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From Warriors

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COURAGE

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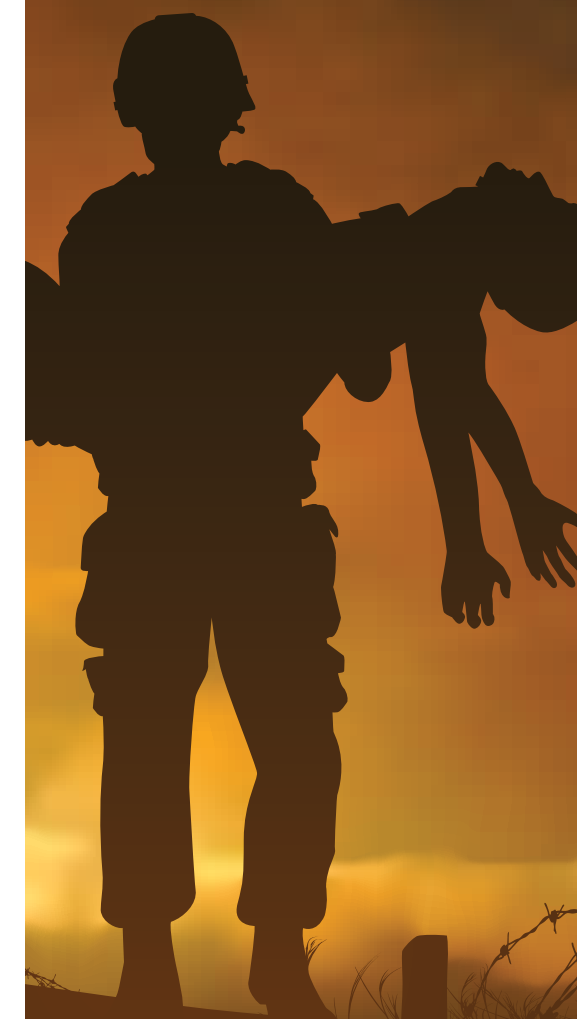
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COURAGE:
To Commit,
To Be Open,
To Expand



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Dan Madsen
Chairman & CEO, Leisure Care

Letter From the Chairman & CEO

Writing Our Own Cinderella Stories
by Dan Madsen

I don't watch a lot of TV, but the NCAA Basketball Tournament has me hooked each and every year. It's great fun to watch these stellar athletes at this high point in their careers go toe-to-toe and see who will come out on top. And there's a lot to be learned from the 23-day show, both personally and professionally. First, it's easy to see how some worthy competition can help drive people each and every day. Each round brings higher stakes and tougher opponents, motivating players to give 110% each and every game. Second, no one wants to be in second place, but being second-best can have an incredibly motivating effect. I recently read a stat that said teams that were losing by one point at halftime were more likely to win the game than teams that were one point ahead at the half. Sometimes you just need that extra bit of motivation to push you ahead.

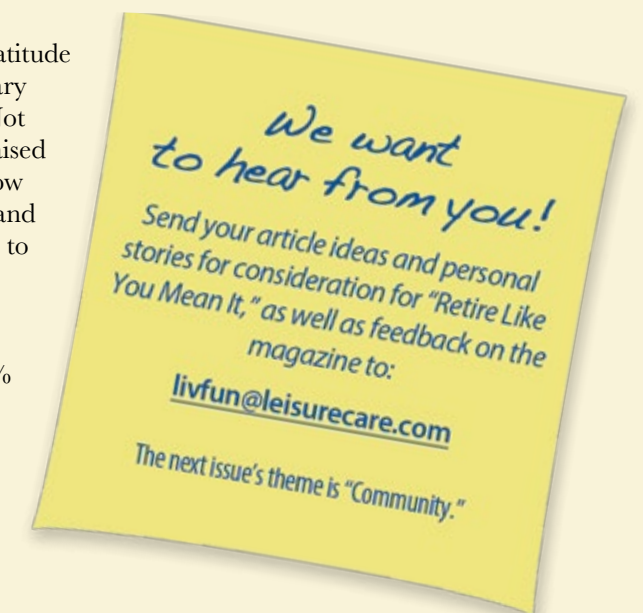
Third, and perhaps most important, these athletes have tremendous courage. As I'm sure everyone does, I love a good Cinderella story. Even though my bracket was busted, I was cheering along with everyone else when Georgia State upset Baylor in the first round. It takes a lot of courage to come into a game as the underdog, but a solid game plan and the courage to stick to it often prevails. These moments show us that truly anything is possible.

As you read through this issue of LIV FUN, you'll see story after story about people who had the courage to keep going. I'm inspired by our two featured residents — Pauline Livingston in St. Charles, Missouri, and Helen Scruggs in Kennewick, Washington — and their personal stories of courage and overcoming obstacles to fulfill their dreams. And I'm so grateful to the staff members who helped encourage and motivate them. This is what all of us at this company strive to do each and every day — make a positive impact on our residents' lives. And I know there are stories just like Pauline's and Helen's in each Leisure Care community across the nation.

Before I close I want to extend my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to each and every one of you who participated in the February Fitness Frenzy and supported the One Eighty Foundation. Not to steal the article's thunder (see page 34), but together we raised more than \$32,000 in that one month alone! Just think of how many children and families will benefit from this generosity and the courage it will give them to continue to dream and strive to achieve their own goals.

As always, I want to thank you for putting your trust in Leisure Care. Whether as a resident, an employee, a family member or a business partner, you inspire us all to give 110% each day.

Dan Madsen
Chairman & CEO, Leisure Care





Style Wise
Expressing Your Unique Self

The Apology

Unfashionably Late

by Skye Moody

Novelist, essayist, photographer and world traveler

My father passed away young and suddenly. There was no time for goodbyes, let alone apologies, and I owed him plenty. On that pre-dawn morning when my brother phoned long distance with the heart-lacerating news, I could barely breathe, but I raged denial he could not be dead — and tore at the walls like a wild animal. I had never felt so alone.

Over the phone my brother said soothingly, “Watch the sunrise.”

My father was 59 when a sudden heart attack claimed his life. He worked in the highly stressful aerospace division at Boeing. His death occurred in early January just a few days after he’d returned to work from an extended Christmas holiday.

During that holiday, inexplicably, he put all his affairs in order, including creating a file for each of his five adult children containing mementoes he had cherished from our childhood years. He also filled and labeled five photograph albums (he was an avid photographer who processed and printed his own pictures), selecting his favorite images of each child.

Why did he organize his affairs that holiday? Did he experience some intuitive moment, unconsciously knowing that he was only days away from the fatal heart attack? He was a man of science and faith; he tolerated no superstition.

One thing he did know. For the first time in his lifelong career at Boeing, when he returned to his office after that Christmas holiday, he said no to Boeing. His company had asked him to move to Iran to train the Shah of Iran’s army in the use of AWACS, Boeing’s over-the-horizon radar system, which my father had helped to develop.

He seemed to sense Iran’s coming troubles, the revolution, or else his security clearance level was high enough that he’d heard talk, and he told my mother that he did not wish to subject her to that potential danger.

I suspect that throughout the Christmas holidays my father had been mulling over his decision about the Iran job. But why the files and albums organized for each child? In any case, he was per-

forming his final acts of love for each member of his family, including me.

Our last conversation was by phone on what was to be his last Christmas Day. We discussed the Denver Broncos and argued politics. I conveyed regret that I wasn’t joining the family for that holiday. Decades later, I wonder, had I spent that last holiday with my father — neither of us knowing his death was so near — how would our father-daughter relationship have fared?

The truth was, at the time, my father was extremely disappointed in me. My personal and political choices infuriated him. The last time I saw him alive, he was so angry with me that he barely spoke to me the entire visit. In retrospect, I can now see my father’s point of view about the condition of my life and some wrong choices I’d made. I can now understand that, had I then possessed more courage and less narcissism, I would have apologized to him for letting him down.

I didn’t. My father passed away without knowing how much I loved him, without the balm of an apology or knowing how sorry I was for hurting him. In fact, for nearly 30 years after his death, one family member insisted that I caused my father’s heart attack. True, this relative agreed, his work was stressful, but despite the great physical distance at the time of his death, it was me, by my actions, who broke his heart. No evidence was presented to support the charge.

I choose to ignore that awful indictment; still, it haunts me. I wonder what exactly I could have done that could trigger a heart attack in someone a thousand miles away. Do we ever know just how deeply we can hurt loved ones? Will I ever be exonerated?

Sometimes we aren’t sure exactly why we need to apologize. Now I believe that if our hearts say we should apologize, then even if we don’t understand why or how we hurt or offended someone, an apology is in order.

A simple “I’m sorry for hurting you” takes courage and humility. I wonder why it’s easier to say “I love you” than to say “I’m sorry.” ♦

The heart knows what our minds cannot; take the risk and listen.

“Our last conversation was by phone on what was to be his last Christmas Day.”



ENTERTAIN Your Brain!

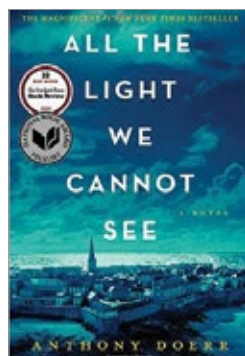
Stories of courage continue to enthrall and inspire us. Be brave and explore something brand new this month.

books | movies | music

BOOK REVIEWS

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

"Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go." — T. S. Eliot



All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr (Scriber, \$27.00)

Marie-Laure is six when she goes blind and is sheltered and educated in the halls and rooms of the Natural History Museum in Paris where her father works as the master of keys. Werner and his sister live in an orphanage in Germany, where the boys are informed they will all work in the mines when they come of age; but Werner's fascination with and growing understanding of the inner workings of radios makes him a better candidate as a Nazi soldier. In Doerr's bestselling novel, each chapter narrates a different period in the lives of Marie-Laure and Werner as the horrors of WWII escalate around them. Doerr interweaves their stories of courage and perseverance with a magical story of enchanted diamonds, brilliant architecture, and the mysteries of seashells into this ultimately uplifting story about the war we will never stop learning and reading about.



