

**livfun** SPRING 2015

The Ego / Health Connection Exposed  
Technology Has Killed Imagination  
#MarkTwain

3 Mind Tricks to Ease Your Pain

Understanding a Transgendered  
Grandchild

# Imagination

The Unexplored Frontiers of the Heart

**1<sup>ST</sup>  
ANNUAL  
FITNESS FRENZY**



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## FEATURES

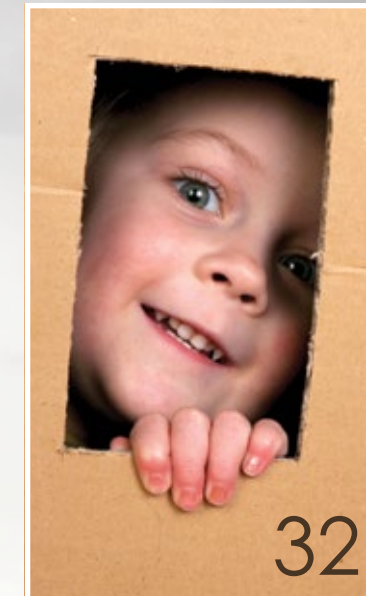
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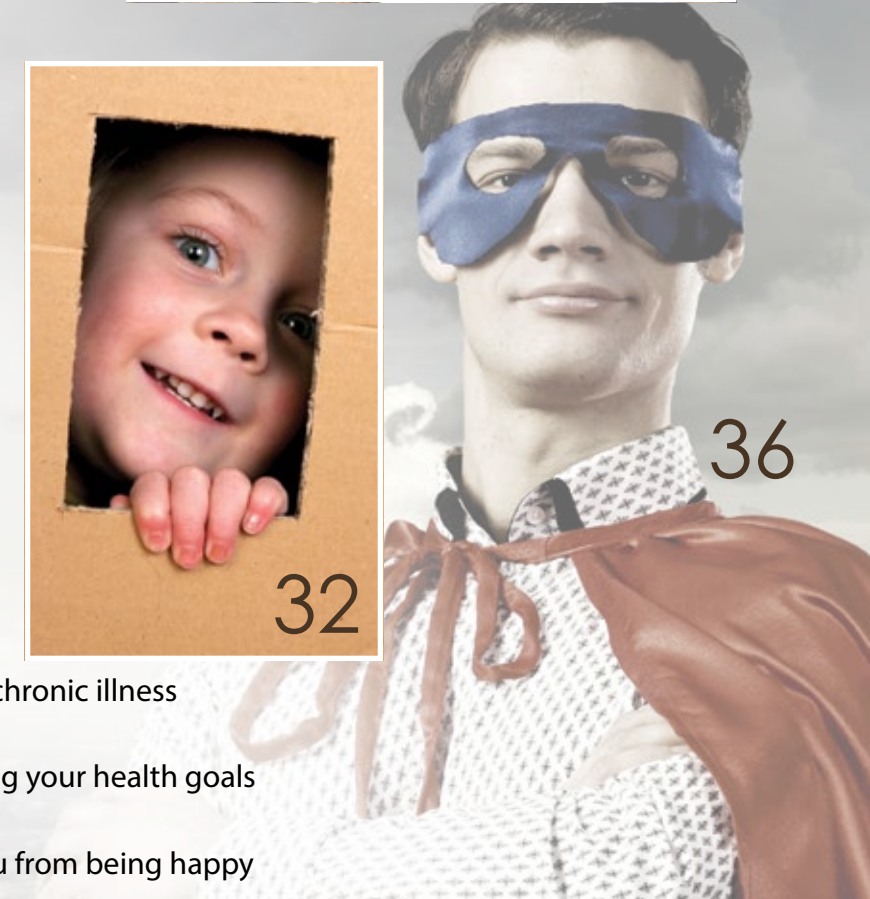
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Brett Robinson,  
Executive VP, Leisure Care

# Letter From the Executive Vice President

**Imagine That**  
by Brett Robinson

A core mission of all Leisure Care team members is to make a positive impact on everyone we come in contact with. This means every colleague, resident, resident family member, and even the clerk at the local grocery store. To live this every day, we believe that a person must be truly happy and strive to live a balanced life. We call this balanced life philosophy the *Three-Thirds Lifestyle*, with equal importance placed on family, philanthropy and work.

To ensure that the company never loses its focus on philanthropy and continues to make a positive impact on the world around us, CEO Dan Madsen created the One Eighty Foundation four years ago. The foundation is passionately committed to improving the lives of children and families — to give when there are needs, to mentor when guidance is sought, and to create opportunities for better lives. The foundation has raised and donated over \$1 million to date.

This mission is embraced at each one of our retirement communities, and over the past few years our team members and residents have done amazing work for philanthropic causes. Imagine that. At the home office, we have done more imagining on how to unite efforts of the foundation with the communities.

The next iteration of the plan launches this month. Our first annual February Fitness Frenzy will encourage all of us to “step it up” and be more active while raising dollars for the One Eighty Foundation. Our goal is to raise \$50,000 for children and families in need. All money raised will be donated to nonprofits, both through the One Eighty Foundation and to local organizations that your community can choose. The more your community raises, the greater the share that stays local!

Imagine how much good that money could do in your town.

We hope you will all take part in this exciting company-wide event. Together, we are leveraging our strength as one to increase the positive impact in the world. Just imagine what a difference we can make!

**Brett Robinson**  
Executive Vice President

*We want to hear from you!*

Send your article ideas and personal stories for consideration for "Retire Like You Mean It," as well as feedback on the magazine to:

[livfun@leisurecare.com](mailto:livfun@leisurecare.com)

The next issue's theme is "Courage."

Style Wise  
Expressing Your Unique Self

# Chronic Chic

Rethinking the importance of underwear

by Thomas Orton

Seattle-based novelist and freelance writer

NOTE: Skye Moody, our regular StyleWise contributor, is featured in a longer essay on page 12 of this issue. Tom is stepping in for Skye, who will return to this column next issue.

*“Style, so I told myself, supported nothing but ego, and ego was not going to help me cope with a chronic disease.”*

I was exhausted. I couldn't help cutting corners. And where there were no corners, I cut whatever was there. This fatigue, a symptom of my Parkinson's, had saddled me with a repertoire of some bad but necessary habits. By bed time every night, I was so tired I pulled off my jeans and shorts at the same time, not bothering to separate them before dropping them in a heap on the floor.

One morning, I put on fresh shorts, then pulled on the same jeans, forgetting that the old shorts were still inside. I went to work as usual. Through the morning, the old shorts began working their way down the back of my right pant leg the way a piglet, swallowed by a python, slowly moves through the serpent's gut. I had no idea this was happening. I felt tightness at the back of my thigh but assumed it was one of those dry jokes by which Parkinson's only makes it seem you are developing yet another symptom.

At noon I left the office for lunch, walking up the carpeted hallway when the shorts finally made it out the bottom of my pant leg. Flew out is more like it, landing some ways down the hall at the feet of a woman just coming out her office door. My face burned hot and I realized something terrible: I was no longer cool.

OK, I probably have not been cool or stylish since I hit 40. Despite the corrosive effect of simple aging in the decades since, I have

managed to keep deluding myself that, if I wasn't actually cool, the possibility still existed.

In my current shape — stumbling, slurring my words, kicking my underwear at strange women — only an idiot could think I was cool. Dignity was hard enough to come by; if I tried to be cool on top of that, I would surely make a jackass of myself.

The underwear had to go.

Perhaps it is true that people with class wear underwear, but wrestling with my shorts every morning exhausted me. I simply was not going to put up with it anymore. I threw out the worst of them and took the rest to Goodwill.

I felt purged, unburdened. This worked so well that I decided there were other nonessentials that could be given their walking papers.

Soon I identified the next item destined for the chopping block: dress shirts. Wearing fine shirts used to make me relaxed and confident; trying to button them with PD bled all that good feeling away. I made another trip to Goodwill. While there, I bought a number of serviceable T- and sweatshirts that were easier to wear and maintain than dress shirts. They quickly became part of what I thought of as my new uniform.

I was on a roll. Casting about for another likely target, my eye fell upon the general category of grooming, a breeding ground of useless style items.

For this next adjustment, I zeroed in on the particular scourge of shaving. I used to put a fairly high premium on shaving my

face as closely as possible, especially when I was going out. For closeness, you needed a blade. An electric razor just wasn't going to make it. With Parkinson's, using a blade on my face had become the same kind of hell as buttoning shirts, only far more intimate. I had to brace my arms to minimize the effects (and the danger) of stiffness and shaking, moving my face against the razor instead of the other way around. All the effort began to seem empty. So, one day I dropped all my paraphernalia in the garbage and let my beard do what it would.

