- Mark Twain was born during an appearance of Halley's Comet in 1835 and died on the day of its next appearance in 1910.
- Abraham Lincoln created the Secret Service on April 14, 1865—the very same day he was shot at Ford's Theatre.
- John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died on July 4, 1826—exactly 50 years after signing the Declaration of Independence.

Source: dailycognition.com

WHO ? KNEW

13 Things Rabbis, Priests & Ministers Won't Tell You

BY MICHELLE CROUCH

1 I am just a regular person. I get angry when someone cuts me off in traffic. I have kids who disobey me. And yes, I argue with my spouse.

2 When I was a new minister, a seasoned minister came into my office. She said, "How's your day going?" I said, "I am so frustrated. I have the newsletter to work on, my sermon to write, and all these other things to do—but people keep calling with all these interruptions." She said, "The interruptions are your ministry. The rest is just paperwork."



3 A lot of us have trouble saying no to other people's needs. As a result, we work too hard, rarely take vacations or any time off, and can burn out really fast. Several health studies have found that we suffer from higher rates of obesity, hypertension, and arthritis than the average population does.

4 My most embarrassing moment? I was ill with a high fever during a wedding, got confused, and started to give a funeral homily. Thankfully, they were very forgiving!

5 When I was in seminary, I thought I would have all these profound things to say to someone whose spouse had left him or her or whose child had died. But I've learned that what people really want is for you to say, "Oh, that's terrible. I'm so sorry." And then sit there and listen.

6 I used to preach for the kids during a children's sermon and save the heavier stuff for the parents. But then I realized that if a seven-year-old does not understand my sermon, neither does his dad. I don't know if that's bad news for the dad or good news for the seven-year-old.

7 Am I always 100 percent sure that God exists? No. Every minister I know has a faith life that ebbs and flows. Sometimes we feel really close to God, and sometimes we don't. But even when God feels distant and abstract, we're still leading worship.

8 I'm not always on the clock. If you come to my house for a Super Bowl party, I don't want to tell your kids Torah stories at halftime.

9 If I'm in a smaller congregation, I may wear 15 different hats. On any given day, I may order toilet paper, visit someone in the hospital, and plan for the Sunday service. Last week, I dressed up as Moses for Bible school. I thought to myself, This is a random job.

10 The sexual-abuse scandals have caused such a mistrust of the priesthood. In response, some priests don't touch anyone at all. I've taken the opposite approach. I am always touching people—a light pat on the shoulder, a squeeze of the hand—so if anyone ever accuses me, I'll have hundreds of people who can say that's how I am with everyone.

11 A lot of us find weddings stressful because everyone wants to be in charge—the bride, the groom—and we're the ones in the middle of it all. Funerals, on the other hand, are easy because the guest of honor doesn't ask for much.

12 Since I've become a rabbi, I've realized that the moment of truth for many people is after they have passed away and I'm interviewing survivors about their life. It reminds me of how important it is to live your life thinking about what people will say about you after you pass away.

13 Here's a pet peeve: people who tell me not to be preachy. Isn't that why you hired me? We'll always be respectful, but we may say things that make you uncomfortable. **R**

Sources: Rev. Matt Horan, a Methodist pastor in Tampa, Florida; Rev. David Lewicki, a Presbyterian pastor in Decatur, Georgia; Rev. Lauren McLaughlin, a minister in Clearwater, Florida; Rev. Derek Davenport, a Presbyterian pastor in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Rev. Eddie Samaniego, a Jesuit priest in Hollywood, California; Rev. Joseph Jenkins, a pastor in Mitchellville, Maryland; Rabbi Jason Miller in Detroit, Michigan; and Rabbi Hayim Herring, PhD, author of *Keeping Faith in Rabbis*



The Underappreciated History of the Snowman

BY BOB ECKSTEIN

THE SNOWMAN is like a frozen Forrest Gump—look to many of history's cultural benchmarks, and there you'll find a forebear of Frosty. It was a snowman who appeared on some of the first postcards, starred in some of the initial silent movies, and was the subject of a couple of the earliest photos, dating all the way back to the 1800s. I discovered even more about one of humanity's earliest forms of folk art during several years of research around the world.

For example, snowmen were a phenomenon in the Middle Ages, built with great skill and thought. At a time of limited means of expression, snow was like free art supplies dropped from the sky. It was a popular activity for couples to stroll through town to view the temporary works of chilly art. Some were created by famous artists, including a 19-year-old Michelangelo, who in 1494 was commissioned by the ruler of Florence, Italy, to

sculpt a snowman in his mansion's courtyard.