The Sasquatch Hunter's Almanac by Sharma Shields (Holt, \$17.00)

Eli Roebuck is only nine when he comes home to find his mother entertaining Mr. Krantz, a Sasquatch, in their home while his father is at work. When his mother leaves with the hairy giant to live with him in the woods, Eli's life is forever changed. This quirky debut by Spokane author Shields is rife with inventive and fantastical details, but at its heart it is about one family's attempts at connection over many years and generations. The novel moves the Roebuck family saga through the decades, as Eli marries, divorces, remarries, has children, and leaves his podiatry practice behind in his obsessive search for the elusive Sasquatch. Washington State's evergreen mystery gives this novel a Twin Peaks feel, in which the quirky makes perfect sense. If you enjoy fiction with a sly yet serious sense of humor, don't miss this auspicious novel that has already been signed to be a potential television series.



Shark Dialogues by Kiana Davenport (Plume, \$18.00)

Hawaiian history is full of tales of courage and survival amidst violent social and political change. Davenport explores seven generations of one biracial native Hawaiian family as the canvas against which the intricacies of that history are revealed. With layered, lush and brutal prose with the emotional power reminiscent of Toni Morrison and Isabel Allende, Davenport presents a truly compelling cast of characters. Pono, the imposing matriarch, forms the center of the novel. The four granddaughters who visit Pono each year on the Big Island act as the moons to Pono's gravity, as the lives of these strong women and the choices they make influence their families and their world. Perseverance, strength and courage are present in every page of this intoxicating and unique novel.

MOVIE REVIEWS

by Robert Horton / Film critic for *Seattle Weekly*

"Courage is being scared to death, and saddling up anyway." — John Wayne



They Were Expendable (1945)

There are many war films that celebrate courage in a victorious struggle; fewer depict the courage required in the face of a lost cause. That's one of the things that makes John Ford's World War II film the uncommonly stirring experience it is. We are with the Allied forces in the Philippines during the early days of the war, discouraging duty indeed for the PT-boat crews left behind to hold the line against the inexorable Japanese tide. Robert Montgomery — an actual Navy veteran who had been in PT boats himself — plays a seasoned officer, with John Wayne as his restless second-in-command. Ford's usual mix of visual poetry and earthy comedy is tipped to the melancholy side here, as the exhausted warriors test out their new boats and try to stave off the inevitable. There's nothing triumphal about the film (the resolution of a brief romance between Wayne and Donna Reed is especially stark), but that makes the theme of dogged resolve all the more moving. (Available on Amazon Instant, Google Play and iTunes.)



Amazing Grace (2006)

The British politician William Wilberforce (1759–1833) waged a successful campaign to abolish the slave trade in the British Empire. The measure of his devotion to the cause is that it took many humiliating years for Wilberforce to achieve his goal, during which he battled not only entrenched business interests but also his own debilitating illnesses. This sober but quietly inspiring biography depicts Wilberforce (Ioan Gruffudd) as he regularly presents his bills before Parliament, consults with best friend (and Prime Minister) William Pitt (Benedict Cumberbatch), and draws strength from a late-arriving marriage to the gutsy Barbara Spooner (Romola Garai). Director Michael Apted guides a fine cast in a sturdy, uncomplicated portrait of sheer determination in the face of perpetual opposition. The title comes from Wilberforce's mentor; the onetime slave-ship captain John Newton (Albert Finney), who wrote the hymn "Amazing Grace" after he reformed and became a preacher. (Available on Amazon Instant, Vudu, iTunes and Netflix.)

Entertain Your Brain: *Continued on page 40*

Out and About

Journeys Completed or Contemplated

A rope, a cliff, and that big step backward

You cannot be brave if you are not first afraid.

Here are the things I was afraid of:

The height.

The heat.

Holding everyone else up.

Getting all the way down, and not being strong enough to make the trip back up.

The way I'd feel the next day if I made my body do things it was not up for.

So I didn't go. I stayed behind with the guy with the new knee. We watched our travel companions strap on their harnesses, clip in to the ropes, and drop over the side of the sinkhole. Most of them would rappel to the bottom, then climb back up the ropes to the halfway mark. Then, they'd hike out.

I hiked to the halfway mark along the ledge. Me, and a guide, and the guy with the new knee. It wasn't hard. There was a little bushwhacking, a little swatting at mosquitoes, and it was humid. We reached the halfway point and waited. We looked up at pictographs and down at the bright green birds circling below.

Sima de las Cotorras — "Parakeet Sinkhole" — is in the Mexican state of Chiapas. It's about 500 feet across and 500 feet deep and takes its name from the hundreds of parakeets that make their homes here. The pictographs on the sinkhole walls are attributed to the Zoque people, indigenous to the region.

When I told friends I was off to Chiapas, they asked me if it was dangerous, this traveling to Mexico.

"I'm not planning to buy drugs or run immigrants," I said. "So what should I be afraid of?"

My trip would be three days of guided outdoor activities and three days in San Cristobal de las Casas, an attractive colonial settlement in the Chiapas highlands. My biggest worries were that I would eat all the hand-made tamales, thus annoying my travel companions, or that I'd say something really stupid in my bad Spanish.

I had not considered that I had signed up to drop over a 500-foot ledge.

I enjoyed watching my travel companions descend the vertical face of the sinkhole. They swung in the air above me, dropping a few feet every time they fed the rope up through a system of brakes designed to keep them safe. They spun out away from the wall; a few of them shot photos. A handful of them unclipped at the halfway point. The remaining climbers continued on to the floor of the sinkhole, disappearing below a canopy of trees. Those of us with our feet

on the ground hiked out along the ledge and drank coffee in the visitor's center perched on the rim.

The following day we hiked down to a waterfall, ate more tamales, and sat in the visitor's center chattering late into the night. I had this crazy idea. If I was not holding up the trip, if I got up really early, maybe I could have another go and drop over the edge this time? My biggest fear was no longer of the heat or the height, or even of holding everyone up. It was that I would miss out. And that fear was exactly the motivation I needed.

I asked the guides and I asked my travel companions — would you mind? Could I? I didn't want to leave without knowing what it felt like to hang from a rope in the sky surrounded by screaming parakeets and the red walls of the sinkhole.

"Let's do it," said Mauricio, the first guide.

"I'll take you; no problem," said Alex, the second guide.

At 5:30 a.m., Alex checked my harness, my brake, and I backed over a 500-foot ledge. I swung freely in the harness, my feet touching nothing, and watched the bright green birds circle below. I spun away from the wall and waved at my waiting companions on the opposite rim. I did not feel brave, but I did feel light.

What changed my mind? It wasn't that all of a sudden I'd become fearless. And certainly I had not become super fit overnight; if anything, I was in worse shape, my body was battered and sore from a difficult hike the day before. And it was still hot. I was dripping with sweat as soon as the sun hit me.

You cannot be brave if you are not first afraid. Of course, I was afraid to step out into the open air. No sensible person should be completely cavalier about such an activity. But a sense of adventure can diminish fear. Fear can be transformed into plain old common sense. And being surrounded by people you trust helps — I knew Alex; my guide would not let anything happen to me. Trust is fear's biggest enemy. A little fear, under the right conditions, can become courage. And that can send you right over the edge in the best possible way.

We went halfway down the rock wall, about 200 feet. Suspended in the air, it was still hot, it was still a long way down, and I could feel where I would be bruised from the harness. But I was no longer afraid. ♦

Over the Edge

by Pam Mandel

Freelance travel writer and photographer

"Suspended in the air, it was still hot, it was still a long way down, and I could feel where I would be bruised from the harness. But I was no longer afraid."

THE HERO WITHIN

Suffering can leave us utterly broken,
or it can help us break out the hero within.

“I could never do what you do!”

I hear this often, when people learn I am a hospice nurse practitioner at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

“Isn’t it depressing?” usually follows.

I used to think the same way. No one told me I could find peace, joy and fulfillment in caring for people at the end of their lives. But I’ve now cared for more than 10,000 dying veterans in my 30-year career, and I have come to realize that I’ve learned lessons about peace by caring for men and women trained for war. Peace with ourselves and peace within ourselves.

As we go about the process of dying, we become fertile ground for healing: Stoic masks dissolve, illusions and denials about aging and death are penetrated, and the sacred becomes almost palpable. More importantly, people often summon the courage to die healed.