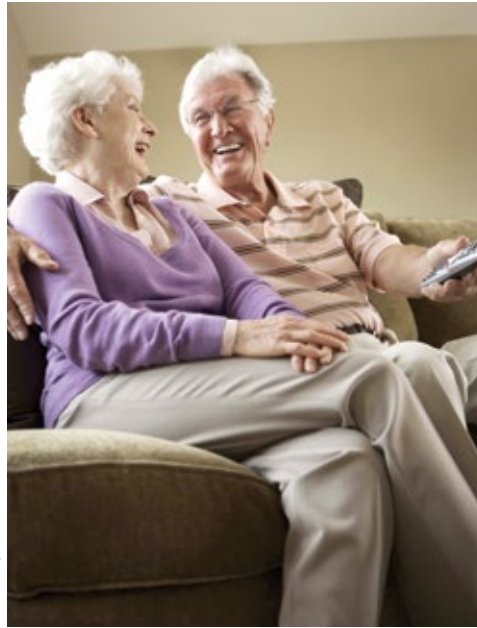
Initially there was the same exhilaration as with the shirts and underwear; the same sense of lightening my life, streamlining it. At the same time, I began to hear a voice in my head saying, *If you keep this up, pretty soon there won't be anything left.*

What? Wait. Where did that chiding, finger-wagging tone come from? I was responding responsibly to an emergency in my life, for God's sake! I was doing something positive about my situation.

Or was I?

Maybe I was simply trying to escape the pain of an ego that was tired of being bruised and battered by the embarrassing symptoms of my “dis-ease.”

Perhaps, unconsciously, I thought if I could edit the style elements out of my life — no matter how minor and unimportant they seemed — I could trick the ego into believing that none of it mattered, as if having style were a **Chronic Chic:** *Continued on page 41*



# ENTERTAIN Your Brain!

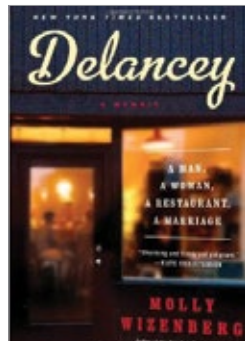
*All of life is change, and our experience of it depends on the strength of our own imaginations. Get carried away a little!*

books | movies | music

## BOOK REVIEWS

by Misha Stone / Readers' advisory librarian & Booklist Magazine blogger

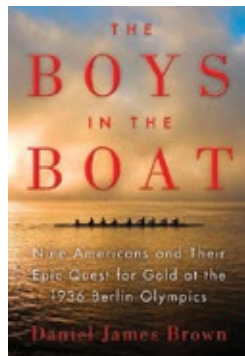
*"Books are the feast for the imagination."* — Robin R. Meyers



### **Delancey: A Man, A Woman, A Restaurant, A Marriage**

by Molly Wizenberg (Simon & Schuster, \$25.00)

Food blogger (on the popular site "Orangette") and the author of the memoir *My Homemade Life*, Molly Wizenberg returns with another winsome story about love, family and food. This time, she describes what she and her husband, Brandon, underwent so he could pursue his dream of opening a pizza restaurant. The author follows Brandon across America, on his quest for the perfect pizza, with a mixture of ambivalence and disbelief. But when "Delancey" becomes a reality, the decision begins to hit home. They are responsible for their staff, their customers and each other as Brandon's dream takes on concrete dimensions. Wizenberg shares recipes as she reveals the challenges and joys of entering into business — and life — with your sleeves rolled up.



### **The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Olympics**

In the 1930s, the world stage didn't think much of the Northwest United States. And no one expected a rowing team of young men from logging, fishing and farming families in Washington to make it to the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. Brown recreates a time in American history when sheer strength of will and determination placed nine young men at the center stage of world history. At the heart of this fine work of nonfiction is Joe Rantz, a boy abandoned by his family and left to learn to survive on his own by the age of 10. The story of Joe's hardscrabble existence in Spokane and his years on the University of Washington's rowing team in Seattle paints a portrait of an individual of great character and personal strength, traits he learned despite the odds. Interspersed within the stories of the team and sport itself is the darker tale of the rise to power of the Nazi party, especially the ways in which Hitler and his Minister of Propaganda Goebbels carefully used the Olympic Games as a smokescreen for their campaign of terror and destruction. It's a stirring, engrossing work about sports, politics, and the extraordinary spirit of the young men who put everything on the line for Olympic gold.



### **The Boston Girl** by Anita Diamant (Scribner, \$26.00)

The author of *The Red Tent* returns with a personal story passed down through two generations. Addie Baum, born in 1900 in Boston to Jewish parents who had recently emigrated from Russia, tells the story of the next 85 years of her life to her granddaughter, Ava, in her own voice. In short chapters that reveal her family life and her early experiences with school and romance, Addie breathes life into early 20<sup>th</sup> century America with a sweet nostalgia for times past. She describes the young women of her time forging new lives for themselves, breaking with the old world, and embracing all their new country had to offer. Addie goes into journalism and learns the ropes there under the tutelage of a tough, older woman. After encountering a cad or two, Addie meets her fella, Aaron, a man dedicated to fighting for child labor laws. Boston's charm and grit shine through in Addie's ingrained accent, and she shares her daily joys and the losses along the way.

## MOVIE REVIEWS

by Robert Horton / Film critic for *Seattle Weekly*

*"All I have in life is my imagination."* — Woody Allen



### **Holiday** (1938)

If you know and love Cary Grant and Katharine Hepburn — and you do, don't you? — the delights of *Bringing Up Baby* and *The Philadelphia Story* probably need no introduction. But let us respectfully suggest that there is another pairing of these two icons that might be an even more enchanting movie. In *Holiday*, Grant plays a motivated, self-made young man full of dreams and ambitions, newly betrothed to the daughter of a very wealthy family. He imagines taking a "holiday" to find himself; his fiancée disapproves of such nonsense, but her misfit sister (Hepburn) is all for it — she's created a safe place in the family mansion, a playroom where dreams can be nurtured and encouraged. Director George Cukor is in heartfelt sympathy with the idea of stepping out of the rat race, and there's wonderful support from Edward Everett Horton and Jean Dixon as Grant's fun-loving pals, plus Lew Ayres as Hepburn's melancholy brother. You may just be inspired to go on holiday yourself. (Available on Amazon, Google Play and Vudu.)



### **Poetry** (2010)

Where does a poem come from? Aren't you supposed to be struck by poetic imagination, like a lightning bolt? And how are you expected to come up with something beautiful when your own life is a mess? These are the questions asked by a grandmother named Mija (played by Yun Jung-hee), who has enrolled in a writing class — she simply wants to finish one poem by the end of the course. Meanwhile, her world seems grim: Her sullen grandson is implicated in a terrible crime, and she is diagnosed with serious health issues. All of this makes it difficult to find the words to describe the beauty of a flower, but as the movie goes on, the act of composing a poem takes on an urgency that gives it life-or-death scale. Perhaps the creation of art is really that — life or death. This lyrical yet tough-minded 2010 film by Korean director Lee Chang-dong is a gem, and its lesson about finding meaning and solace in the imagination is honestly earned. (Available on Fandor.com, Amazon Instant and Netflix.)

**Entertain Your Brain:** *Continued on page 40*



# Out and About

Journeys Completed or Contemplated

Standing slightly to the left of my current life, the possibilities of an alternative universe seem astonishingly real.

Surely, I'm not the only one who does this.

I will visit some place in the course of my travels, and something, anything, will set it off. The things that cause it are so insignificant, a feeling of familiarity in the corner of a new-to-me café in a new-to-me town. The wares on offer in a shop window — never glamorous, little more than housewares, perhaps a blender and a stack of carefully folded cloth napkins. Alternating light and shadow on the car windshield as I drive through a tree-lined road that is still wet with the morning's rain. The sound of a squeaky gate, or a bird that sounds like a squeaky gate, from the other side of a meadow.

I am sucked into another version of my life, a mirror, a revision, a story that could be mine not in an "if-only" way, but in a way that I visualize so completely that there is nothing for it but to concede, with great embarrassment, that those people who swear by past lives might actually be on to something.

No, not that, never that; it could not be true. Perhaps it's just the burden or gift of a wildly overactive imagination.

A beach house on a rise above the ocean; a slope that goes from the little town of Lawson's Landing down to Dillon Beach. It is nothing special, a slab of

California modernism, similar and common, a rambler. Big windows, a bare porch with a tiki head of weathered wood. There are a lot of beach houses here, more attractive, newer, better maintained, but this one — here I pictured my life. My surfer mate gone in the early morning because, "Surf is up, sorry, didn't mean to wake you."

I'm not younger in this existence, and neither is my mate, but he hears the ocean, and it's part of who I am too. So even if it's not the big waves that call me, any morning when it's not dripping fog, not too cold — which is often, because it is the Northern California coast — I stand barefoot on the Spartan porch watching for the light to come over the rise behind me and hit the Pacific. There is a cup of coffee in my hands, and my feet are cold. The garden is neglected intentionally, because left alone, it goes to poppies, pink ice plant, wild iris and beach grass, and what could be better?

What do I do in this life? I have no idea. I am not rich. I never imagine myself rich in these scenarios; I am always dressed in the same old T-shirts and worn-out jeans. I always have the same cobbled-together interior where the art on the walls is very good, but the rest of my belongings are from garage and clearance

sales. We could probably use some more carpets; we should go to Ikea, but the sand gets everywhere, so maybe not. There are surfboards in the garage, not mine, and rusting bicycles that are mine. I don't worry about much more than replacing the screens. Oh, we are going to have to drive all the way into town to the real hardware store. Could we put that off until Tuesday, because the weather is supposed to be good over the weekend and the traffic is going to be awful? Let's just leave it for a few more days, and I'll schedule some other stuff that has to be done in town too.

My fictions are weirdly specific. I stand slightly to the left of where I stand in my life today, where I cannot see the water but I can walk from my door to the shores of Puget Sound. None of this is a line of "I would be so much happier if ..." wishful thinking. No. It is much more a feeling of seeing myself in a complete view in another, marginally different existence.