The Miracle of 1511 took place during six weeks of subzero temperatures called the Winter of Death. The city of Brussels was covered in snowmen—a spectacular tableaux that told stories on every street corner. Some were political in nature, angry swipes at the church and government. Some were downright pornographic. For the people of Brussels, this was their Woodstock, a defining moment of artistic freedom. At least until spring arrived, by which time the Belgians were dealing with damaging floods.

Snowmen also played a part in one of the bloodiest events in early American history, the Schenectady Massacre of 1690. At the time, Fort Schenectady, in what is now upstate New York, was a remote Dutch settlement under constant threat of attack. But the soldiers guarding the gates, which were frozen open, left a pair of snowmen at their post to protect the town when they left to get out of a blizzard. Unknown to them, a contingent of 210 French Canadian soldiers

and Native Americans were approaching. Having traveled over three weeks in knee-deep, slushy snow, they were unfazed by the snowmen and invaded the fort, killing 60 villagers.

If you fear the heyday of the snowman has passed, don't worry: I've learned that some explosive snowman history is still being made today. Every year since 1818, the people of Zurich, Switzerland, celebrate the beginning of spring by blowing up a snowman. On the third Monday of April, the holiday *Sechseläuten* is kicked off when a cotton snowman called the *Böögg* is stuffed with dynamite and paraded through town by bakers, blacksmiths, and other tradesmen who throw bread and sausages to the crowds. The parade ends with the *Böögg* being placed on a 40-foot pile of scrap wood. After the bells of the Church of St. Peter have chimed six times, representing the passing of winter, the pile is lit. When the snowman explodes, winter is considered officially over—the shorter the combustion, the longer summer is said to be. **R**



BOOK TALK, THEN AND NOW

Classic: a book which people praise and don't read.

MARK TWAIN

As far as I can tell, a young-adult novel is a regular novel that people actually read.

STEPHEN COLBERT





SEE

THE WORLD ...



Turn the page ➔➔



... DIFFERENTLY

The rainbow eucalyptus grows in tropical climates, and different colors emerge as layers of bark peel off in the humidity. The bright green hue appears first, then darkens over time into blues and reds. Surprisingly, the tree's pulp is used to make white paper.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: CHRIS MARTIN/ALAMY; THIS SPREAD: INTERNETAGETRAVELER/FLICKR



Humor in Uniform



THE MILITARY UNVEILS THE WEDGIEMATIC

The Army's new procedure for putting on pants is a hit with efficiency experts. "And once we figure out how to free them from the ceilings, it will really save time on dressing!" boasted one colonel.

ANDY SIMMONS

WE WERE AN AIR FORCE family, but our son could not grasp that fact. Anytime someone asked what his father did, he'd say, "He's in the Army." I told him umpteen times, "Stop telling people I'm in the Army!" It finally seemed to hit home because on the admittance form for kindergarten, under "father's profession," the teacher wrote, "He doesn't know what his father does, but he's not in the Army."

R. WAYNE EDWARDS, *Somerville, Texas*

HUMANKIND HAS a perfect record in aviation; we never left one up there.

Source: propilots.org

MY HUSBAND is infantry, and he said the most wonderful things to convince me to marry him:

- The closets could all be mine since he wears the same thing every day.
- I could have as many babies as I want because giving birth is free.
- He would never get on my nerves, because he would always be gone.

MOLLIE GROSS

(molliegross.com) is the author of *Confessions of a Military Wife*, published by Savas Beatie.

Do you have a funny military story? Send it to us—it may be worth \$\$\$! Go to rd.com/submit or page 7 for details.


IT PAYS TO INCREASE YOUR

Word Power

Whether you're listening to Christmas carols at the mall or belting out "Auld Lang Syne," joyful music and sound abound during the holiday season. So this month, a sonically inspired quiz. Answers on next page.