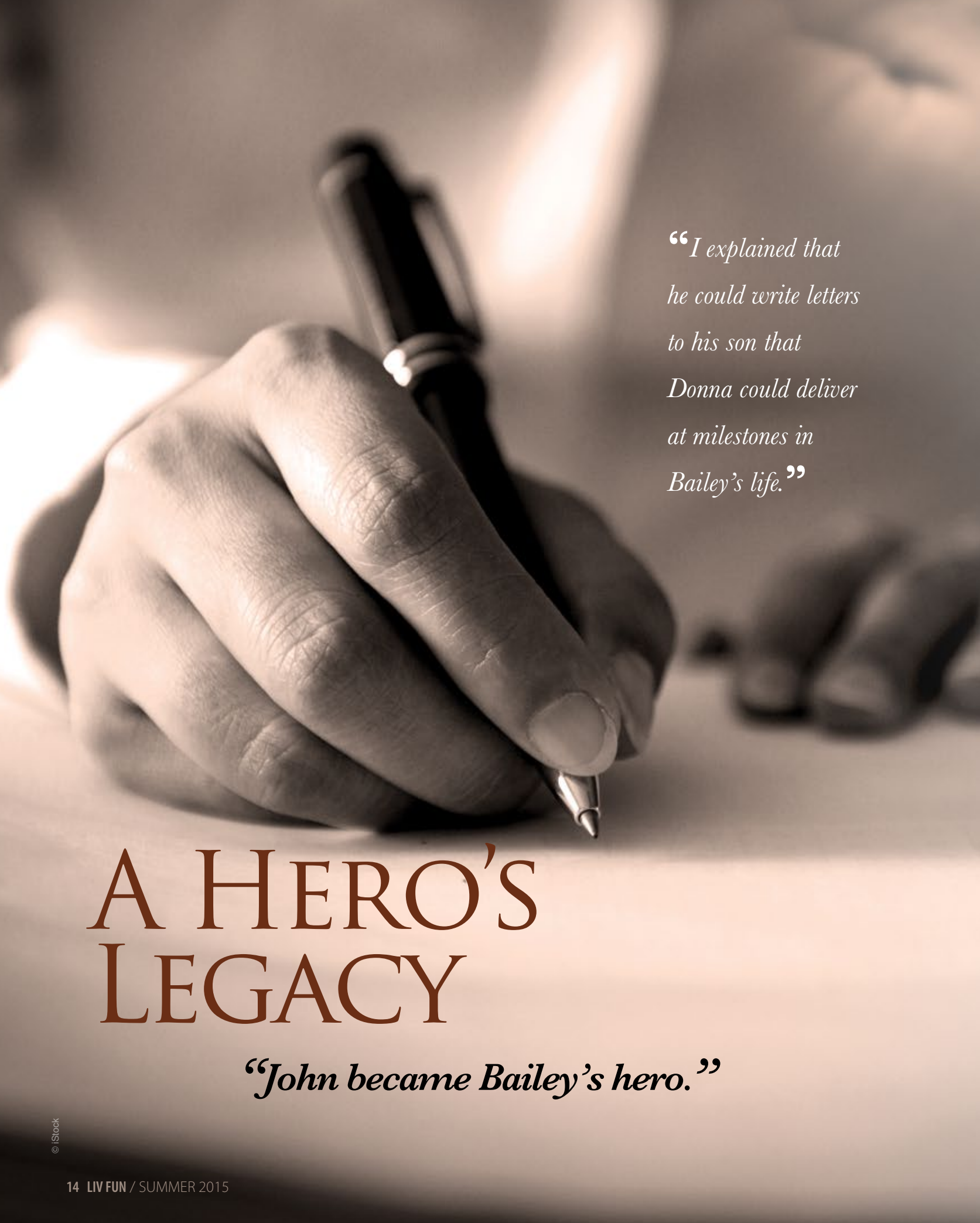
Continued on pg. 14

“I’ve learned quite a lot about dying in peace from those who were trained for war.”

by Deborah Grassman

Founder and CEO of Opus Peace





*“I explained that
he could write letters
to his son that
Donna could deliver
at milestones in
Bailey’s life.”*

A HERO’S LEGACY

“John became Bailey’s hero.”

By most anyone’s definition, John was a failure. An alcoholic at age 13, he numbed his distressing emotions with alcohol rather than feeling the painful experiences. His stoic military training provided further reinforcement of this approach. His drinking held him back from any measurable success in his career or his relationships. He had a 6-year-old son he had never met.

Then at age 37, John was diagnosed with stomach cancer. He rocketed into despair until his failing health served as the wake-up call he needed to get his life on track.

The first thing John did was stop drinking. Sober and confronting a life-threatening illness, he saw things anew. His priorities shifted. He contacted his son’s mother, Donna, making arrangements to meet his son, Bailey.

I met John two years later when his doctor asked me to evaluate him for hospice services. Understandably, most of John’s concerns focused on preparing Bailey, then 8 years old, for his death. They had enjoyed two great years together; John and Donna had even married. Still, John felt a burning need to compress a lifetime of fatherhood into their remaining months together.

I suggested that there was a way to remain an important part of Bailey’s life in the years to come. John was incredulous but interested. I explained that he could write letters to his son that Donna could deliver at milestones in Bailey’s life. John enthusiastically jumped at the chance to not waste his suffering by guiding his son so he would not repeat his father’s mistakes.

John’s first letter urged Bailey to do well in

school; the second letter focused on puberty and the sexual issues Bailey would face. Subsequent letters highlighted marriage and childbirth. All of the letters were filled with loving, practical, poignant advice. John became Bailey’s hero. The last letter was chilling with its haunting wisdom:

Dear Bailey, This is the last letter you will receive from me. I haven’t had the wit of Johnny Carson or the love of Mother Teresa, but I do pray. I pray that in the place where there is extra love, that you will use it to shine a light on someone in the dark today who has forgotten that God is in their heart. I pray for people who want help. Since I first met you, Bailey, you told me, “When I grow up, I want to help people who are in trouble.” I hope you have continued to keep that mission, and if you haven’t, that you might reconsider it now. It will bring much peace, meaning and fulfillment to your life.

Ten years later, Donna tells me that the letters are still having a dramatic impact on Bailey’s life.

Unlikely heroes like John show us how to encounter failure. They do not “rise above” or stoically endure their hardships the way I had been taught. They are beaten down and broken by life, but at the bottom they summon the courage to use those hardships to reach deeper depths within themselves.

“Cancer saved my life,” John had told me.

If John had not allowed death to beckon him beyond his bodily limitations, there is no doubt that he would still be drinking, having never met his son, and failing to live the wisdom expressed in that last letter.

Continued on pg. 16



LIVING HEALED

*“I was tortured in a
German prisoner-of-war camp.”*

*“That’s when
I decided that
Germany was not
going to control me
any longer.”*

When I asked 82-year-old Milton if there was anything left unsaid or undone as he faced the end of his life, his answer left me stunned.

“Nothing at all. In fact, I feel blissful,” he said with strength, joy and clarity, drawing me into rapt attention.

“But you’re getting frail,” I protested. “Each day is becoming a struggle.”

“It doesn’t matter what is happening out there. In here,” pointing to his head and then his heart, “is bliss. It doesn’t change.”

“I was a POW you know,” he said, turning to look me fully in the eyes. “I was tortured in a German prisoner-of-war camp.”

We sat quietly together while I marveled at what he had seen and experienced.

“If those things had happened to me, I’d be bitter,” I finally said.

“I was at first,” he said. “After I was released, I wanted nothing to do with Germany or with Germans. I had moved on in my life as an art professor. I didn’t need to remember.”

Events in his life conspired to force him to remember when the granddaughter of German composer Richard Wagner phoned and asked him to be the set designer for an opera in Germany. At first he turned her down, but he could not get the offer out of his mind.

“It was a dream-come-true opportunity, but I couldn’t accept it because my resentment kept me trapped. That’s when I decided that Germany was not going to control me any longer. I called Friedlinde back and told her I’d come.”

Germany was a landmine of triggers causing flashbacks; the worst was the German language itself.

“I cringed just to hear a German word; it brought back memories of guards spitting out German words as they tortured us.”

Nevertheless, Milton learned the language so he could direct the workers on the set. Then, he was asked to become a German interpreter.

“That was the *best* thing that ever happened to me.”

I was baffled.

“To be an interpreter, you can’t just translate one word for another,” he clarified. “You have to understand the *context* of the language. To do that, you have to understand the people. In fact, you have to be a *bridge* of understanding.”

The lesson he shared with me took my breath away.

“It forced me to understand people I didn’t want to understand. It forced me to love people I had only known to fear. In doing that, I became free. It was my *real* release date from the German POW camp. If I hadn’t done that, I’d still be imprisoned today.”

Can We Die Healed?

Our affluent culture offers comforts and security that, paradoxically, lure us into imprisonment without our even realizing it. Most of us are not passionate about aging. We shy away from stating our real age. Pharmaceutical rescues, anti-aging formulations and surgical procedures pique our interest. Too many of us fail to seriously regard aging as an opportunity to cultivate wisdom, because we have become so arrogant as to actually believe that aging and death have nothing to teach us!

Liberation comes with facing our fears. It requires honesty to let go of denials and pretenses about aspects of ourselves we prefer to hide. Paradoxically, this honesty brings a humility that empowers us; we gain our real power when we let go of pride and willpower and acknowledge who we are and who we are not. We can become heroic to the people we are leaving behind, forgiving ourselves and learning to share our spirits.

Like Milton, we can choose to come to peace with what tortures us. Like John, we can face what we’ve failed to accomplish.

Like both of them, we can ask, “If I died today, what would be left unsaid or undone?”

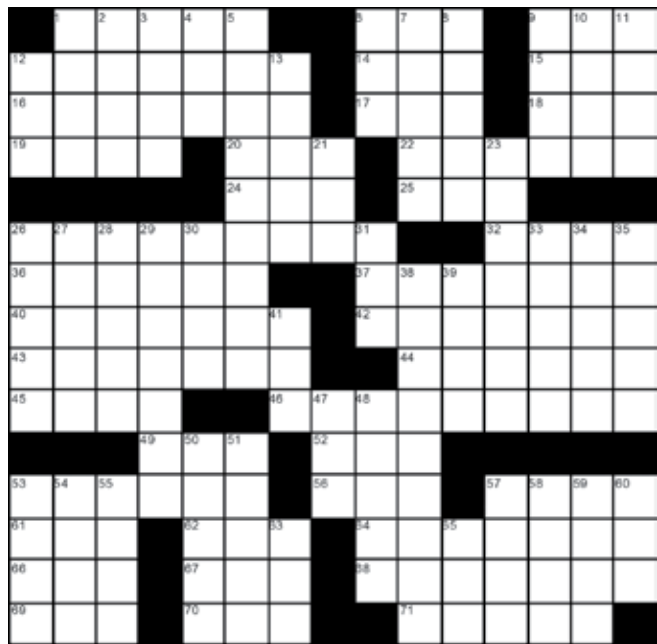
Somehow, once we know that, we can often summon the courage to *live* the answer. ♦

Read more:

Grassman, Deborah. (2012). *The Hero Within*. St. Petersburg: Vandemere Press.

Crossword Puzzle

Take Heart!