And while it's different, while I know that life can't be mine because I'm living the one I'm in so completely, it still feels so very real. This is just one time it has happened, not the first, and never the last.

Surely, I'm not the only one that does this.

Right? ♦

“ There is a cup of coffee in my hands, and my feet are cold. The garden is neglected intentionally, because left alone, it goes to poppies and pink ice plant and wild iris and beach grass, and what could be better? ”

# With All Due Respect

by Skye Moody

Novelist, essayist, photographer and world traveler

*“Some people talk to animals. Not many listen, though.”*

— A.A. Milne, Winnie-the-Pooh



© iStock

*Over the past century, animal behaviorists have shown that animals possess varying levels of intelligence and even the ability to imagine and create. As a result, our perceptions and treatment of them have changed.*



**M**y mystery novelist Bill Fitzhugh keeps chickens in his Los Angeles backyard. Each hen has a name: Aunt Ray, Watermelon, Woody, etc. Occasionally, Fitzhugh posts a “Chicken Report” on Facebook, narrating his videotaped visits to the henhouse and lush grassy pecking yard. Responsive to his gentle commands — Fitzhugh addresses the chickens in an adult tone of voice, in human language — the hens scamper to greet him, stepping eagerly forward for special treats like handfed grape leaves or an affectionate feather ruffle. You might say Fitzhugh’s hens live a dog’s life, and in some ways that would be a fair statement.

My mother’s pet dog, Barney, a pampered wire-haired dachshund, enjoys watching television. When the image of a dog, cat or cow appears on the screen, Barney barks viciously at it. When the screen animal fails to respond, Barney races to the rear of the television and tries to climb inside. I have no explanation for his trying to enter via the back of the television (herding instinct?) instead of executing a frontal attack at the screen, but Barney evidently recognizes screen images and imagines them as real creatures trespassing on his territory.

Aristotle’s Great Chain of Being ordered all forms of existence descending from God to angels to humans, with all other extant forms categorized below humans. In this Ladder of Life, animals were generally treated as non-sentient beings lacking the ability to feel, think, reason, imagine or experience subjectively. Most animals led lives of misery and brutal deaths.

By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an upsurge in keeping domesticated pets promoted new attitudes toward animals: Pet owners began observing similarities in animals and humans. Similarity generates empathy, and many pet owners adopted gentler handling of their domesticated creatures, extending kindlier treatment even to their farm livestock. Hunting and herding dogs especially demonstrated intelligence and were often pampered, kept by the hearth instead of in the barn. Still, few believed that animals possessed rational thoughts or emotional lives, let alone imaginations, and certainly not immortal souls.

Queen Victoria changed all that. Victoria’s pet menagerie included (but wasn’t limited to) Jacquot the donkey, Dash the King Charles spaniel, Nero the greyhound, a parrot named Lory, Alma the Shetland pony, and numerous Pomeranians. When her beloved collie Noble fell ill at the age of 16, the Queen brought in her private physician to treat him. Many of Victoria’s animals were memorialized in portraiture, and both Noble and Sharp, another collie, were commemorated with statues of their likenesses. Noble and Sharp received ceremonial burials at Balmoral Castle, because Victoria believed that the “higher” animals possess souls and will experience an afterlife, and therefore should be properly mourned. On her deathbed, the Queen requested the presence of Turi, her favorite Pomeranian.

By 1901, the year of Queen Victoria’s death, domesticated pets and “companion” animals were the subjects of many a leisurely *tête à tête* and diary entries, gossiped about as if they were persons, often anthropomorphically to the extreme. Meanwhile most scientists and cynics stuck to the old belief system, rejecting notions of rational animals.

Today, thanks to more than a century of scientific experiments conducted by animal behaviorists, proof exists that most, if not all, animal species possess varying but measurable levels of cognition,





From left to right: Rico the border collie; a New Caledonian crow with a self-fashioned feeding tool; and a herd of cows enchanted with jazz music.

logical thinking, and even the ability to imagine and create.

In Germany, Rico, a border collie and television performance artist, understood the names of some 200 toys. In 2004, researchers at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig testing Rico demonstrated how easily dogs can develop new mental skills. The scientists found that Rico could recall names and even learn new words about as quickly as a human toddler.

Betsy of Vienna, another border collie, could be shown a picture of an object and then go to the next room and fetch the actual three-dimensional object or its picture. In March 2008, Betsy's picture appeared on the cover of *National Geographic Magazine* for an article describing her amazing intelligence. Chaser, yet another border collie, trained by retired Wofford College psychology professor John Pilley in South Carolina, also tests positive for cognition and word learning, understanding a vocabulary of about 1,000 words and comprehending syntax.

Like chimpanzees, New Caledonian crows shape and manipulate tools to forage food. Betty the Caledonian crow appears on YouTube demonstrating how a crow modifies a tool to solve a specific task, in this case, fetching food. The leap to flatware isn't far.

In my aunt's Palo Alto backyard lives a mockingbird who renders a perfect imitation of a ringing cellphone. The constant ring causes my aunt to run for

her cellphone dozens of times a day, and no matter how many times she changes the ring tone, the bird immediately learns the new sound. Does the woman's running to and fro, and her evident frustration, serve any purpose other than entertaining the mockingbird sitting in a tree peering through the window?

Chickens have distinct personalities, strike up friendships and make enemies among their broods, and are increasingly acquired as urban pets. Cows also possess individual personalities, nurture friendships among the herd, bear grudges against other cows, and elicit a particular behavior described as an excited "eureka" moment when they learn something new. Maybe that's why the cow jumped over the moon.

In 2011, in County Armagh, Northern Ireland, farmer Tom Grant's herd of dairy cattle mysteriously escaped from their barn and the next morning were discovered chewing cud in the barnyard. These mass bovine escapes continued nightly for weeks. Baffled, suspecting rustlers were behind the nocturnal breakouts, Farmer Grant and his brother rigged a video camera outside the barn. The next morning, the video revealed a cow named Daisy using her tongue to unbolt two latches on the barn door, pushing it open, and freeing herself and her fellow cows. Daisy now has her own Twitter account.

In Autrans, France, a herd of cows basks in the sounds of New Orleans style jazz. The YouTube site *jazzforcows* demonstrates this bovine jazzfest, proving that Irish Daisy isn't the only cool cow. The trendy new quarterly magazine *Modern Farmer* carries a story by journalist Andy Wright (*Modern Farmer*, March 10, 2014) about pigs who, unlike many a toddler, put away their toys and also recognize themselves in a mirror. Meanwhile, the Utrecht School of the Arts with Wageningen University in the Netherlands have created a video game called "Pig Chase" in which humans from "the comfort of their own homes" bounce a light onto a touchscreen connected to a ball-shaped device set up in a pig stall. "When the pig touches the ball with its snout, sparks of light fly off. Humans enjoy a little more contact with livestock; the pigs are stimulated." Silly, but "it does train people to associate pigs as pets," says one of the inventors.

Today we may not lavish Victoria's pomp and circumstance on animals, but increasingly domesticated creatures are the glad recipients of kinder, gentler masters, like Fitzhugh with his chickens, whose basic animal instincts are respected while with added human interaction, they enjoy opportunities to develop their chicken brain potential. Maybe chickens have imaginations too. But where is the line drawn between

absurd levels of anthropomorphism and ignorant theories of behaviorism (animals as machines)? Do we reward creatures who mimic us more than those we feel share nothing in common with us?

Fitzhugh never made Aunt Ray wear a dress. He and his savvy urban chickens seem to have forged a mutu-

ally respectful and rewarding bond while their endearing interaction continues to fascinate and instruct their Facebook fans. Seems that Aunt Ray is broody — again. ♦

**Read more:**

The Website [www.AnimalLaw.com](http://www.AnimalLaw.com) covers issues of animal welfare in great

detail, including surprising discoveries in animal behavior and intelligence.

The November 2014 *National Geographic* is devoted to animal minds, another example of how much interest imaginative animals are generating among their human friends.

## Be Good To Yourself. Volunteer.

Research shows that people 55+ who volunteer lead stronger, healthier lives.

