

Reader's digest



KATE SWAFFER

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Reader's digest



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Letters

READERS' COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

Feline Road Sense

On reading your story on the traffic-savvy cat (Smart Animals, October), I thought I must tell you that I, too, have seen this behaviour by a cat. The first time I saw my cat Bungi stop and look

from left to right before crossing the street I found it hard to believe. But after I saw this happen a few times, I realised it was not a one-off. No-one has ever believed me so it was very satisfying to read your story.

MASIE SMITH



Safety in the Sun

While I do not dispute the damaging effects of the sun, your article 'Cell By Cell' (November) encourages people to avoid the sun entirely, thus foregoing the benefits of sun exposure, including stronger bones, and relief from certain skin conditions such as eczema. One should practice sun safety instead of shunning the sun altogether.

PIAN SA

On My Mind

'Coming Out to Grandma' (My Story, November) had me in tears. Reading the story, I really missed my grandfather a lot. He

died eight years ago. My grandfather was a wonderful man. He loved me, took care of me, and we played and ate together.

UROOJ FATIMA

Words to Dwell On

I read with interest your filler at the bottom of page 64 ('Beginnings', October) regarding the only four commonly used words in English that begin with 'dw'. In our family we also occasionally use the following words that start with

'dw': 'dwale' (deadly nightshade), 'dwalm' (fainting spell), and 'dwine' (to waste away, pine).

HANS-HEINRICH WEISS

LET US KNOW

If you are moved – or provoked – by any item in the magazine, share your thoughts. See page 6 for how to join the discussion.

Travelling North

I enjoyed reading 'Leader of the Pack' (November). I have been wondering what it would be like to be part of a travelling experience at the top end of Australia. Robert Skinner opened my eyes to every detail I had wondered about. And I loved the colourful photographs, with which you always frame each story. **LYNNE MARIE AMBROSE**

Owning Up

I agree with your article 'That's An Awful Idea' (October) that the medical profession should admit to its mistakes. I disagree this would lead to more litigation. When a surgeon suggested that he was in the clear because a mere mortal like me could not question his judgement, I sued him and won. Had he apologised, I would have let the matter rest.

MARIE PINSDALE

WIN A PILOT CAPLESS FOUNTAIN PEN

The best letter published each month will win a Pilot Capless fountain pen, valued at over \$200. The Capless is the perfect combination of luxury and ingenious technology, featuring a one-of-a-kind retractable fountain pen nib, durable metal body, beautiful rhodium accents and a 14K gold nib. Congratulations to this month's winner, Hans-Heinrich Weiss.



PHOTOS: ISTOCK



Plumbing the Depths

We asked you to think up a funny caption for this photo.

Help! I'm bowled over.

AZEEZAH JAMEELAH MOHAMED

I am trying to go with the flow!!!

CEDRIC FOO (10 YRS OLD)

Yahoo. I found the blockage, can you give me a hand out?! **JOHN STOFMEIL**

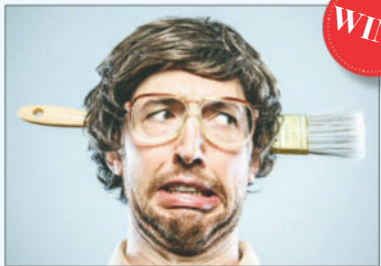
Hate your partner? Try our new VacuFlush.

FELIX HENG

Raise your hand, if you like this toilet humour.

KHER CHENG GUAN

Congratulations to this month's winner, Kher Cheng Guan.



CAPTION CONTEST

Come up with the funniest caption for the above photo and you could win \$100. To enter, see the details on page 6.

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FOR DIGITAL EXTRAS AND
SOCIAL MEDIA INFO, SEE PAGE 29.

Anecdotes and jokes

Send in your real-life laugh for
Life's Like That or All in a Day's
Work. Got a joke? Send it in for
Laughter is the Best Medicine!

Smart Animals

Share antics of unique pets or
wildlife in up to 300 words.

Kindness of Strangers

Share your moments of
generosity in 100-500 words.

My Story

Do you have an inspiring or
life-changing tale to tell?
Submissions must be true,
unpublished, original and
800-1000 words - see website
for more information.

Letters to the editor, caption competition and other reader submissions

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Editor's Note

Navigating a New Way

I'M DEVOTED TO OFFERING READERS surprising insights into how to navigate through challenging experiences. There's no doubting that being diagnosed with dementia is life-changing. Globally, more than 47.5 million people live with the condition, with countless families and friends directly impacted. Sometimes, it's difficult to know what to say to someone with dementia; we worry that our questions might offend or confuse. So perhaps we withdraw, phone less often, maybe cut short visits. Worse still, unlike almost every other serious condition, we stop asking them how they feel. How do we know what someone with dementia is thinking? It can feel like there's an invisible line between us and them that can be hard to cross.

So when the chance arose to meet Kate Swaffer, a dynamic academic and mother, who was diagnosed with dementia at age 49, contributing editor Helen Signy and I were both eager.

This month's cover story, 'Life Beyond Dementia' (page 32), is personal for me, as it is for millions of individuals and their families and friends. Kate's response is an honest, lucid and humorous account of what dementia feels like. Her strength and achievements shout a clear message that there is – most definitely – life beyond a diagnosis of dementia.



Louise

LOUISE WATERSON
Managing Editor

If I Could Change Careers I'd Be ...