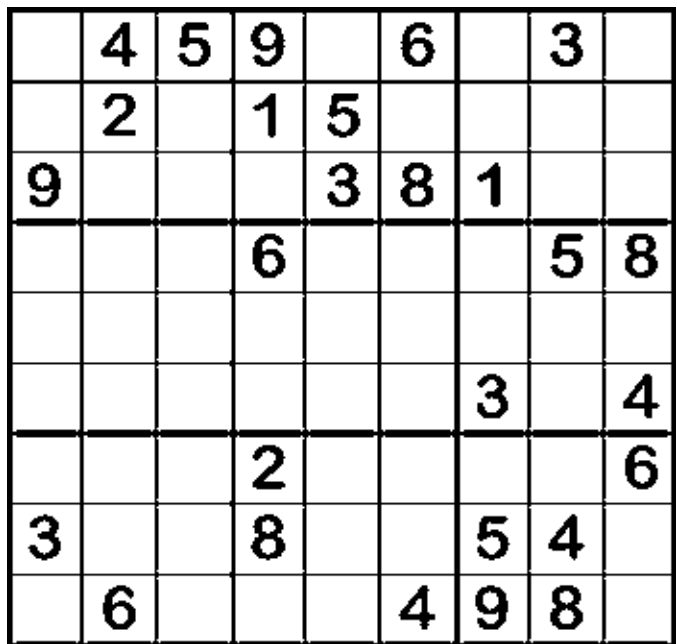
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ACROSS

- 1 Hero hangouts
- 6 First part of a Thomas Jefferson quote
- 9 60s fad
- 12 Rum source
- 14 Old Saturn
- 15 Diamonds, slangily
- 16 Verbal omission of sounds
- 17 Something to put on it
- 18 Second part of quote
- 19 Third part of quote
- 20 Game or pizzeria
- 22 Bldg. managers
- 24 Kid
- 25 One way to vote
- 26 Fourth part of quote
- 32 Burn a little
- 36 Claim
- 37 Pacify
- 40 Visualize
- 42 Exact
- 43 Climber's challenge
- 44 Spoke
- 45 Withered
- 46 Last part of quote
- 49 Suitable
- 52 Toreador accolade
- 53 Cook Stewart
- 56 Writer's choice
- 57 Epic narrative
- 61 Large ratite
- 62 Wisc. neighbor
- 64 Purlloining practitioner
- 66 Firefighter Adair
- 67 Clay, now
- 68 Violent flow
- 69 Common ending in chemistry
- 70 Sodium hydroxide
- 71 Employee wish

Sudoku

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



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DIFFICULTY: ★☆☆☆☆

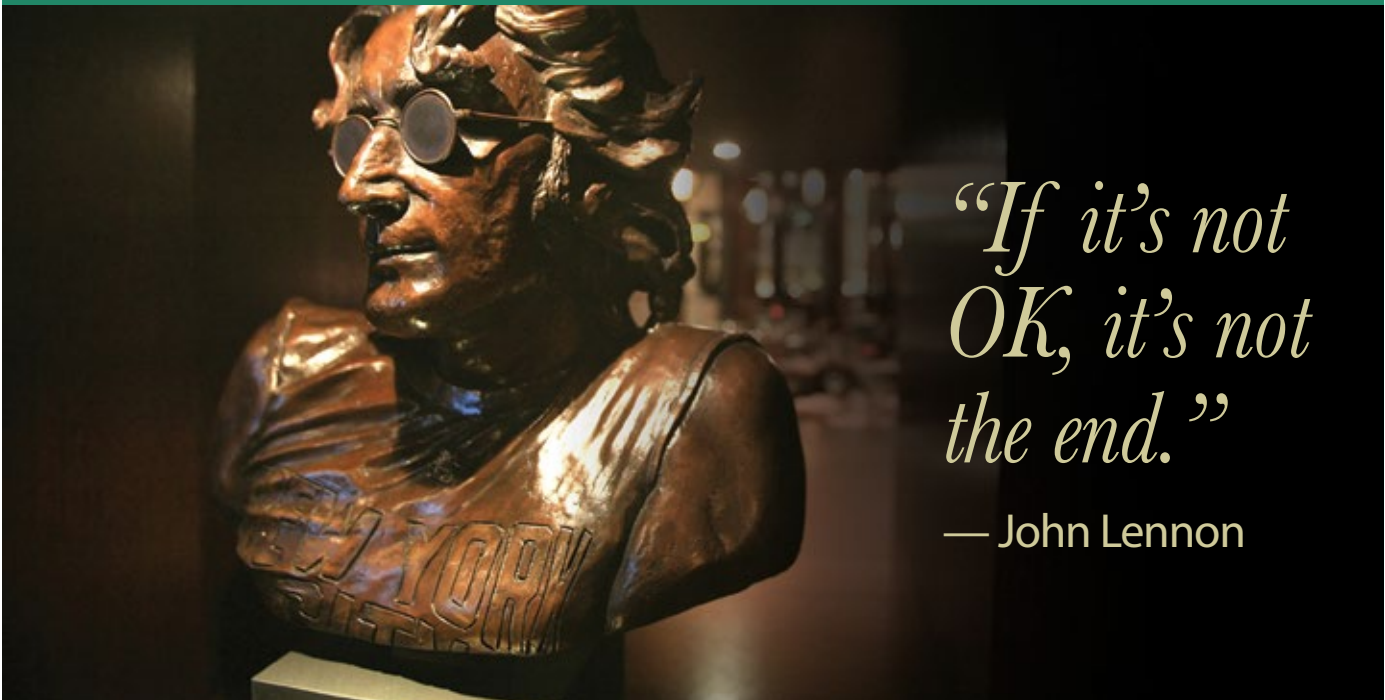
DOWN

- 1 Eccentric artist
- 2 Produce
- 3 A LaRue
- 4 Year during Augustus' reign
- 5 Floggers
- 6 Cruet contents, perhaps
- 7 Adjective for many parties
- 8 To invest
- 9 Scurvy preventer
- 10 Surgery reminder
- 11 Lairs
- 12 Descendant of Simeon
- 13 Famous orphan
- 21 Kimono outfit component
- 23 Indy sight
- 26 Cod and Fear
- 27 Mediterranean tree
- 28 Stomach or skin ailment
- 29 Withdraw
- 30 Malaria symptom
- 31 Syrup source
- 33 Dominican Republic neighbor
- 34 Plus
- 35 Thin
- 38 Presentation device
- 39 Daughter of Chloris
- 41 LAX datum
- 47 Crowd
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- 50 Medicine bottle
- 51 Add up
- 53 No more than
- 54 Sunday's last word?
- 55 Ill-mannered
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- 63 Fib
- 65 Significant period

BRAIN GAMES ANSWERS ON PAGE 42

Healthy U

Good Health 101 and Beyond



by Stephan J. Smith

Doctor of Chiropractic

In our lifetimes, we have many, many moments where we face a change. Changes in our careers, in our families, in our health, in our finances and so on. Often these changes are fun and happy ones, with the promise of a new experience, a new place, or a new point of view.

Other times, the change is not as welcome and we resist it. It's human nature to resist change. There's an inherent fear in big new things in our lives. Sometimes, excitement overrules fear and we plunge in headfirst, but other times, the fear is too big and we pull back.

When we look back in our lives at a time when we faced an impending change, we tend to remember only the times when things didn't work out. Those bad experiences can stand in the way of choosing to be brave today. Negative comments from others can also cause us to question a decision that requires a leap of faith or bravery. It adds to the fear and uneasiness and makes us hesitate even more.

But even though things don't always

turn out the way we expect them to, most of the time they are still OK. Most of the time the fear we had about making a decision wasn't justified in the end. Singer and songwriter John Lennon is often credited with the quote: "Everything will be OK in the end. If it's not OK, it's not the end." Realizing this can be a powerful tool in being courageous in the future.

Having courage is not the same thing as having no fear. Some of the greatest, bravest people in history have recounted that when their moment came to face a fear and have courage, they were terrified. Nelson Mandela said, "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."

So, what can we do to inspire ourselves to have courage? *Psychology Today* lists the Six Attributes of Courage as:

- 1) Feeling Fear Yet Choosing to Act.
- 2) Following Your Heart.

- 3) Persevering in the Face of Adversity.
- 4) Standing Up for What Is Right.
- 5) Expanding Your Horizons and Letting Go of the Familiar.
- 6) Facing Suffering With Dignity or Faith.

Having courage is not something you're born with. It is a learned behavior, and as such can be developed and improved with practice. Start with a small thing that you're afraid of and step forward into it. How did it feel afterwards? Was it as bad as you feared, or was your fear unjustified? Taking small steps with courage can teach you how to handle the bigger things when they come along.

Changes are a part of life, and facing them with courage leaves you stronger and happier. ♦

Source:
Greenberg, Melanie, Ph.D. (2012). "The Six Attributes of Courage." *Psychology Today*. Retrieved March 17, 2015, from www.psychologytoday.com. View article at tinyurl.com/wise-courage.

Money Matters
Common Sense and Professional Advice

Leaving It All Behind

by
Sue Peterson, CFA
Managing Director, Cornerstone Advisors, Bellevue, WA

It's yours to give;
are you bold enough to do it now and
enjoy the fruits of your labor?

St. Paul wisely wrote in 1 Timothy 6:7, "For we have brought nothing into the world, and so we cannot take anything out of it. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content."

One could argue that this verse is the basis of the common cliché, "You can't take it with you." Intellectually, we would probably agree, yet our money and our "stuff" have often helped define our lives to our family, our community and ourselves. They help prove that we

are (or were) successful, that our efforts mattered, that we chose well.

As a wealth advisor, I understand how deeply rooted our personhood can be in proof of financial success. Yet as we age, one of the most courageous acts we can take is to begin intentionally reducing the size of our estate and prepare for that time when you leave it all behind. Easier said than done, but this four-step process will give you a good roadmap for this part of your financial journey.

1) How Much Can You Give?

First, consider how much you *really* need. A wealth advisor can help model the sustainability of your lifestyle and the corresponding asset base you will need to support it. This will shine a spotlight on where there is excess that can be thoughtfully given away to family or charity (or spent without worry!) during your lifetime.

2) Dare to Give Now

I often encounter objections to this idea of making gifts of your estate to family while you are still alive. I hear that children and grandchildren cannot be trusted to spend the gift wisely or that the gift might spoil them. This is another opportunity to be courageous.

The dictionary defines a gift as a thing given willingly to someone *without payment*. So dare to be disappointed! Dare to be surprised! Above all, don't forget that you too at one time in your life had to learn to be a good steward of your finances. Better for your family to learn with small amounts while you are alive than have no experience when it comes time to handle a larger inheritance.

Consider also the charities that you want to enable to carry on their work long after your passing. Wouldn't you receive much more joy helping them out

while you are alive rather than leaving only a bequest? Again, with the aid of a wealth advisor, you should be able to determine how much you can comfortably give away now.

For more than 20 years, I served a retired CEO and his wife with an eight-figure portfolio. Upon her husband's death, the widow would write \$25 checks to dozens of charities at year-end, fearful that she didn't have enough to give more. When I was able to help her understand that, logically, she could give significantly more and still maintain her lifestyle, fear turned into serious philanthropy. She ended up happily giving over \$1 million to charity before her death.

3) Face the Facts and Get Organized

It takes courage to prepare for your own death. That's pretty blunt, but we all know it's a question of when, not if. The majority of us want others to think well of us, to consider our lives to be organized and well-managed. Yet time and time again, this desire breaks down when it comes to facing our future passing. One of the biggest and most loving gifts you can give your family is to organize your affairs so the process of probating your estate doesn't fracture relationships.