BY EMILY COX & HENRY RATHVON

- 1. raucous** ('raw-kes) *adj.*—
A: disagreeably harsh. B: thin and reedy. C: with no embellishment or creativity.
- 2. harangue** (huh-'rang) *n.*—
A: Irish accent. B: ranting speech. C: earnest plea.
- 3. tremulous** ('trem-yeh-les) *adj.*—
A: shaking slightly. B: impressively forceful. C: lyrical.
- 4. mellifluously** (meh-'lif-loo-us-lee) *adv.*—A: in a slurred manner. B: smoothly and sweetly. C: in muffled tones.
- 5. Lorelei** ('lor-eh-liy) *n.*—A: story narrator. B: opera soloist. C: woman who sings with bewitching beauty.
- 6. a cappella** (ah keh-'peh-luh) *adv.*—A: sung spontaneously. B: sung without instruments. C: sung in a syncopated rhythm.
- 7. repertoire** ('rep-er-twahr) *n.*—
A: complete list of works, as of music. B: full range of a voice. C: tune sung in a round.
- 8. declaim** (deh-'klaym) *v.*—A: retract an oath. B: vow. C: speak pompously.
- 9. dissonant** ('dis-seh-nent) *adj.*—
A: in counterpoint. B: teasing or mocking. C: harmonically clashing.
- 10. timbre** ('tam-ber) *n.*—A: tonal quality. B: accent. C: introduction, as of a speech.
- 11. troubadour** ('trew-beh-dor) *n.*—A: town crier. B: strolling singer. C: choir director.
- 12. eulogize** ('yew-leh-jiyz) *v.*—
A: lament. B: praise. C: sing a solo.
- 13. inflection** (in-'flek-shun) *n.*—
A: vocal rise or fall. B: catchy melody. C: repeat of a phrase.
- 14. scat** ('skat) *v.*—A: sing nonsense syllables. B: omit notes. C: speak fast.
- 15. soliloquy** (seh-'lil-eh-kwee) *n.*—
A: glee club. B: pause in speaking. C: act of talking to oneself.

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

Answers

1. raucous—[A] disagreeably harsh. I awoke, as usual, to the *raucous* chorus of crows outside my window.

2. harangue—[B] ranting speech. One more infomercial *harangue*, and I'm tossing this TV off the balcony!

3. tremulous—[A] shaking slightly. "Um, Dad, any chance of a raise in my allowance?" Taylor asked in a *tremulous* tone.

4. mellifluously—[B] smoothly and sweetly. As expected, Lucille's aria was delivered most *mellifluously*.

5. Lorelei—[C] woman who sings with bewitching beauty. Many a sailor has been lured to shipwreck by a lovely *Lorelei*.

6. a cappella—[B] sung without instruments. Jo asked in music class, "Is it still *a cappella* if we use kazoos?"

7. repertoire—[A] complete list of works, as of music. The new cellist was given just two months to learn the orchestra's *repertoire*.

8. declaim—[C] speak pompously. Why can't politicians speak to us without *declaiming* like blowhards?

9. dissonant—[C] harmonically clashing. "Let's run that line again," the conductor said. "Those three notes are still a little *dissonant*."

10. timbre—[A] tonal quality. Want to impress your music friends with the *timbre* of your voice? First make sure you pronounce the word correctly! (It's tricky—see previous page.)

11. troubadour—[B] strolling singer. I was followed by a troublesome *troubadour* at the Renaissance Faire.

12. eulogize—[B] praise. Alex was *eulogized* at the ceremony for his countless acts of philanthropy.

13. inflection—[A] vocal rise or fall. The detective could tell from the suspect's *inflection* that she was lying.

14. scat—[A] sing nonsense syllables. Louis Armstrong set the standard on how to *scat*.

15. soliloquy—[C] act of talking to oneself. Don't pester me—I'm trying to memorize Hamlet's *soliloquy*.

FINAL NOTES

Fable held that a dying swan would sing an especially sweet melody. Whether the folklore is true or not, **swan song** by extension now means any final performance or appearance. For example, certain baseball hall-of-famer Derek Jeter made his swan song for the New York Yankees in his 20th season this past year.

VOCABULARY RATINGS

9 & below: Strident
10-12: Dulcet
13-15: Clarion



Finally!

A Help Button that can automatically call for help.

What our customers are saying

"My 85-year-old mother was home alone on a 111-degree day, and she fell on her concrete patio. I wouldn't have been home for another four hours, but AutoAlert detected her fall and she was able to get help. Without this service, I feel she would not have survived. Thank you to this wonderful company from me and my entire family." — Toni W.



In a fall or emergency, every second counts. Philips Lifeline with AutoAlert is more than just a medical alert service – it provides advanced fall-detection capabilities that could save your life! We're the only company offering the proven effectiveness of AutoAlert, the most widely adopted fall-detection technology in the U.S. medical alert market today. Join more than 250,000 seniors who have benefited from AutoAlert's added layer of protection.

- AutoAlert can automatically call for help if it detects a fall, even if you can't push your button.
- The easy-to-wear pendant is waterproof and comfortable, providing 24/7 access to help.
- Philips Lifeline is the #1 medical alert provider, delivering peace of mind and independence for 40 years.
- The Lifeline Service has been recommended by hundreds of thousands of healthcare professionals nationwide

The time for Lifeline is **BEFORE** you fall. Be prepared.