[GetInvolved.gov](http://GetInvolved.gov)

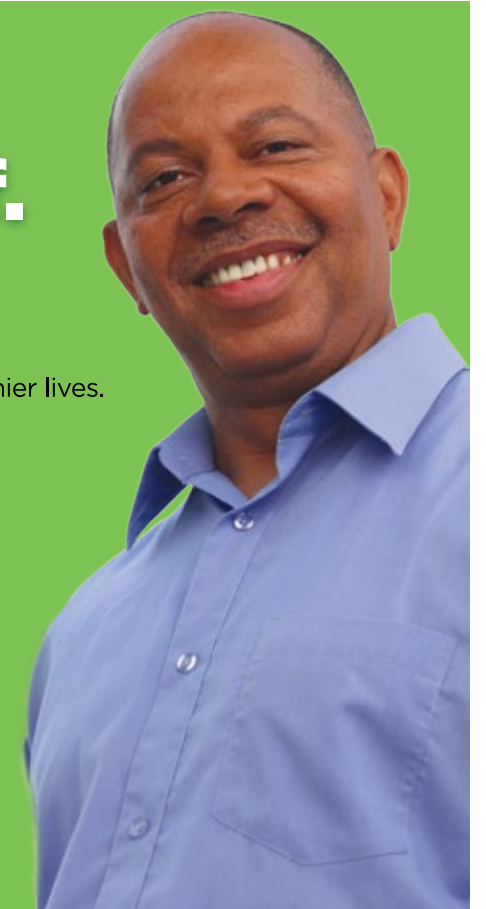
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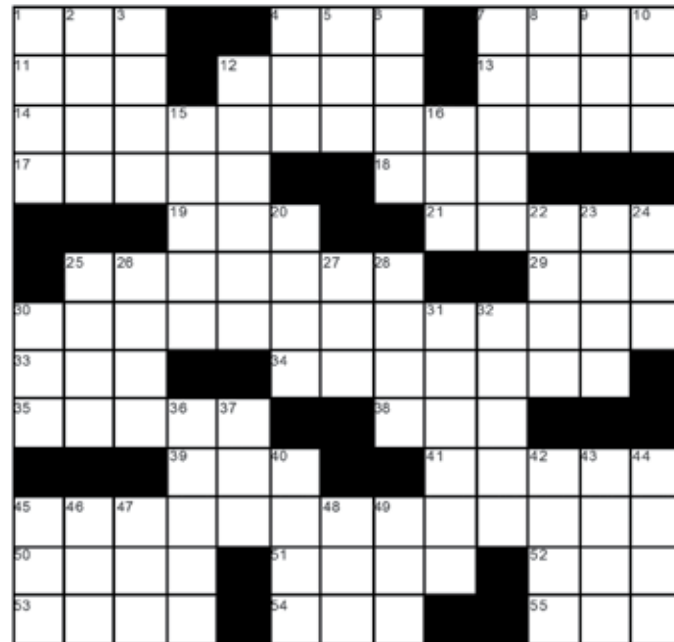


The three Senior Corps programs – RSVP, Senior Companions, Foster Grandparents are administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency that improves lives, strengthens communities and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering.



## Crossword Puzzle

Imagine That!



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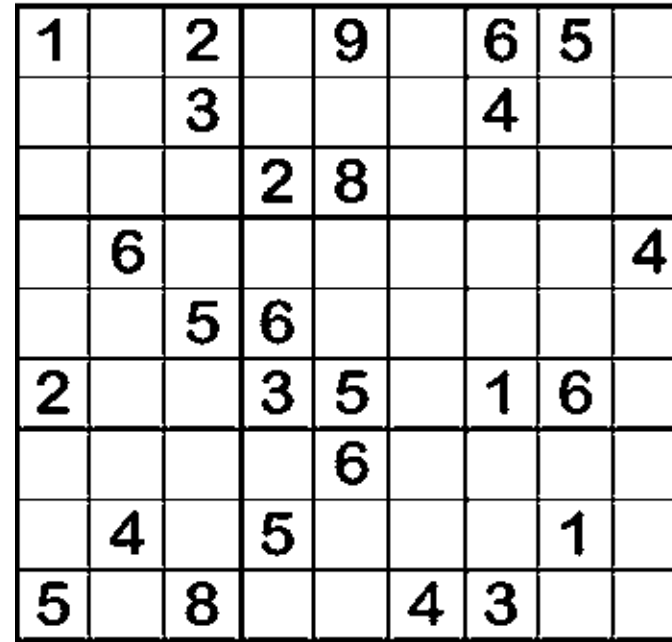
### ACROSS

- 1 Ferrell - Newhart movie
- 4 Aswan or Hoover
- 7 Tar's yell
- 11 Something to shoot for
- 12 \_\_\_ Hai
- 13 First widescreen CinemaScope film with "The"
- 14 First of a 3-part Einstein quote
- 17 Fill and seal seams
- 18 Common street name
- 19 Result of caring, sometimes
- 21 Gap
- 25 Stocking fixers
- 29 Government's demand
- 30 Second part of quote
- 33 Match a bet
- 34 Dunk
- 35 Rare quality
- 38 LAX posting
- 39 A MacGraw
- 41 Sea

- 45 Third part of quote
- 50 Unit of power
- 51 After Tarot or calling
- 52 DOJ agency
- 53 Dairy case choice
- 54 Oinker enclosure
- 55 \_\_\_ dam tootin'

## Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.



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DIFFICULTY: ★★★★★

### DOWN

- 1 Monumental
- 2 Buddhist teacher
- 3 Adult female (Ger.)
- 4 One of the Twelve Tribes
- 5 In the manner of
- 6 Little pest
- 7 Bakery product
- 8 Term of endearment
- 9 Japanese article of clothing
- 10 Possible proposal response
- 12 Famous atoll
- 15 Visibility reducer
- 16 Not well
- 20 Before god or tasse
- 22 School groups
- 23 All there
- 24 Directory abbr.
- 25 He has accomplishments
- 26 Geometry 101 calculation
- 27 78, 45, or 33 1/3
- 28 Not all
- 30 Common flavor enhancer
- 31 Said again
- 32 Tiny amount
- 36 Poem segment
- 37 Lodge member
- 40 Common business card abbreviations
- 42 Type of current
- 43 Screenwriter for The African Queen
- 44 Partner of far
- 45 Number for tea?
- 46 2001 antagonist
- 47 Lunched
- 48 Bit for dobbin
- 49 Sardonic

**BRAIN GAMES ANSWERS ON PAGE 42**

# Healthy U

Good Health 101 and Beyond



## What Does Health Look Like to You?

by Stephan J. Smith  
Doctor of Chiropractic

Why do most of us have such a hard time reaching our health and wellness goals?

No one likes to be ill or have health problems, yet we seem to struggle with making those long-term changes that can mean better health and an improved quality of life.

It could be that we focus too much on the end goal, or what we are told we "should" do, instead of taking smaller, more realistic steps that we can achieve one at a time. For example, if your end goal is to lower your cholesterol or blood sugar (or if your doctor has told you to lay off the junk and eat more veggies), adding a salad before you eat pizza is much easier than absolutely denying yourself that slice. Add good things on the front end, and the bad things begin to fall off the back end all by themselves. Add a brisk 15-minute walk before you sit down to watch the game instead of thinking you can't watch the game

because you "should" go to the gym. Small steps, and small changes, yield big results as they add up.

For many folks, making a vision board is a great way to stay motivated and on task. Cut pictures out of magazines or print pictures from the Web that show people doing the things you would like to do — walking with grandchildren, hiking in the mountains, taking up painting, planting a small garden, etc. Choose images that really appeal to you, that you can imagine this healthier version of yourself doing and enjoying. If you have no desire to climb a mountain, skip the Everest pictures; this is about you and what you want to achieve, not about what the world expects from you!

Tack the pictures up on a bulletin board or your fridge, somewhere you can see them every day, and spend a few minutes each morning looking at them and imagining how you'll feel as you do these activities. This will help

you focus on what you can do today to move toward those goals. Now imagine a smile on your face, and make that smile happen as you step out your door for that first step toward this new you.

Join in the Frenzy!

Having a support network for making positive change is so important. Take advantage of the Fitness Frenzy going on in your community this month to not only pursue your own health goals, but raise money for some great charities. Whether it's walking, biking, or taking an exercise class, you can make every minute count by having friends and family pledge to support you with small contributions.

Just like those small changes to your lifestyle, those small contributions can add up to do some real good in local communities. Not sure what exercise would be best for you? Talk to your health practitioner and get some advice before starting, or changing, any exercise program. ♦

Money Matters  
Common Sense and Professional Advice

# AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS

by Barbara Pinckney

Financial reporter and freelance journalist in New York

**The financial “shoulds” in our lives can keep us from being truly happy.  
How about we don’t let them anymore?**

## “HAPPINESS IS NOT IN HAVING WHAT YOU WANT; IT IS IN WANTING WHAT YOU HAVE.”

“Happiness is not in having what you want; it is in wanting what you have.”

It’s a common saying, one you’ve no doubt heard, yet it can be hard to remember. No matter how much you have, it’s easy to resent someone wealthier than you, because you believe they are also happier. On the other hand, the wealthier person may feel anxious, burdened, unworthy even, and envy someone else’s simpler life.

Fortunately, as we age, it becomes increasingly possible to shake off the “shoulds” of the past — “I should have a big house, a fancy car, designer clothing . . .” — and imagine a lifestyle based on cherishing what we have, including the personal strengths we can use to benefit others.

“It is true that the older we get, the happier we get,” says Judi Clements, president of Judi Clements Training & Development in Clifton Park, NY. “Young people work their heads off to be rich, to look good, to have the high lifestyle. But when we age, we find out that these things don’t translate into happiness.”

Clements offers workshops in “Authentic Happiness” using the tenets of positive psychology to give people the skills they need to cultivate joy in their lives. She lists these steps:

### Let Go of the Past

“What you have to do is look at the past with gratitude and forgiveness,” Clements says.

She explains that unhappy people ruminate. They stew about the injustices of the past — many of which are financial in nature. The promotion they were passed up for, the raise they didn’t

get, the bad advice from their broker.

“Every time you revisit these, you are distributing cortisol (the stress hormone) in your body,” Clements says. “You are having a hormonal, negative reaction. This is the very definition of stress. It is very unhealthy and destructive.”

This does not mean denying the past. The key is to acknowledge that while there may have been some true injustices: “That was then and this is now, and we’re moving on.”