What's involved? Of utmost importance, have current estate plans, a will or revocable trust, that clearly states your wishes for who receives your assets and which individuals carry out this responsibility. Review the beneficiaries of your retirement accounts with your attorney so they align with your estate plan as these assets pass outside of probate.

4) Write it All Down

Complete the Checklist for Life (download a copy at tinyurl.com/wise-checklist) so your executor knows how to locate all of your assets, including online user names and passwords. Prepare a Disposition of Tangible Personal Property to eliminate family members arguing about who gets Grandma's tea service or other family heirlooms. Execute a Directive to Physician and consider completing a POLST form (Physician Orders Life-Sustaining Treatment). (Find the form at www.polst.org.) Finally, complete a Directive for the Disposition of Your Remains.

Leaving a legacy to our family and community is a great intention. Be courageous and make it a goal in 2015 to take the necessary steps to make that intention a reality. ♦

"Better for your family to learn with small amounts while you are alive than have no experience when it comes time to handle a larger inheritance."

LIVE LONG AND PROSPER

The Best Advice?

by Tammy Kennon

Writer, sailor, traveler, photographer and blogger

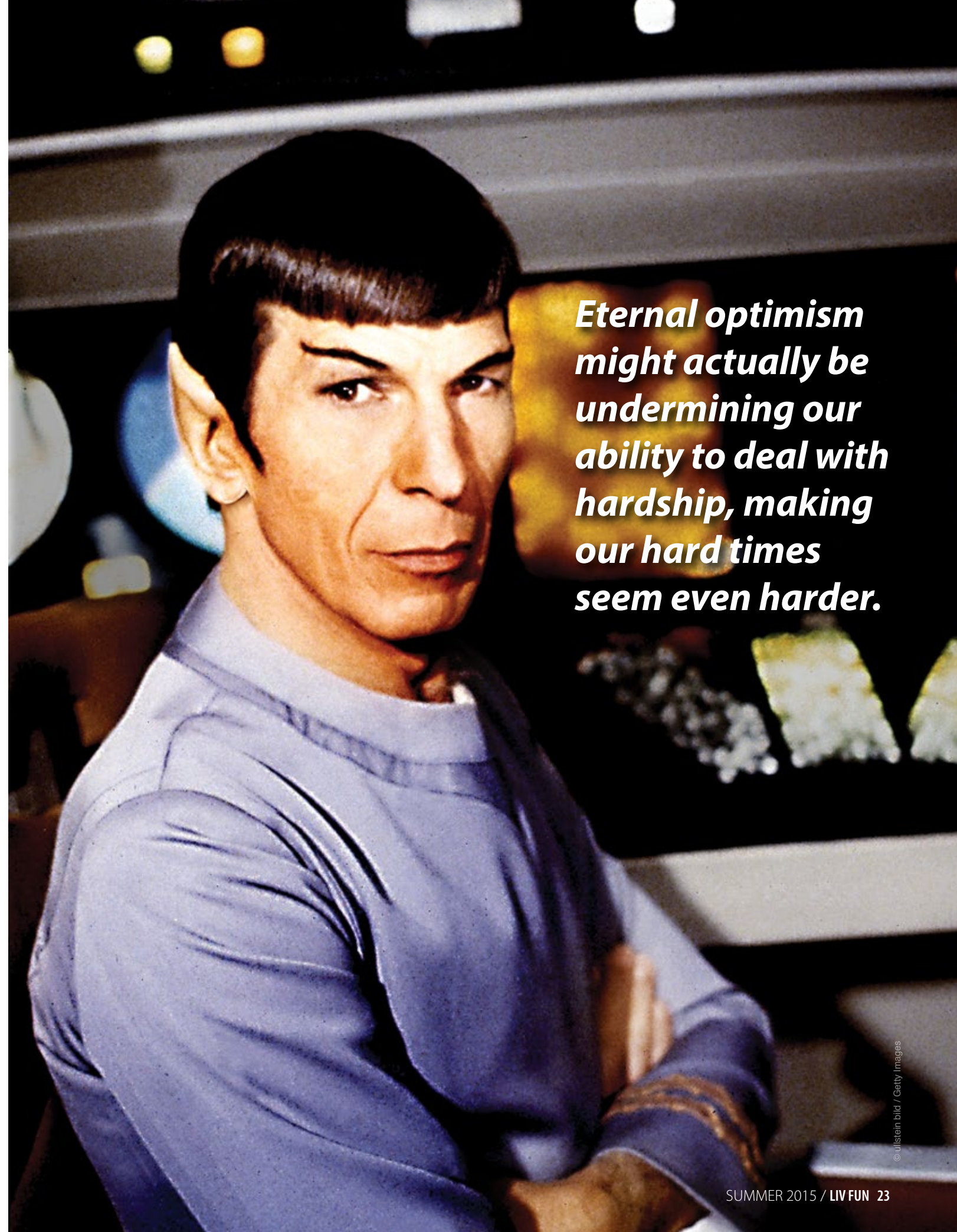
There's evidence to suggest that some of us are Vulcans (RIP, Mr. Spock). Our only vision of the future is "Live long and prosper." We can't muster the courage to picture anything other than happy days, an imaginary future where our relationships thrive and our families flourish. We will surely enjoy impeccable health and a life free of tragedy or unexpected happenstance. All the glasses ahead are half full.

Counterintuitive as it may sound, we might want to take a lesson from the Eeyores among

us who see the other half of the glass. Scientists are now finding that an overly optimistic outlook might actually undermine our ability to deal with hardship when it comes, making hard times seem even harder. In fact, it appears that we measure our level of happiness not by whether things are *going well*, but by whether they are going *better than expected*. By looking at the future with rosy blinders, we unintentionally skew our expectations too high, setting ourselves up to view setbacks in the worst possible light.

Live Long: *Continued on page 24*

Eternal optimism might actually be undermining our ability to deal with hardship, making our hard times seem even harder.





*“We might want to take a lesson
from the Eeyores among us who see the glass half empty.”*

“What we plan is very narrow. What is in store for us is very wide,” said Rabbi Sherre Hirsch, author of *Thresholds: How to Thrive Through Life’s Transitions to Live Fearlessly and Regret-Free*, coming out in August 2015. “We don’t imagine bad things happening to us — only to other people — so we are surprised when they do.”

Of course we’re surprised, because we can’t bear to consider the death of a child, losing our spouse, being diagnosed with a terminal illness. No. No! Don’t say it or even think it. You might jinx yourself.

Of the top 10 most stressful life events on the Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale (1967), only two of them are things we anticipate and plan for: marriage and retirement. The rest are things that take us by storm, including the three most stressful: death of a spouse, divorce and marital separation.

“Transitions are intrinsic to being human,” Rabbi Hirsch told me. “But we spend our time trying to get out of them, trying to reverse them or ignoring them.”

With her book, Rabbi Hirsch hopes to start a conversation. “I wanted to bring the discussion about transitions into the open so people did not feel so alone — allow people to share their transitions,” she said.

Rabbi Hirsch says that in her experience, the people who most successfully handle life’s painful transitions, like facing a terminal illness, are the ones who have the courage to face them head on.

“Rather than deny it, try to save themselves or engage in distractions,” she said, “they embrace what it means to be in the moment.”

Those who study how our brains function are finding that Rabbi Hirsch’s observations are right on track — that accepting the inevitability of adversity strengthens our ability to face it.

Dr. Alex Lickerman calls this an undefeated mind. His book, *The Undefeated Mind: On the Science of Constructing an Indestructible Self*, is a thoughtful treatise on how we can create a life state that increases our ability to withstand adversity.

Part of the problem, Dr. Lickerman told me, lurks deep in our evolutionary history.



*“We can still cling to our Vulcan mantra, ‘Live long and prosper,’ but science now
tells us that accepting the reality of the perils ahead will not jinx us.”*

“Our natural tendency is to avoid physical pain, which is a survival skill,” he said. “But as we evolved, aversion to pain carried into the psychological realm.”

He says this psychological distaste for pain manifests itself in our daily lives, whether it’s as benign as avoiding difficult email or as unhealthy as drowning out negative emotions with drugs and alcohol. But Dr. Lickerman believes that we can squelch our natural tendency to avoid or mask pain and at the same time learn how to prevail over it.

“The key is not avoiding pain, but recognizing it’s a part of life,” he said. “It seems small, but small change can make all the difference in how we deal with the pain.”