Call Today and **Save \$50!**

FREE ACTIVATION

No Long-Term Contract

No Equipment To Buy

Now – No Phone Line Needed*

AutoAlert's superior technology provides real independence and peace of mind!

1-855-475-2051

www.GetAutoAlert.com



© 2014. Button signal range may vary due to environmental factors. For new customers only. Not to be combined with any other offer and subject to change without notice. Monthly fees and applicable taxes apply. Other fees may apply. Minimum stay on service may be required. No. 1 claim is based on number of subscribers. AutoAlert does not detect 100% of falls. Users should always push their button when they need help. *Assumes the location of the communicator is in an area with sufficient access to coverage by the AT&T wireless network. A customer phone number is required to enroll in this service.

PHILIPS
Lifeline

Quotable Quotes



Work is the greatest thing in the world, so we should always save some of it for tomorrow.

DON HEROLD, humorist



FORESTS ARE THE LUNGS OF OUR LAND.

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

The reason we struggle with insecurity is because we compare our behind-the-scenes with everyone else's highlight reel. **PASTOR STEVEN FURTICK**

I THINK THE MOST UN-AMERICAN THING YOU CAN SAY IS "YOU CAN'T SAY THAT."
GARRISON KEILLOR



My heroes are Larry Bird, Admiral Byrd, Lady Bird, Sheryl Crow, Chick Corea, the inventor of birdseed, and anyone who reads to you even if she's tired. **BIG BIRD**

WHEN THE WINDS OF CHANGE BLOW, SOME PEOPLE BUILD WALLS, AND OTHERS BUILD WINDMILLS.

CHINESE PROVERB



A mirror becomes a razor when it's broken. A stick becomes a flute when it's loved.

YOKO ONO

Reader's Digest (ISSN 0034-0375) (USPS 865-820), (CPM Agreement# 40031457), Vol. 184, No. 1106, December 2014/January 2015. © 2014. Published monthly, except bimonthly in July/August and December/January (subject to change without notice), by The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 44 South Broadway, White Plains, New York 10601. Periodicals postage paid at White Plains, New York, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Reader's Digest, PO Box 6095, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1595. Send undeliverable Canadian addresses to ca.postal.affairs@rd.com. All rights reserved. Unauthorized reproduction, in any manner, is prohibited. Reader's Digest, The Digest, and the Pegasus logo are registered trademarks of The Reader's Digest Association, Inc. Marca Registrada. Printed in U.S.A. You may cancel your subscription at any time and receive a refund for copies not previously addressed. Your subscription will expire with the issue identified above your name on the address label. **SUBSCRIBERS:** If the Post Office alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within one year. A special *Reader's Digest* Large Print with selected articles from *Reader's Digest* is published by The Reader's Digest Association, Inc. For details, write: Reader's Digest Large Print, PO Box 6097, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1597. **CONSUMER INFORMATION:** Reader's Digest may share information about you with reputable companies in order for them to offer you products and services of interest to you. If you would rather we not share information, please write to Reader's Digest Customer Care, PO Box 6095, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1595.

TWELVE HOURS. ZERO MERCY.



Only Mucinex[®] has a bi-layer tablet that starts right away and keeps working. Not 4, not 6, but 12 full hours of relief.

Use as directed. ©2014 RB Mucinex.com

START THE RELIEF.
DITCH THE MISERY.

**LET'S
END THIS.[™]**



Go from a life
of back pain
to a lifetime of living.



Natalie Gulbis

Natalie Gulbis

LPGA Player and Laser Spine Institute Patient

FINALLY, AN ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL OPEN BACK SURGERY.

It's time for you or a loved one to stop suffering. Do what more than 45,000 people have done and get your life back.

EXPERTS IN TREATING CONDITIONS SUCH AS:

Bulging/herniated disc
Spinal stenosis
Sciatica
Other chronic
conditions



THE ADVANTAGES OF MINIMALLY INVASIVE SPINE SURGERY AT LASER SPINE INSTITUTE

- 97% patient recommendation rate
- No lengthy recovery*
- Minimally invasive outpatient procedure
- Board-certified surgeons+



All it takes is an incision
less than 1-inch.

 **LASER SPINE INSTITUTE®**
.COM

Call **1-866-263-8406** for a free MRI review.

*Each patient is different. Results may vary.

+For more information visit LaserSpineInstitute.com/surgeons. Medicaid currently not accepted.