### Savor the Present

“This is where we get into a lot of stuff that is really like Buddhist teaching, which is living in the present,” Clements says.

She adds that too few people take the time to really savor life and the time spent with loved ones or participating in favorite activities. This problem has gotten worse with the proliferation of technology, as people often engage more with their smartphones than with their dinner companions. The wealthier one becomes, the more distractions may exist.

Clements recommends “spacing,” which means always giving yourself something to look forward to. It may be a holiday, a visit with the grandchildren, a movie with friends, just about anything. When it arrives, savor every minute.

“That is an important part of living in the present, because you have hope and optimism,” she says.

### Find Your Signature Strength

Positive psychologists have found that the surest way to achieve authentic happiness is to find that which you

do best and then use that signature strength to do good for human kind.

“When you are doing what you do best, you lose yourself in that activity and you get into what the Buddhist’s would call ‘flow,’” Clements says. “Flow is the notion that you are so busy doing something you love that you lose track of time. It is so important to find your signature strength because when you are in flow, you don’t care about money.”

Clements herself left a successful teaching career, and the promise of a pension, to open her consulting practice nearly 30 years ago. While her friends are now retiring to lives of leisure, she continues working — and spending part of each day in flow. She is not as wealthy as she would be if she had remained a teacher, but she is gratified by the notes she receives from people she has helped.

“So, you make a choice based on your signature strengths and then that becomes more important than the money,” she says.

That is not to say that money is not important. Clements acknowledges that people who don’t have enough to meet their basic necessities cannot have authentic happiness.

“But once they feel that they are not robbing Peter to pay Paul, then they can implement the things we’ve talked about,” she says. “The real key to happiness is balance. You have to have enough money to pay your bills, and then you can free your mind from worry and focus on ‘what are my signature strengths, and how can I share them to make a better world?’ That’s happiness.” ♦

## WHAT ARE YOUR SIGNATURE STRENGTHS?

By Carol Pearson,  
Managing Editor, Wise Publishing Group

According to Positive Psychology pioneer Dr. Martin Seligman, everyone has a few strong suits or “signature strengths,” those character traits that help to define what we enjoy and where we excel. Maybe you have a love of learning, a brave heart, a loving and caretaking nature, the ability to lead with authority, or one of the other 24 defined character strengths.

According to Dr. Seligman and others in his field, when these traits are applied to your everyday life, you feel engaged, happy and authentic.

Finding your signature strengths and using them to make a better world is a large part of what our Leisure Care communities are all about. We believe that when the “work” we do — whether at home, in our communities or on the job — is aligned with our signature strengths, we have a recipe for a well-balanced and happy life.

### Take the Free Survey

The VIA Institute on Character offers an in-depth and insightful online survey that will help you more fully explore who you are at your core and what drives and motivates your happiness.

Set some quiet time aside and visit the link below. All you need is an Internet connection and an email address (to receive the results). The survey will take about 15 to 30 minutes and is absolutely free and confidential.

Take the survey here: [www.viacharacter.org](http://www.viacharacter.org).

Once you have your results, you may want to talk about them with the people in your life to whom you are closest. Knowing someone else’s character strengths helps build stronger relationships and a deeper understanding of what makes them tick.

We encourage all our Leisure Care community members to always be moving toward happiness, and we encourage you to take this chance to learn a bit more about what that means for you. ♦



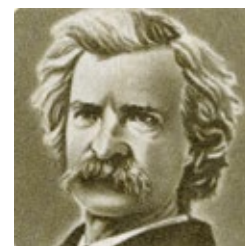
# Would Twain Tweet?

by Beverly Ingle

San Antonio-based freelance writer



Tom Sawyer is thought to be the first American novel written on a typewriter. What would Twain think of today's tech?



The playground of the mind was once populated with ideas fueled by books, stories and art. The raw material of today's imagining has taken on a new and

technology-mediated form. Some say that the impact of technology on individuals and society is greater now than ever. Others say that there has always been an impact of technology and we just think it is greater now because we are living now.

That contention is only part of a larger and longer-standing debate about whether technology has, for better or for worse, also diminished our ability to think for ourselves and form our own opinions. In 1898, the much admired American writer Mark Twain bemoaned the fact that for all of the technological development he witnessed during his lifetime, none of it helped propagate independent thinking. Were Mr. Twain alive today, he would be equally as disappointed at the current state of thinking.

Consider social media in the context of independent thought and the utterance, "I get my news and information from Facebook," or "If it isn't on Facebook, I don't know anything about it." One might think the speaker is a member of the digital-native Millennial generation, who has probably never read a physical newspaper or watched the nightly news. Increasingly, though, it's members of older generations making those statements.

Anyone of any age who considers a social media platform like Facebook as a primary news source can hardly be called discerning. Is the information shared on Facebook balanced, much less accurate? Is the data supporting both sides of an argument shared and debated so that the reader can arrive at his or her own conclusion? Quite simply, no. Facebook is a treasure trove of sound bites, news snippets and opinion couched as fact. It is far easier for the reader to skim the headlines, assimilate what is found to be reason-

able, and move on to a new topic rather than take the time to evaluate the available information and form an independent opinion.

What Facebook is to news and information, Pinterest is to creativity and imagination. At one point in time, our creativity and imagination were limited by our own ability to dream up something new, different, innovative or clever, or at the most, it was limited by the abilities of our friends and family to whom we would go for help. With the advent of Pinterest, we can simply go to the site, search for "dinner party," and receive back a seemingly unending pool of ideas for creating an evening sure to be the envy of all. Rather than wracking her brain for impressive-but-inexpensive party decorations, delicious-but-easy meals, the perfect wine pairings, and parting gifts that will make the guests anxious to return for another celebration, the hostess can search Pinterest, find ideas she likes and replicate them. Simple? Yes. Impressive? Perhaps. Imaginative? Not so much.

For people who have neither the time nor patience to read the short posts on social media in order to inform their opinions, there's another solution in the form of infographics. Quite often, infographics are not only a beautiful way to communicate comparative or complex information, but also an effective way to increase comprehension of that information. Imagine the difficulty in describing with words alone the past 50 years of space exploration or the intricate detail in comparing Disney to Marvel, and you can understand the truth in the adage, "A picture is worth a thousand words." However, just because a well-designed infographic can successfully communicate information in an understandable fashion doesn't ensure that the reader thinks about the information presented. Rather, the reader quite possibly — probably? — sees the data, ingests it, and moves on without any evaluative process or thoughtful consideration. The idea surely has Mr. Twain ranting from the heavens above about the infographics' ability to feed our mental laziness.

At the pinnacle of technological development in the past three decades is the ascendancy of the Internet, arguably the most useful invention since the wheel and the most ubiquitous since sliced bread. With a world of information a mere keystroke or two away, the fruit of the tree of knowledge is abundant and ripe for the taking. It seems, though, rather than gorging on an unending bounty of information, the majority of society nibbles, samples and then tosses the bulk of the information away. In fact, instead of making us smarter, the Internet might be doing quite the opposite.

As writer Nicholas Carr observed in his 2008 article in *The Atlantic* titled, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” the nature of the Internet is reducing our ability to think critically and with any depth. “What the Net seems to be doing,” writes Carr, “is chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation. My mind now expects to take in information the way the Net distributes it: in a swiftly moving stream of particles.” As the mind skims over the surface of information, it takes little time to plunge the depths that lead to critical, independent thought. It also takes little notice of the veracity of the sources from which the information comes, which leads the otherwise deliberate and diligent thinker to quote dubious sources such as Wikipedia.

Technological developments have truncated our ability to think and imagine, but it doesn’t stop there. Technology has lessened our ability to converse and engage with others in a way that offers any kind of meaning or value. Rarely do we participate in long, impassioned conversations or even brief-but-meaningful exchanges. That kind of interaction with others has been replaced with electronic communication, and email was our gateway drug.

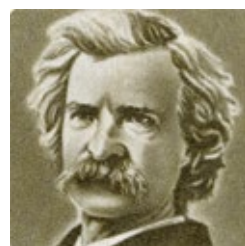
With the advent of email, face-to-face meetings and phone calls could be avoided with the click of a button. Entire conversations,



business transactions and more have transpired purely through email. Texting arrived and exacerbated the situation, further eliminating the need for a phone call. With the ability to text, one didn’t need to wait for an emailed response when an immediate one was needed or preferred. Nor did one need to adhere to the tiresome convention of accuracy in spelling, grammar and punctuation, since the communication was undoubtedly — ahem — hurried.

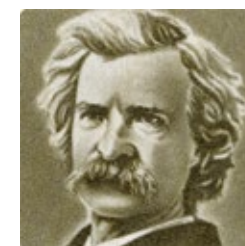
The communications abyss cracked wide open with the launch of Twitter. Where texts are short, tweets are even shorter because of the social media platform’s 140-character limit. While the genius of Twitter provides anyone and everyone with the opportunity to broadcast their opinions, news and other information to anyone who cares to pay attention, its character limitation forced users into communicating in a way never before experienced. A message one might have transmitted through multiple paragraphs via email or through multiple sentences via text could only be shared via Twitter in one very brief, curtailed thought. Mischievously, one has to wonder if Twain would be on Twitter. Oh, the pith.