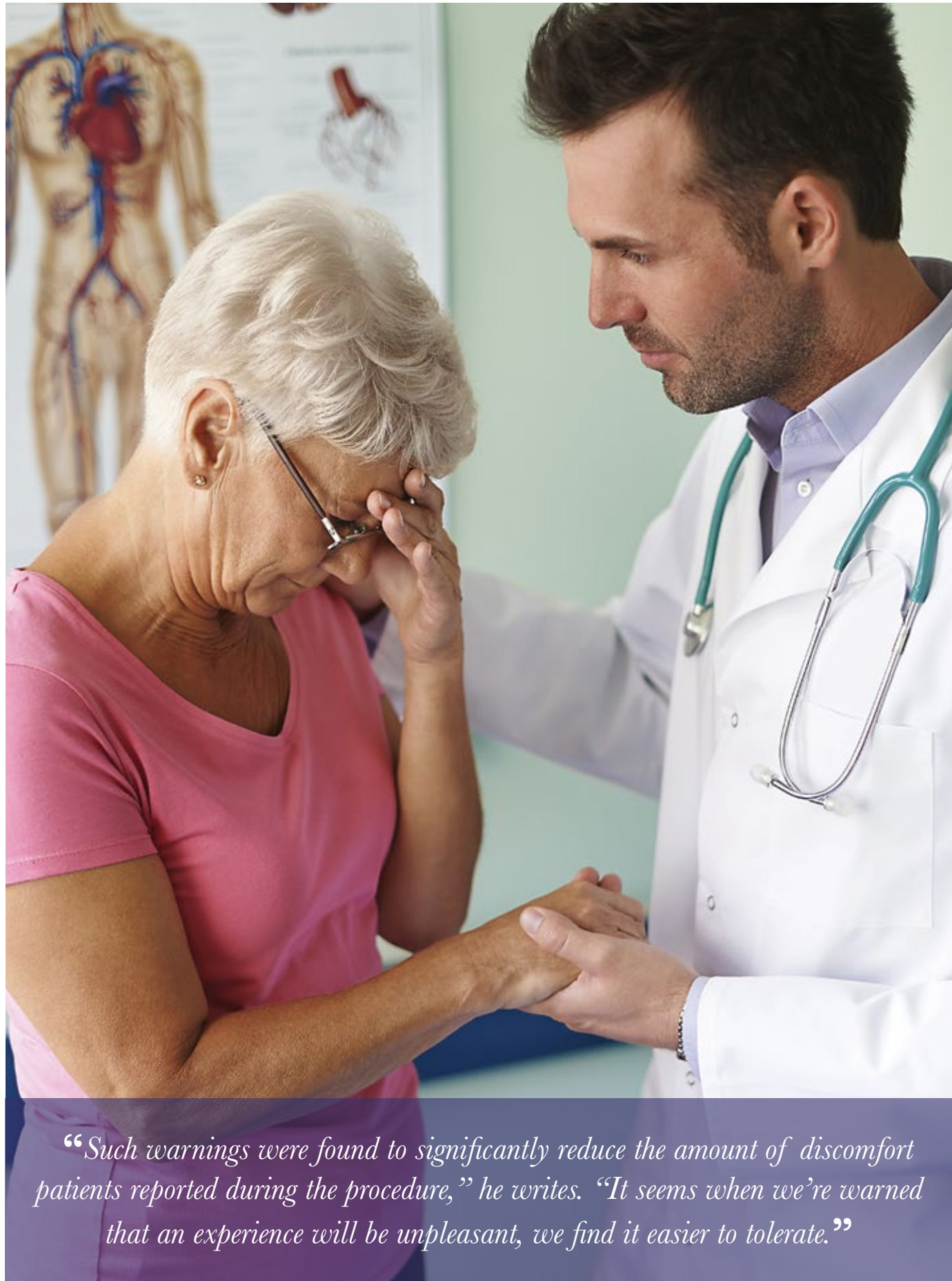
Scientists have learned through brain imaging that while we experience physical and emotional pain differently, with few exceptions, they activate identical regions of the brain. This similar brain response explains another startling finding, published in *Psychological Science* in 2010, that Tylenol alleviates not only the pain from a sprained ankle but also pain of hurt feelings. While it might not be possible to completely eliminate physical or emotional suffering, by adjusting our expectations, we can be more comfortable enduring it.

In his book, Dr. Lickerman describes the effects of warning patients how much pain to expect during medical procedures. Instead of marginalizing the pain by saying, “You might feel some pressure,” they explained to patients explicitly how much pain to expect.

“Such warnings were found to significantly reduce the amount of discomfort patients reported during the procedure,” he writes. “It seems when we’re warned that an experience will be unpleasant, we find it easier to tolerate.”

The amount of actual pain the patients experienced did not vary, but calibrating expectations helped them handle the pain with less distress. Dr. Lickerman uses this study and others to show how we can cultivate this kind of hardiness and endure difficult physical and emotional conditions with less suffering.

Live Long: Continued on page 27



“Such warnings were found to significantly reduce the amount of discomfort patients reported during the procedure,” he writes. “It seems when we’re warned that an experience will be unpleasant, we find it easier to tolerate.”

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“The goal is not to stop feeling pain, but to overcome it,” Dr. Lickerman said. “With practice, we can move from thinking *anxiety is bad* to thinking *I’m feeling anxiety*. Science suggests that by approaching emotional pain with a spirit of acceptance, we can be observers of our own pain with no judgment. It takes courage to allow ourselves to feel badly.” (This does not in any way mean forgoing medical treatment for physical and mental distress.)

Nobody says it will be easy to develop that spirit of acceptance, but Dr. Lickerman has laid out a road map for getting there. The fact that you’ve read this far about an uncomfortable topic means you’ve already taken a few steps down the path. You have exhibited courage just to read about something you fear, and then you continued reading in spite of that fear. Well done. You have not only bolstered your strength for thinking about hardship, but you have also strengthened your resilience.

“We are more resilient than we think,” said Dr. Lickerman. “And it is some function of how much we believe we are. When our worst fears are realized, very rarely do people crumble and become inert. They continue to hope and move forward.”

The research into our brain activity is thoroughly modern, using advanced brain imaging

technology, but the underlying wisdom has come down to us through the ages, expressed most beautifully some 168 years ago by Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*:

“... now I remembered that the real world was wide, and that a varied field of hopes and fears, of sensations and excitements, awaited those who had courage to go forth into its expanse, to seek real knowledge of life amidst its perils.”

We can still cling to our Vulcan mantra, “Live long and prosper,” but science now tells us that accepting the reality of the perils ahead will not jinx us. Quite the opposite; it will bolster our courage to go forth and prosper in the wide and varied field before us. ♦

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DeWall, Nathan C. et al. (2010). “Acetaminophen Reduces Social Pain: Behavioral and Neural Evidence.” *Psychological Science* 21, 931–937.

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Rahe RH et al. (2000). “The Stress and Coping Inventory: An Educational and Research Instrument.” *Stress Medicine* 16, 199-208.

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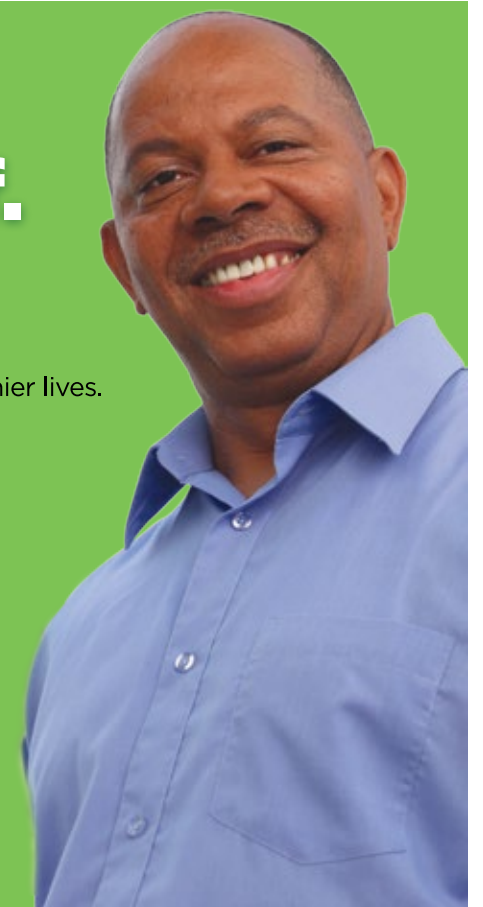
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The three Senior Corps programs – RSVP, Senior Companions, Foster Grandparents are administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency that improves lives, strengthens communities and fosters civic engagement through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



Advice for the Journey

Personal Advice and Expert Opinions

by Evan Kimble

Psychotherapist and Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC)

Q: When I was young, my older brother molested me. It happened several times. I tried to tell my parents about it, but I was too timid to tell them the facts; and what I did tell, they probably didn't believe. I'm sure he denied it, so he never got any consequence or treatment for it. Aside from the abuse, he was mean. He teased and criticized both me and our younger brother. As an adult, I have done my best to avoid him. He acts like nothing bad ever happened. I write holiday cards to his family, but I avoid interacting with them. Recently, my brother and his wife wrote that they are coming to town and talked like they planned on staying with us. I don't even want to see him, let alone host. But I feel guilty, and I'm kind of falling apart. In my family, we were taught to value charity and hospitality. And we're not getting any younger — I wonder if I am supposed to forgive him before the end. Am I wrong to reject them? How do I tell them I don't want to see them?

A: You are not wrong. You are right to set healthy boundaries. In your childhood, you experienced violation and criticism, and it is appropriate of you to safeguard yourself. Even if there is no further risk of sexual abuse, it sounds like it could be emotionally hurtful to visit with him.

If we are raised in an unsupportive environment, we are likely to devalue our needs as adults and to put other people's needs before our own. The part of you that feels guilty is that child who thinks it is wrong to actually respect her own needs and take care of herself. The part of you that is falling apart knows that you *have* to take action but feels conflicted about it.

Respect your personal limits. **Your brother's need for a place to stay does not outweigh your needs to keep yourself safe and sane.** What really matters is that you set the limit. How you tell your brother is secondary. Say whatever you need to avoid hosting. If you don't want to see them at all, it's OK to set that limit too, even if it makes you feel bad.

You could try the direct path: "Dear brother, I know you don't acknowledge the abuse that happened in the past, but it happened. At this time, I can't have contact with you in person. I will continue to write you from time to time, and perhaps one day we can address what happened. Until then, I can't visit with you like everything is fine." If that is more than you want to confront, beg-off indirectly: "Hey there, things are just too hectic here right now for a visit. I'm sorry, but let's think about visiting another year." You are under no obligation to confront them or to explain your choice.

Bottom line: Your needs matter. Your family matters more than your brother's comfort. In recovering from childhood abuse, there are times where it's just not healthy to interact with the abusers. Maybe in time this can change — but it may be impossible unless your brother is willing to do his own hard work of taking responsibility for past actions. ♦

For Further Reading:

Walker, Pete. (2013). *Complete PTSD: From Surviving to Thriving*. (Self-published). This book and Mr. Walker's website (www.pete-walker.com) are full of tools for handling the shame and overwhelm that can hit us in situations like the one described above.



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A Morning I Once Had

Sometimes the bravest thing you can do is just get out of bed.

by Ashley Roman

Blogger and mental health advocate in Metro Detroit

“Anxiety disorders are twice as prevalent as dementia among older adults.”

You wake up to your alarm, and the instant wave of fear hits you. You feel it in your stomach — that nervous feeling that won’t go away and appears out of nowhere.

Is it gonna be another morning like this?

Deep breaths.

You force your legs over the edge of the bed, put one foot in front of the other, brush your teeth, turn on the shower.

You do all this simply because this is what you know you’re supposed to do.

It’s not what you feel like doing.

In fact, you feel like doing nothing. But you know doing nothing will produce no good and cause more of the same feelings, enlarged.

This was me one brutal morning last summer. Two weeks off of my anxiety medication, and I hit a brick wall. Old reactions flooded back: fear, despair, pain, hopelessness. They come and go most of the time, thankfully, but for that one week they were relentless.

If you have similar feelings, you’re not alone.

Forty million adults in the United States suffer from anxiety disorders; that’s close to one in five of us (ADAA stats, 2015). We are far from alone.

Anxiety plays no favorites; it doesn’t target a certain race or age, although the ADAA notes that it is more common in females. Anxiety lives and grows in all walks of human life, including the senior population where it is often overlooked and unreported due to an emphasis on physical health problems.

According to Dr. Keri-Leigh Cassidy, “Late-life anxiety disorders are a ‘geriatric giant,’ being **twice as prevalent as dementia among older adults**, and four to eight times more prevalent than major depressive disorders, causing significant impact on the quality of life, morbidity and mortality of older adults.” (Cassidy & Rector, 2015).

Dr. Cassidy notes that those who have anxiety disorders in their later years most likely had some form of those disorders throughout their life. Some are waiting until now to receive treatment. Others never receive treatment, suffering with this crushing loneliness and fear for years.

As a Christian, I believe that God does not get any joy or satisfaction in letting his children suffer. And I sometimes question why He allows us to feel these things.

Yet I know there is reason to hope. Anxiety disorders are highly treatable, and healing is available for those who seek it. The first step in my healing was admitting I couldn’t face another day alone. That admission led to seeking professional therapy, which helped me enormously. But therapy alone wasn’t enough, and medication was added. This combination has been proven to help decrease anxiety in many patients.

There is no shame in seeking medication for anxiety or other mental health challenges, just as there is no shame to treating a broken bone or a stomach disorder — we are so fortunate to have available the blessings of modern medicine.

Whether our own struggles revolve around worry, stress, anxiety or depression, healing begins when we accept these conditions as realities in our lives. We must embrace them, not deny them, and do everything we can to work toward healing. We must find the courage to live our lives the best we can in the midst of it.

Like the “Psalm of David” says, “Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.”

This is what Myron believes. A family member who is in his 80s, Myron is also my hero. He is an educated, kind, generous, wonderful man who has touched my life. And he struggles daily with depression. Many in his life don’t understand. I do.

Depression and anxiety are real illnesses, just like cancer or any other disease we treat. He doesn’t know if his symptoms will ever completely go away, but he doesn’t let that stop him when there is more life to be lived. His hope keeps him going. He believes that he will have his morning.

When will your morning be?

That I cannot tell you. I do know that you have to believe. Whatever your belief system is, believe in something. Believe that a power greater than yourself is there with you and can bring you healing. Believe in the love and support of your family and friends. Believe in the skill of your medical team. Most importantly, believe that you too can rise above the battle.

If you have a loved one dealing with an anxiety disorder or depression, the most helpful thing you can do for them is love unconditionally. Don’t minimize their symptoms. Don’t tell them to smile and get over it. Be there for them on the days when they don’t want to get out of bed, and praise them for the days when they do.

Let us not give up on ourselves, and let us not give up on each other. ♦

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Retire Like You Mean It

Your Life, Your Rules

Swimming With Dolphins

by Stacy Welker

Community Sales Manager, Fairwinds – River's Edge



Pauline Livingston of Fairwinds – River's Edge and her daughters swim with dolphins on their Caribbean cruise.

Standing at a petite 4' 6", Pauline Livingston moves through life as if she were six feet tall. No reservations, no cares, certainly not scared of adventure. If someone challenges her, or when she challenges herself, she rises to the occasion.

Life as a farmer's wife had challenges all its own for Pauline, but once free from the corn and soybean fields and livestock responsibilities, she and her husband, John, moved closer to one of their daughters and now reside at Fairwinds – River's Edge in St. Charles, Missouri.

In her five years here, Pauline, 85, has taken on many exciting adventures

with a philosophy in life that there is no better time than the present. Not only has Pauline zip-lined in Illinois, sledged down the snowy hills where her family lives in Kansas City, and flown in a hot-air balloon with the *Wish Come True* campaign, she has also conquered something she has always feared ... the water.

About two years ago, Pauline took swimming lessons at Fairwinds to help her overcome that fear, and she's happy that she can now submerge herself without the dread she'd always felt.

Pauline and her three daughters took a cruise of the Western Caribbean in January 2015, visiting Belize and other

exotic locations before ending up in Cozumel, where she had the opportunity of a lifetime: to swim with the dolphins. Two years ago she wouldn't have dared do it, but swimming classes helped her feel confident in being able to stay afloat and stay safe in the water.

"The water was a little rough, but the dolphin came up and kissed me on the nose," Pauline recalls with a giggle. She wouldn't have wanted to miss out on that wonderful experience for anything. Pauline continues to enjoy her newfound love of the water by swimming and enjoying the pool with her great-granddaughters. ♦

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

Retire Like You Mean It

Your Life, Your Rules

Wheelchair Bound? Not on Your Life

by Heather Gifford

Programs Supervisor, Hawthorne Court



A life of challenges couldn't stop Helen Scruggs of Hawthorne Court, now walking again after doctors told her it was impossible.

Two years ago when I joined the staff at Hawthorne Court, Helen Scruggs was in a wheelchair. She was told by her doctors and family members that she would be there the rest of her life; they all believed that her injuries from a fall were too severe for her to ever be strong or stable enough to walk again.

Helen, however, was not convinced. She told me not long after we met that she would get rid of that wheelchair and walk again!

Helen was completely committed and enthusiastic about health and fitness, attending every PrimeFit class and activity that she could. Before long she was walking short distances on her own.

As I got to know Helen better, I learned that she has been no stranger

to persevering through hardship. The year 1959 was especially fraught with tragedy for Helen. That year, she lost her oldest son to cancer, though he was just 14 years old. Later that same year, her husband of 17 years was killed in an accident at work, at 42.

During her husband's funeral service, she turned to her brother and told him that she thought she was pregnant. Though her brother was skeptical, she knew her instinct was correct, and eight months later, Helen gave birth to her fourth child.

She remarried a year later, only to have poor health take her second husband after only two years together. With her children depending on her, she went to work and built a good career at Welch's, working hard to pro-

vide for her family. The determination and diligence she practiced throughout her life was something I witnessed personally.

About a year ago, I walked into the Activity room before GroupFit class and saw Helen sitting in her usual spot in the front row. But there was something unusual — Helen was not in her wheelchair! She proudly declared she had walked all the way from her apartment to exercise class that morning and now, a year later, has not been back in the device! She is an inspiration to so many of us at Hawthorne Court, and her story encourages other residents to stay active. Helen is a rousing example of how practiced discipline, courage and strength from within can conquer any trial we might face. ♦

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

Three-Thirds in Action

Family | Philanthropy | Work



The team at Fairwinds – Spokane kicks off the month with style!

Around the World in 28 Days ... and \$32,000 for Charity!

by Olivia Drury

Sales and Marketing Coordinator, Leisure Care

At Leisure Care, we understand that fitness often takes a backseat to ... well, lots of other stuff.

And we also know that fitness makes a world of difference in so many aspects of health. It boosts energy, fights disease, improves brain function, and helps us accomplish our life-long pursuits. But sometimes, we all need just a little extra motivation and courage to overcome whatever barriers hold us back.

Whether it's PrimeFit group classes, one-on-one training, or a community-wide fundraiser like the February Fitness Frenzy, the staff at Leisure Care strive toward encouraging success and growth for all of our residents.

So far, 2015 has been chock-full of success stories, including two heart-touching stories in our Retire Like You Mean It section and the following round-up of our February Fitness Frenzy.

FEBRUARY FITNESS FRENZY



February's Fitness Frenzy features some rollicking Ping-Pong tournaments, like this one in Fairwinds – Desert Point.



Planking in the pool is demonstrated by the staff at Fairwinds – Redmond.

Judging by the results of the February Fitness Frenzy, this just might have been that extra push we were all looking for this winter. We witnessed group workouts, plank competitions, enthusiastic Ping-Pong tournaments and even dance parties! The Fitness Frenzy got the entire Leisure Care community moving during the grip of our cold winter weather.

In just one month, Leisure Care residents and staff were active for a grand total of 753,922 minutes. Based on the average amount of time it takes to walk a mile, this calculates to approximately 50,261 miles — enough to walk around

the world twice, and in only 28 days!

Not only were we all a little extra active for the February Fitness Frenzy, the Leisure Care community came together to make a huge impact beyond our own walls. As a whole, we raised more than \$32,000 to help improve the lives of children and their families. Leisure Care and the One Eighty Foundation can't thank you enough for your support and involvement in the February Fitness Frenzy.

Now, let's keep up the momentum and continue to work toward our fitness goals as part of a healthy, happy and generous lifestyle. ♦

OneEightyFoundation

A NEW DIRECTION IN GIVING



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GUTS & GLORY

When Dining Alone

“The CIA has it wrong. Instead of coercing information out of prisoners through waterboarding or sleep deprivation, it only needs to employ the threat of dining alone in a crowded restaurant.”

“I should have ordered room service.”

by Jeff Wozer

Humorist and stand-up comedian

I have been charged by a convulsed black bear in Teton National Park. I have stood before 9,000 people at Red Rocks Amphitheatre telling jokes. I have camped in Arizona’s Sonoran desert during tarantula mating season when the huge furry creatures emerge in mass. I have huddled atop 14,000-foot peaks in blinding blizzards.

But never have I experienced more unfathomable fear than last month when I dined alone at a table for two in a crowded restaurant.

I was performing and lodging that night at the Strater Hotel in Durango, Colorado, an iconic state landmark that proudly served as the occasional writing home for author Louis L’Amour. My performance fee included dinner in the Strater Hotel’s Mahogany Grille, a high-brow establishment with entrees that cost more than a one-night stay at a Motel 6.

I opted against room service. At 53 I felt I was becoming too comfortable with the temperaments of routine, denying me new life-tremors, imperative to keeping my vitality tank full. After a lifetime chasing National Geographic-type experiences, I decided to keep it topped up with more commonplace challenges, anything that would take me out of my element and make me feel uncomfortable, a deliberate embrace of Eleanor Roosevelt’s verbal-goose to “Do one thing everyday that scares you.”

And so I dined alone, and scare me it did.

Guts and Glory: *Continued on page 41*



THE COURAGE OF THE ARTIST

Learning to live the full width of our lives takes some gumption.



Ethics and Spirituality

Reflections and Contemplations on Life and Living

by Elana Zaiman

Rabbi, chaplain and writer in Seattle

To wake up in the morning to face the blank canvas, the unsculpted stone, the mound of clay, the empty page, and to begin again: That is the courage of the artist.