Although we are in the midst of rapid technological change, just as we were 200 years ago, 20 years ago, and will continue to be in all the years to come, those changes and the developments associated with them have done little to improve the individual’s ability to think independently or imagine fervently. Those changes haven’t fostered critical thinking or new methods of analysis, nor have they reinforced the weak skills we already possess. Technological change has simply redefined the formats and the parameters in which we think, imagine and communicate. But like the weather in Texas, if you don’t like it, just wait a little while; it’ll soon change again. ♦



### Mark Twain

“Let us make a special effort to stop communicating with each other, so we can have some conversation.”



### Mark Twain

“For all of the technological development I’ve witnessed during my lifetime, none of it helped propagate independent thinking.”



# It's a Beautiful Day

Was it his belief that the next day would be beautiful that gave him the strength to tough out the day in front of him?

by Nancy Gertz

Health and well-being coach in Boston

**M**y father always replied the same way when I called him on the telephone and asked, “How are you today, Dad?” His reply didn’t waiver much, and his tone almost never revealed the tentative quality of his days. Whether he was imagining it or it was real, he would tenderly offer: “It’s a beautiful day.” It was an honest reply for him, in the moment, as I pictured him gazing out the window at one of his favorite

scenes. He loved living down by the beach and enjoying the colors in the garden, the birds in the sky, and the gentle gradations of green in the dancing grasses out back.

Even though I persisted in asking the question, I already knew most of the time how Dad’s days were unfolding. His doctor told him his two goals for each day were first, to wake up, and second, to weigh himself. These goals of staying alive and monitoring his water

retention were a far cry from those that drove his younger days as the founder and CEO of his own successful engineering and manufacturing firm. He knew how to set serious goals and reach them, proudly and steadily persevering even when times were tough. But these days, the doctor would expect him to simply answer my question with, “I’m still standing, and I weigh 210 lbs.” And that was supposed to be a sufficient reply to, “How are you?”

*“If you have only six months to live, how do you imagine living them well?”*

My father’s esteemed, world-renowned physician, who wished he could do more than predict the next sort of decline, once told me that living with congestive heart disease is like “dangling from a silk thread.”

My father never imagined that he would live his later years like the spider in the metaphor. His days were consumed with mounting medical visits, painful and disabling surgeries, and an endless list of indignities that are all too familiar to patients of chronic disease. His losses were many, not the least of which was when diabetes stole from him the simple pleasure of eating the fruits he loved so much.

In my coaching practice, I listen to the stories people tell me about their lives. I’m humbled by our human capacities to endure struggle. It’s astounding that we can still see the beautiful day when the chips are down or when it seems as if they are just plain all used up. With every new client I ask them to tell me a story about themselves. I often hear the words, “I never imagined this.” “Who could ever have imagined?” “If I had only imagined ...” These reflections are ways people who are surprised by life’s twisted turns patch together their stories, bridge together the unexpected chapters that form the narratives of their lives. Statements like these highlight the power of surprise, as well as the well-honed psychological tools many of us use to focus on a positive future as we plan ahead.

*I was in the best time of life, the kids were in college, we were finally having time to travel and get to know one another again. How could I have imagined I would be diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer?*

*I never imagined that I would not be able to cook my own dinner. I’ve always been independent.*

**Beautiful Day:** Continued on page 41



Nancy Gertz' father. © Betsy Gertz

# Retire Like You Mean It

Your Life, Your Rules

Highlighting the *Leisure Care* community, out there grabbing life by the horns, getting things done their way.



© ThinkStock

## The Author's Life at Leisure Care

by Tony Stevens

Programs Supervisor, Fairwinds – Desert Point

Even though imagination doesn't check itself at the door of our communities, it isn't often that we can boast of a resident publishing a book. So imagine our surprise and delight when two of our residents each published books within a month of one another last fall here at Fairwinds — Desert Point in Arizona. Residents Jane Kimball and Bill Hartman both launched their respective books — *Safe Corners* and *E.R.'s Year* — with book signings amid

the acclaim and excitement of 200 of their fellow community members.

*Safe Corners* is Jane's first novel, fictionalizing the account of the loss of a child and the painful passage back to a meaningful life by the child's mother.

"The book is an outgrowth of my professional career as a psychotherapist in which I spent many years listening to the struggles of my patients as they wrestled with the various losses in their lives — loss of a job, of

a marriage, of health, of beauty, of status, of a dream, of a loved one," Jane explains.

"And, the longer I sat with them as they struggled, the more awe and admiration I felt for how valiantly they worked to get through and beyond the pain. Those who faced the most difficult struggle were parents who had lost a child. For, while no form of loss is insignificant to the sufferer, the loss of a child is the most traumatic be-



Fairwinds — Desert Point authors Jane Kimball and Bill Hartman.

© Photo courtesy of Leisure Care

cause the intensity of the parent-child relationship exceeds all others.

"Parents are supposed to die *before* their children, not after them," Jane continues, "and when the reverse occurs, the grief consuming the parents is frequently mixed with conscious or unconscious feelings of guilt and failure. After all, they're supposed to be their children's caretakers."

Thus was born the story of Christina, the fictional protagonist in *Safe Corners* who, after her loss, struggles through a challenge to her faith and a challenge to her marriage while learning along the way who can console her, who cannot, and what she has to do to gain strength for the next phase of her life. It is through her friendship with two unique women who have had losses of their own that Christina moves through the three most difficult years of her life into a new time of creative possibilities.

Bill Hartman, our second author, has always enjoyed writing.

"When I retired, I discovered that writing a novel where it's permissible to use your imagination is far more fun than writing technical articles where such proclivities are frowned upon," Bill explains.

"So I solicited professional advice from my daughter, and we co-authored a terrorism novel entitled *Convergence, Three Worlds, One Long Afternoon*. While it is a novel, it's based upon one of my prior work assignments.

"Even after this book was published," Bill continues, "I found it mandatory to continue writing to keep my mind active. Much earlier, I'd started deciphering the extensive diary that my father had kept every day during 1942. I resurrected this and, again with my daughter's help, began writing, incorporating some of my own recollections and the actual history of the first year of WWII to supplement his diary entries.

"Five revisions later, my second book, *E.R.'s Year*, was born, a story that recounts the history of WWII and its effect on small communities in the Midwestern United States."

Both authors find Fairwinds — Desert Point an extremely accommodating community in which to collect and compose thoughts. In Bill's words, "It's a pleasure living and writing at Fairwinds. There is a calming solitude when you desire it, but when you're seeking inspiration

you can always go down to the lobby to find someone to talk to or a fun activity to engage in."

For Jane, living at Fairwinds has provided her the valuable time necessary to write her novel.

"A door opened for me when my husband Paul and I moved here in February 2011," she recalls

"Our beautiful, commodious two-bedroom apartment with housekeeping services and three-meal dining services freed me from those daily living activities, which previously had consumed a lot of my time and distracted me from the writing. I can sit at my desk and without guilt ... write, write, write while also finding time to take bridge lessons, participate in book clubs, and enjoy an all-around fulfilling life."

Based on the achievements of Jane and Bill, Fairwinds has now implemented a memoir writing workshop. Led by an accomplished author, all residents are afforded an opportunity to compose, document and eventually publish their own legacies.

*Safe Corners* and *E.R.'s Year* are available in paperback and Kindle editions from Amazon.com. ♦



THE 1<sup>ST</sup> EVER  
FEBRUARY  
**FITNESS  
FRENZY**



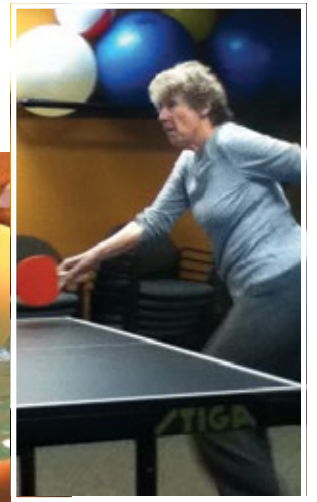
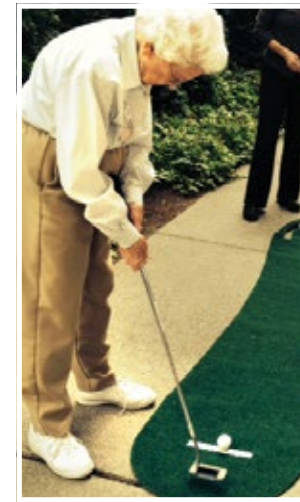
**improving  
the lives of  
children and  
families**

by **Olivia Drury**  
Sales and Marketing Coordinator

© Hemera

**Three-Thirds in Action**

Family | Philanthropy | Work



It's just about that time when people start slowing down on New Year's resolutions. It's cold and dark in much of the country, and it's hard to get motivated to be active. So here's a sure way to shake off those winter doldrums: Leisure Care and the One Eighty Foundation are challenging all of us residents, staff and family members to refocus and "step it up" for the first annual February Fitness Frenzy benefiting the One Eighty Foundation.

Four years ago, Leisure Care's CEO Dan Madsen founded the One Eighty Foundation with a mission committed to improving the lives of children and families — to give when there are needs, to mentor when guidance is sought, and to create opportunities for better lives. With a goal of raising \$50,000 across all Leisure Care communities in one single month, the February Fitness Frenzy is the foundation's most ambitious fundraiser to date! We are confident that with your help, we can make a positive impact on thousands of lives that are in need.

So, how does the February Fitness Frenzy work? We're asking residents and staff to get sponsored by family and friends for just .05 cents for each minute that they are active in the month of February. For instance, let's say you want to challenge a resident to be active at least 30 minutes a day. That's just \$1.50 a day, totaling \$42 for the month of February. There are countless ways to log activity minutes, including walking, yoga, Primefit sessions, playing Wii, rocking, ping pong and more.

Together, let's step up to improve personal health, step up to make an impact on a child's life, and step up to change our communities. It's time to lace up your sneakers, get out that Wii-mote, unroll your yoga mat, and step up for the February Fitness Frenzy!

Visit your local Leisure Care Primefit instructor to learn more about how to participate in the February Fitness Frenzy. ♦



© Photo courtesy of Leisure Care

# Advice for the Journey

Personal Advice and Expert Opinions

by Evan Kimble

Psychotherapist and Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC)

**Q: I recently learned that my granddaughter considers herself to be a “trans” man. She started dressing like a man, and I think she is dating a woman. Does this make her lesbian? I have heard that some “trans” people change their sex. What does that really involve? I’m not a prejudiced person; I try to treat all people fairly. But this is completely outside my experience. I am confused and I am upset, and I’m not sure what to do or say to her or to her mom (my daughter). Help?**

**A.** I can understand your confusion. Until pretty recently, most of us viewed gender and sex as having only two varieties: male or female. What we know now is that gender and sex can be viewed as being along a continuum, along several different scales. These include our actual physical sex (some people are born with sex organs that are not specifically male or female), our sexual orientation (straight, bisexual, gay/lesbian), our gender identity (male/female/both/neither), and our gender expression (dressing and behaving more traditionally “masculine” or “feminine” or a combination of both).

To make things more complicated, “trans” can mean very different things. A “transsexual” usually means someone who has had surgery and/or hormone therapy to change their sex-assignment, but not always. “Transgender” might only be changes in self-identity and gender expression, or it can indicate someone who is also taking sex hormones or moving forward with surgery. And when there is surgery, it might just be “top” (breasts removed or added), just “bottom,” or both.

As for your upset, this too can be a normal response. Often family members experience loss or grief when someone ceases to be their “daughter” or “son” or “granddaughter.” We all carry hopes and dreams for our loved ones that might no longer fit their story. Hopes to see your granddaughter as a bride or a new mother might have to be grieved and released.

As you adjust to that reality, realize that you now have a grandson. If he considers himself a trans-man, then that is what he is now, no matter how he dresses or acts, or who he dates. I encourage you to immediately begin to refer to him as a man, to use male pronouns when you speak with him or about him, and call him by whatever name he chooses. It takes practice! Years of habit are not easy to change, especially for something we didn’t realize could be changed. But I am sure he will appreciate your efforts ... even if it’s a struggle for you.

Since your grandson is a man, it is pretty unlikely he identifies as a lesbian. But you never know; the only way to know for sure is to ask him. If you show that you are open, curious, and interested in what is going on for him, he may be happy to fill you in. Keep in mind, though, that sometimes this can be such an intensely personal and challenging time that he may not want to talk about it. He may not be able to give clear answers yet. Be open, be loving, and give it time. Find a trusted person to talk to so you can process your own upset and confusion and come to terms with this exciting, important unfolding for your grandson. ♦

#### To learn more:

Mock, Janet. (2014). *Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love & So Much More*. Atria Books.

PFLAG: an organization for families, friends and allies of LGBTQ individuals and their rights. Visit them on the Web at [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org).

Learn more about terminology like “Transgender,” “Gender Identity,” and “Gender Expression at: [www.genderdiversity.org](http://www.genderdiversity.org)

# The One Eighty Foundation is passionately committed to improving the lives of children and families.

{ To give when there are needs, to mentor when guidance is sought, and to create opportunities for better lives. }



OneEightyFoundation

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# It's Never Too Late . . . I Hope

by Jeff Wozer  
Humorist and stand-up comedian

*“I feel unstoppable. Like I should be wearing a cape.”*

## Is cramming a sound strategy for life improvement?

I'm a sucker for Nike's *Just Do It* ads. I see those three simple words and immediately become wild with carpe diem, ready to scale Mount Everest, swim the English Channel, direct the Boston Philharmonic, jam with the Rolling Stones, and surf the banzai pipeline all in the same day. I feel unstoppable. Like I should be wearing a cape. But five minutes later conviction subsides, and instead of seizing the day I'm seizing the television remote deciding between *Judge Judy* or *Doctor Oz*.

I'm just a minion to the tyranny of procrastination.

Nothing symbolizes this more than the Hohner blues harp that sits in my upper desk drawer. When I bought it I entertained visions of me blowing on the harmonica like James Cotton reincarnate, sweat pouring down puffed cheeks while wailing on

Sonny Boy Williamson and John Lee Hooker covers. An honorary son of Chicago's South Side. Me, a walking juke joint. But after 11 years my musical repertoire is limited to the first verse of *Oh My Darling, Clementine*.

Oh my darling, indeed.

Yet I continue to maintain hope. I still believe I can escape the shackles of procrastination and tap into new potentials. History, after all, proves it's never too late to chase down a vision. Ray Kroc opened his first McDonald's at 52. Laura Ingalls Wilder published her first book in the *Little House on the Prairie* series at 65. Saddam Hussein invaded his first country at 53.

A friend, who moonlights as a life coach, told me that every decision must be followed with direct action. After buying the harmonica, she said I should have immediately followed up by taking classes. This would have facilitated momentum.

When I shared I still harbored hopes of expanding my musical repertoire from *Oh My Darling, Clementine*, she suggested that I temper expectations. In the latter half of life, she added, we should expand for ourselves rather than for public acclaim. A more simplified version of the Buddhist belief that the journey is the goal.

To help avoid the thorns of procrastination, she recommended maintaining a “progress journal.” Just like NFL teams learn from watching videos of their games, she said a daily log would serve the same purpose, allowing me to recognize what actions or habits are holding me back from experiencing life-enriching, creative pursuits.

The following are selected excerpts from this log:

### Day 1

This is the day I enter the brotherhood of musicians. My goal for the next 30 days is to average at least one hour a day honing my harmonica skills. I would start playing today, but my slotted practice time coincides with the *Rachel Ray Show*. She's hatching a new Sloppy Joe recipe. Can't miss that.

### Day 2

Began practicing today. Stopped after five minutes out of fear I had strained a lip muscle. Researched harmonica playing online. Relieved to read strained lip muscles are not common among harp players. In retrospect, maybe it was just chapped lips.

### Day 3

Read today that learning an instrument is similar to beginning a workout regimen in that it should include rest days. Hence, I'll set aside the next six days for rest.

### Day 9

The respite revived my resolve. Had planned to practice for six hours today to make up for the time off, but decided that in order to train like a musician I must dress like a musician. Went online and ordered a grey felt fedora. Will hold off on practicing until the package arrives.

*In retrospect, instead of maintaining a journal, I should have just looked at the words “Just do it.”*

### Day 14

No mail today due to it being Sunday, meaning another day of waiting for my fedora to arrive. Very upset. I feel as if society is conspiring against me playing the harmonica.

### Day 15

My fedora arrived today, but it's brown instead of gray. Mailed it back immediately. This means another substantial delay in practicing. Fortunately, I had already penciled in the next seven days for rest.

### Day 28

Exactly three weeks into my musical regimen and I've played a total of five minutes. I'm behind in my goal to practice 30 hours in 30 days. No problem. I'll practice 10 hours per day over the next three days. I'm wild with determination.

### Day 30

After missing the last three days of practicing, I've decided it's humanly impossible, even for someone with my granite-chipped resolve, to practice 30 hours in one day. Instead, I've set sights on a new goal of practicing 60 hours in 30 days. I'd start tomorrow, but I already scheduled it as a day of rest. ♦

Ethics and Spirituality  
Reflections and Contemplations on Life and Living

# Why Do I Hurt?

by Elana Zaiman  
Rabbi, chaplain and writer in Seattle

We often enter the forest of worry, fear and anxiety  
when we could just as easily enter the ocean of  
calm, comfort and peace. *Why?*



Our imagination all too often takes us to places we don't want to go: "My daughter didn't call when she said she was going to call. She must have been in a car accident." "My friend's headache won't go away. She must have a brain tumor." "My feet are in constant pain. The pain will never end."

Why do we run the tape of all that can possibly go wrong instead of having a little faith and saying, "It's probably just traffic, or a migraine, or the foot pain will heal." Why do we enter the forest of worry, fear and anxiety when we could just as easily enter the ocean of calm, comfort and peace? How we choose to view a situation makes a difference in terms of our emotional, spiritual and physical well-being.

This is particularly true for those who are suffering from physical pain. I lived in pain for many months before I learned why, and after going through two hip arthroscopy surgeries I still wasn't convinced that my hips were my only problem. I continued to believe that there might be something more serious going on. I was consumed with worry when I should have been focused on healing.

It's true that we must adjust ourselves to the fact that, as we age, our bodies are not as able as they used to be, but before giving into our pain, before accepting pain as an unwelcome houseguest who refuses to move out, we have another option: We can change the tape we run in our minds about pain and what it means.