As a writer, I know the empty page. Sure, there are the good days, when I feel as if I'm being guided by God, and a piece essentially calls itself into being. But there are the other days, the more frequent days, when ideas run amuck, deadlines loom, and the choruses of "I'm not good enough" swirl around inside.

What will I write today? Do I have anything new, interesting or meaningful to say? Do I have anything to say at all? Am I bold enough to write what I feel? Will I be able to execute my idea, and, if not, will I be courageous enough to accept the paltry reflection of that idea that has found its way onto the page?

On particularly bad days, the chatter in my mind unravels my whole sense of self. So I've written essays, articles and nonfiction, and I've been published, but I'm not really a writer. I'm just an imposter.

"Just trust yourself. Then you will know how to live."

— Goethe

Artist's Courage: *Continued on page 42*



La promesse (1996)

Thanks to an Oscar nomination for Marion Cotillard in last year's superb *Two Days, One Night*, co-directors Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne received some much-deserved attention. The Belgian filmmaking brothers have been making remarkable films for many years, none stronger than *La promesse*, a profile in courage about a 15-year-old boy (Jeremie Renier) who must face up to his own abusive parent. Resolving to honor a deathbed promise to one of the illegal immigrants his father has been cruelly exploiting for years, the teen faces challenges that would daunt an adult, let alone a boy struggling to grow up. The Dardennes work in a realistic, kitchen-sink mode, but their observations about human nature are the stuff of great novelists, and the simplicity and purity of the situation allows them to delve deep into the setting (mostly around a corrupt construction site) and the blue-collar characters. And if *Two Days, One Night* is still in theaters, catch that one too. (Available on Amazon Instant, Hulu Plus and iTunes.)

MUSIC REVIEWS

by Joe Rodriguez / Freelance music writer

This mix tape of singles includes a range of styles and genres sure to pump up your emotions.



Glory (Single) — Common & John Legend, Selma – Music From the Motion Picture, 2015

This powerful Academy Award-winning collaboration between lyricist/poet Common and vocalist John Legend speaks of the courage of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil right leaders as they undertook their marches from Selma to Montgomery. “Glory” melds the significance of that watershed moment in our history with the continued struggles that the African American community faces in modern times. Singing, “One day when the glory comes it will be ours, it will be ours,” Legend acknowledges the continuing battle and the courage we need to keep the dream alive. Let this poignant torch inspire us to bring glory, dignity and equality to all.



Brave (Single) — Sara Bareilles, The Blessed Unrest, 2013

You’ve likely heard “Brave” in a Windows ad. Pop singer-songwriter Sara Bareilles was inspired by the struggles of a close friend dealing with the anxiety of coming out. Bareilles entreats her friend to seize the moment, be silent no more, and to just say what needs to be said. It stands as a message of encouragement to us all to be proud of who we are as individuals. Speak your mind when it truly matters, and let the chips fall where they may.



Stand (Single) — Rascal Flatts, Me and My Gang, 2006

The members of country pop band Rascal Flatts have been stars in their genre since they formed in Columbus, Ohio, back in 1999. Their songs often dealt with a more mature subject matter than typical country hits of today, and “Stand” is no exception. This number one chart topper has an inspiring message of perseverance and courage to overcome life’s challenges: “You get mad, you get strong, wipe your hands, shake it off, then you stand.” It’s a powerful message in any genre, but somehow makes the most sense with a twangy guitar and soulful country delivery.



The Show Must Go On (Single) — Queen, Innuendo, 1991

When this song was recorded, the members of the British rock band Queen were facing the end of their band as they knew it. Their charismatic and flamboyant lead singer Freddie Mercury was dying of AIDS. This final track on *Innuendo*, written by lead guitarist Brian May, chronicles Mercury’s courage to continue performing despite the realization that each performance could be his last. In spite of his illness, Mercury nailed the recording in one incredible take. The single came out in October 1991, and six weeks later Mercury was dead; a true showman till the end.

Perception trumps reality in uncomfortable social situations. When I entered the restaurant and approached the hostess, I felt like a modern-day Hester Prynne, wearing a scarlet “A” emblazoned across my shirt, short not for adultery but for alone.

Sensing my unease, she gave me the option to save dignity by offering me a seat at the bar. But that would have required chatting with the bartender and perhaps other solo diners, causing me to confront another social fear — small talk.

I’m too small talk as neck tattoos are to L.L. Bean clothing models. I’ve never perfected the art. After the initial obligatory hi-how-are-you questions, my mind spasms into panic mode. Fearing the conversation will lose traction, I blurt anything, which more often than not makes me sound like a gibbering fool, or worse, a jerk. Last summer while idling in road construction traffic, a flag person walked up to my window to chat. My brain foamed with unease. What do you say to someone who earns a living rotating the words “Stop” and “Slow?” Panicked, I asked, “Do you ever work with nouns?” She took it as an insult, resulting in the planet’s most unnerving sound of all — strained silence.

No, not tonight, I thought. My courage-scope is sighted on dining alone. Addressing fear of small talk will have to wait.

The hostess weaved me through the packed restaurant, seating me at a table next to a boisterous party of five. As the hostess walked away, I felt like a first grader on the first day of school being left by a parent at the bus stop. Agonizing awkwardness. Get a grip, I coached myself; feeling good about having the courage to recognize that inner-discomfort, regardless of age or situation, is essential for a rewarding life of constant growth.

But the voice of perception wasn’t buying my affirmations. It convinced me that I was the focus of every person in the restaurant, even the busboy with bad acne. I felt a strong and reckless urge to climb atop my table and do my best John Merrick impersonation from *Elephant Man* and scream, “I am not an elephant! I am not an animal! I am a human being! I ... am ... a ... man!”

Fortunately, this urge was interrupted by the waiter who took my order for a pepita crusted rocky mountain trout. This, unbeknownst to me, would begin the longest 18 minutes of my life waiting for the meal to arrive. Without props — iPhone, iPad, book, newspaper, magazine — I did not know what to do with my eyes. Stare across the room? Unnerve the table next to me and stare at them? Stare at my dinner fork with head bowed to feign deep dogmatic contemplation? It was excruciating. I was convinced even the chef had stepped out of the kitchen to stare and laugh.

To calm the brain I recited poet Gregory Corso’s line that “Standing on a street corner waiting for no one is power.” But Corso’s wisdom had zero effect, leading me to conclude that the CIA has it wrong. Instead of coercing information out of prisoners through waterboarding or sleep deprivation, it only needs to employ the threat of dining alone in a popular restaurant. It was while pondering this that dinner was delivered, arriving like a care package from the angels of mercy. I ate fast. Not out of hunger, but to end my nightmare.

Within 10 minutes I was fleeing the restaurant relieved to be free of the burden of self-consciousness, happy knowing in 90 minutes I’d be on stage being stared and laughed at by 300 people who paid for the privilege to do so. ♦

“As the hostess walked away, I felt like a first grader on the first day of school being left by a parent at the bus stop.”



*“We are, after all,
the artists of our own lives ...”*

Those days are not exclusive to artists. There are times in all of our lives when we struggle to be ourselves, when our image of who we are clashes with the image of who we want to be. When the image of who we are suddenly isn’t good enough or clashes with the image of who others want or need us to be, and we find it hard to be ourselves. There are times when we’re afraid to speak out for what we believe in and times when we’re hesitant to be true to ourselves for fear of hurting the people we love. Times when we doubt our abilities to meet the challenges we’ve set for ourselves and the label of “imposter” seems most fitting.

What then? How do we move ahead when our insecurities get the best of us?

We can come to believe them as truth and drown ourselves in depression, or despair. We can ignore them. Or we can acknowledge them, recognize that they are part of us, but not the whole of us, and we can face them and continue to grow into the selves we long to be.

As we age, as we slow in body and mind, as aches and pains set in and we spend more time with our doctors than with our families and friends, it’s sometimes hard to believe that we have a choice other than depression or despair, but we do.

In *The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully*, Joan Chittister, a 70-year-old Benedictine sister, offers this guidance: “We cannot allow ourselves to die from the outside in. It may be necessary to live with a body that is changing. That we can’t avoid. But the shape of our life itself we can control. We are responsible for the shape of our world, however much it seems to be reshaping itself.”

We are, after all, the artists of our own lives, and like artists with pens, paintbrushes and sculpting tools, it’s never too late to approach the canvas of our lives with inventiveness, ingenuity and imagination and create works of art now. If we’re physically able, we take off on that wilderness hike we’ve always dreamed of but ruled out because no one took our passion seriously. If we’re unable to take so rugged an adventure, we blow up a mattress, put up a tent in our children’s backyard, and camp outdoors with our grandchildren. If we gave up dancing early in our lives because people we loved told us that dancing wasn’t a career, we sign up for a dance class, or we just dance around our apartment as the spirit beckons. If we’ve avoided wearing yellow because someone once commented that yellow drained us and made us look jaundiced, we buy that bright yellow sweater that glows like a light bulb and wear it, just because.

As the poet and writer Diane Ackerman once said, “I don’t want to get to the end of my life and find that I have lived just the length of it. I want to have lived the width of it as well.”

We must let ourselves live the width of our lives. It’s never too late to begin again. What have we got to lose? As the sage Hillel said long ago, “If not now, when?” ♦

Sources:

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Ackerman, Diane. (1990). *A Natural History of the Senses*. New York: Random House.



BRAIN GAMES ANSWERS / From Page 18

Answers to Crossword Puzzle

DELIS	ONE	LSD
JAMAICA	ION	ICE
ELISION	LID	MAN
WITH	UNO	SUPERS
	RIB	YEA
COURAGE	IS	CHAR
ALLEG	APPEASE	
PICTURE	PRECISE	
EVEREST	ORATED	
SERE	AMAJORITY	
	APT	OLE
MARTHA	BIC	SAGA
EMU	ILL	STEALER
RED	ALI	TORRENT
ENE	LYE	RAISE

Answers to Sudoku

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

“I’M FIT AS A FIDDLE.”
And this fiddle has some nice biceps, too.



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Take a look at a few of the things available at many of our communities: a PrimeFit Gym, Balance Builders, walking programs, recreational sports, aquatic exercise, holistic offerings, and low-impact exercise.

Contact the PrimeFit staff at your local Leisure Care community to learn more. You might even want to ask them where the saying “fit as a fiddle” comes from. Because we have no idea.

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