Not long ago my physical therapist recommended a helpful handbook by Adriaan

**Why Do I Hurt?:** *Continued on page 42*



### Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory (1971)

It's not hard to guess why the musical adaptation of Roald Dahl's children's book is so fondly remembered by a couple of generations. The fantasy of childhood magic, the colorful designs inside the great candy factory, the catchy songs — and the appeal of “pure imagination,” as Mr. Wonka himself sings it: “There is no/Life I know/To compare with pure imagination.” The movie is so wild (especially in contrast to the humble existence of Golden Ticket winner Charlie), it can't help but fire up the brains of children and adults alike. In fact, a common shared reaction of grown-ups re-visiting this movie is to marvel at just how weird it actually is, especially a practically psychedelic monologue delivered during an out-of-control boat ride by the great Gene Wilder, whose starring turn as the chocolate-maker is a classic. But maybe that craziness is liberating, too — at any age. (Available on Amazon, Google Play and Vudu.)



“It's a beautiful day ...”

## MUSIC REVIEWS

by Joe Rodriguez / Freelance music writer

“Reality leaves a lot to the imagination.” — John Lennon



### Historical Misappropriation (Album)

— Scott Bradlee & Postmodern Jukebox, 2014

Here's an album that will definitely help you bridge the musical generation gap. Not just another cover album, it's an amazing collection of current pop, hip-hop and rock hits completely re-imagined. These arrangements — which could be mistaken for jazz and swing gems from decades ago for those unfamiliar with them — are the brainchildren of 33-year-old Scott Bradlee and his Postmodern Jukebox (a band of rotating singers and jazz musicians). The first track, “Rude,” transforms a reggae rock hit by Magic into a doo-wop tune with the heartthrob crooning of Von Smith and backup vocals reminiscent of the Shangri-las. Then there is the reimagined Britney Spear's tune “Womanizer” that transports you to a smoky speakeasy where a singer in the vein of Shirley Bassey serenades your ears. Perhaps the best reimagining on this album was of this summer's biggest hit from pop sensation Meghan Trainor, “All About That Bass,” now slowed to a sultry tempo with the buttery-toned jazz singer Kate Davis providing lead vocals and playing standup bass. Gorgeous stuff.



### Pure Imagination (Single) — Fiona Apple, 2013

Chipotle (yes, the restaurant chain) has been working with musicians to create compelling re-imagined songs for its brand awareness campaign, hoping to provide a stark comparison between them and other fast food restaurants. Many of these videos have gone viral and become musical hits of their own. Fiona Apple was one of those artists who lent her talents to Chipotle's cause and performs a dark rendition of “Pure Imagination” from the 1971 classic film *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*. Unlike the original film score's happier tone, Fiona's version has a brooding and dystopian soul to it, albeit with a message of hope and change in the lyrics. Without imagination, no new ideas or changes would ever be free to see the light of day, and this song exhorts us to use our imagination more and often. To experience the full impact, watch the video on YouTube.



### With Imagination (I'll Get There) (Single) — Harry Connick Jr., Blue Light, Red Light, 1991

This Dixieland jazz/gospel-inspired track treats your ears to the New Orleans jazz style that Harry Connick Jr. helped revive in the early 1990s. At 24, Connick Jr.'s voice reminded us of Sinatra and Crosby with a southern flair. “With Imagination” gives the feeling that you've stepped out onto Bourbon Street and are witnessing his impromptu performance with a brass ensemble. In this wistful song, we travel with Connick Jr. on his search for a place to call home. In the end, he finds what he was seeking by using his dreams and imagination as his guide. His message is simple; if you can visualize your goals, then you can reach them with the help from the heavens above and your imagination. In this way, nothing is unattainable.

### Beautiful Day: Continued from page 29

*If I had imagined this, I would have done many things differently before it happened. I wish I had known. Now I'm a caregiver, and life isn't the same.*

*I wouldn't dare to imagine living like this, alone and living in a new place so late in life.*

As for one of my personal favorites: “I never imagined that at this point I would be in this situation.” When I was first separated from my husband, still shocked (even though someone else might say it was fairly predictable), I sat with a friend, repeating those words over and over. She humored me, as I recall, by tossing out the idea that I could write a book entitled, *The Failure of Imagination*.

But it's less about failure than it is about how we choose to use our imagination. Thinking of what could go wrong hardly feels like a healthy way to plan or live a good life. Indeed,

those of us who do too much of this are plagued by worry, fear and anxiety about the future. I start the coaching process with an imagination-powered question: “What inspired vision do you have for yourself?” Few would want to reply with, “Well, if I get diagnosed with a terrible disease in my sixties, then I will ...” Rather, we turn our creative minds to the life-affirming well-being we wish for — how we see ourselves flourishing for as long as we have days and dreams. How do you see yourself in the days and years ahead? I ask this question of everyone, even those who know their days are limited by their condition. If you have only six months to live, how do you imagine living them well?

While my father never imagined the beasts he would wrestle in the physical sense as he dangled on the silk thread for more than 15 years, his imagination didn't fail him as he saw the beauty in each day. He could describe

the taste of a pear, just ripe enough to eat but not too much so, in a way that caused my own salivary glands to think I had taken the bite myself. Was it his imagination that the next day would be so beautiful that gave him hope, or was it the hope for another day that allowed him to imagine he could tough out the day in front of him? Could he ever have imagined that I would use his story to inspire others and myself?

How do you use your imagination to make this day a good one? How do you imagine yourself in the days and years ahead? Sick, healthy, alone or with loved ones, how would you describe yourself being the best you can be or having the best day you could have? What small change can you make in that direction today? And last, if you told me your story, could you imagine telling it with a new beginning? Try this as an opening statement: “It's a beautiful day ...” ♦

### Chronic Chic: Continued from page 7

matter wholly of choice. Instead, style proved to be a separate entity, a living thing that did most of its important work while I wasn't looking, while I believed, wrongheadedly, that I was making strides in a different direction.

Rather than discarding my style, I found myself revamping it. I started buying dress-style shirts at thrift shops, and now wear them unbuttoned and untucked over T-shirts, consciously avoiding clashing colors. I bought a trimmer for

my beard, much more forgiving than razors. Making these changes allowed a trickle of the old confidence. For now, the ego is playing along.

Maintaining a sense of style when you're dealing with a chronic illness is not only possible, it's mandatory. Giving your ego even a mild workout can supply the vinegar your personality craves when depression seems to have bled all your resources dry. And when you do, your style can reflect these changes that sometimes, happily, appear out of the blue. ♦

**Why Do I Hurt?:** Continued from page 39

Louw titled *Why Do I Hurt?* that successfully consolidates the neuroscience behind pain into terms a layperson can understand. (Louw, 2013) He speaks to the complexity of pain, noting that how we think and process pain is vital to the amount of pain we experience. Louw explains how the painful areas in our body have nerves that connect to the spinal cord, which, when faced with danger, send messages to the brain by way of electrical impulses. Once the danger is averted, this system usually turns off, but sometimes, like when we're not healing as rapidly as we would like, we're worried or anxious about not healing, or experiencing stress in other areas of our lives, our system remains in a state of heightened sensitivity.

How can we turn it off? We can educate ourselves about pain. Louw notes that exposing people to a 30-minute session on neuroscience and pain helps these nerves calm down. Brain scans prove it. Though I didn't have a brain scan after reading his handbook, I know I felt calmer.

Meditation, with its known benefits of increased calm

*“To me faith means not worrying.”*  
— John Dewey

and focus, is another way to change the tape we run in our minds and decrease our pain. It's not for everyone. I, for one, find it hard to sit still, in body and in mind, but when I make it a point to stop and to take deep breaths, I am aware that I experience greater equanimity. Jon Kabat-Zinn, scientist, writer and meditation instructor, offers meditation guidance and more in his book, *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness*. He also speaks to the link between the emotional and physical elements of pain. In fact, one of his chapter titles is “Working With Physical Pain: Your Pain Is Not You.” (Kabat-Zinn, 1990)

Another way to change that tape in our minds: Tapping or Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), a psychological acupressure practice that works to clear the emotional block from our body's energy system by tapping on our energy meridians (the same meridians used in acupuncture) and voicing positive affirmations. An example of a basic affirmation offered by Dr. Mercola, an advocate of the process: “Even though I have this \_\_\_\_\_, I deeply and completely accept myself.” (Insert your pain(s) in the blank.) (Mercola, 2014)

I have now made tapping part of my daily ritual; it re-trains my brain and guides my mind to a place of positivity, a place where I can find the faith to know that I can heal and that I am whole.

When you experience pain, you have a choice. You can let your imagination run to the worst possible scenario and inhibit your healing, or you can nudge your imagination to a healthier place and promote your healing. It's your choice. Choose wisely. ♦

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**BRAIN GAMES ANSWERS / From Page 18**

**Answers to Crossword Puzzle**

ELF		DAM		AHOY
PAR		BALI		ROBE
IMAGINATION		IS		
CAULK			ELM	
	AID		LAPSE	
DARNERS			TAX	
MORE	IMPORTANT			
SEE		IMMERSE		
GRACE		ETA		
	ALI		OCEAN	
THANK	KNOWLEDGE			
WATT	CARD	DEA		
OLEO	STY	YER		

**Answers to Sudoku**

1	7	2	4	9	3	6	5	8
8	5	3	1	7	6	4	9	2
4	9	6	2	8	5	7	3	1
3	6	9	7	2	1	5	8	4
7	1	5	6	4	8	9	2	3
2	8	4	3	5	9	1	6	7
9	3	1	8	6	7	2	4	5
6	4	7	5	3	2	8	1	9
5	2	8	9	1	4	3	7	6

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