Stuck in a job that isn't you? RD readers tell us what they'd *really* like to do

... a professional singer because singing and performing bring me much inner happiness and fulfilment.

JEANETTE STUBBS, *Perth, WA*

... a politician because they get a big salary and a good pension.


BETTY DAY, *Thornlie, WA*

... a life educator to set up teenagers to succeed.

BRUCE WADDELL,
Perth, WA

... an animal foster carer because I like helping animals and giving them a second chance.

JENNIFER BROADHEAD, *Berriedale, Tas*

A stylized map of Australia in light blue, with darker blue callout boxes pointing to specific locations. The callouts are for Steve Musson (Barcaldine, QLD), Ilse van Staden (Gladstone, QLD), William Walsh (Bundaberg, QLD), Rennie Cameron (Grafton, NSW), G. Powell (Sydney, NSW), and Judy Anderson (Langwarrin, VIC). Tasmania is shown as a separate island at the bottom left.

... a farmer and
grow nice food
for others to be
more healthy.

STEVE MUSSON,
Barcaldine, Qld

... a creative
linguistics
illustrator
because it would
combine my love
of words and art.

ILSE VAN STADEN,
Gladstone, Qld

... a bed tester
because I love to
laze around.

WILLIAM WALSH,
Bundaberg, Qld

... a midwife
because I love the
thought of the
whole experience.

RENNIE CAMERON,
Grafton, NSW

... a ship's
captain
because I
love the sea.

G. POWELL, Sydney, NSW

... a photographer so I could
record history.

JUDY ANDERSON, Langwarrin, Vic

Playing with the Wind

A 15-year-old paraglider confronts the unpredictable

BY DEIRDRE VENERACION

Deirdre Veneracion is a tenth grader. She was born and raised in Manila, in the Philippines, where she currently lives. She loves outdoor adventures and has also tried scuba diving, sailing, rock climbing, motorcycle riding, skydiving, windsurfing and kayaking.

I AM FALLING. I see the canopy of my paraglider directly in front of me. It is not catching enough wind to stay overhead. My dad is behind me on his paraglider and I hear him on the radio shouting, “Keep the wing flying!” I’m about 60 m over a rice field with two water buffalo grazing below. This has never happened to me before – I am terrified. I struggle hard not to give in to panic.

My name is Deirdre Veneracion. I am 15 years old and I am a licensed paraglider pilot. I’ve been paragliding since I was 11.

My dad and I arrive at our local fly site in San Mateo, Rizal, on a June morning. We meet our instructor, along with a few fellow paraglider pilots and spend the first 20 minutes observing the weather and wind cycles. There are a few cloud patches in the sky and the wind is coming from the south-west, locally termed ‘Habagat’. During Habagat, the weather is usually wet and unstable and difficult to predict but today seems like a beautiful day to fly. I unpack and lay my wing on the ground. I am looking forward to playing with the wind.

I go through my pre-flight procedures. I check my lines to ensure they are free from tangles, put on my harness and helmet, turn on my radio and test it is working.

“Now is a good time!” my instructor yells to me. I start



to lift my wing directly above my head, check my brake lines again, and put all my weight forward. I charge to the edge of the cliff towards the horizon.

At last, I take a step and feel the ground beneath me fall away. I feel the pressure of my weight on the canopy, then I lean back and relax. I see a winding mountain road and some small figures that could be cyclists riding along. Now, I'm quite far from where I took off.

After 15 minutes of playing with the wind, my father radios me from the cliff where he is about to take off. "How's the wind?"

"Perfect!" I respond.

Dad takes off behind me and he finds a 'ridge lift', a wind that is deflected upwards by a slope that gliders ride like a wave to gain altitude. He stays on it to achieve maximum height.

I feel the consistent, gentle breeze on my wing and on my face. I see birds flying by my side and can't help but say to myself, "Wow!" I look up and say, "Thank you." I have done almost 100 flights and yet every flight amazes me just as much or maybe even more than my first. I love the unpredictability of each flight. Every flight is different. After 15 minutes more, I decide to land.

Now, I'm over a rice field. It is a much smaller landing than most landing zones but it's possible. I know this because I've landed here three or four times before. Out of nowhere, I feel my canopy become unstable – it loses pressure and falls directly in front of me. I am falling, I can feel it. I have butterflies in my stomach. I pull my brake line, in the hope that my wing will regain pressure but it doesn't respond. I am now at the edge of

panic. I hear my dad shouting, "Keep the wing flying!" I look towards him and see that he is also in trouble. It's as if we were inside a washing machine being tossed up and down, tumbling from left to right. I face the wind with almost full pressure on my speed bar to try to penetrate it. I'm ready to land but I'm not descending. I try making quick, shallow turns to help me lose height but nothing works.

Now I'm facing the wind, but I look down and realise that the ground beneath me is moving towards me. The wind is blowing faster than the speed of my wing. *I am flying backwards!* I won't make it to the landing zone in front of me. Directly beneath me are sharp bamboo clumps. Behind me is a two-storey poultry farm and to my right is a narrow stream with barely any water in it. I make my decision: the narrow stream is my best chance of landing safely. I look behind and make final adjustments. There is an area that would exactly fit my wing with a tiny bit of clearance on both sides.

As I touch down, my wing snags on the roof of the poultry farm. I remove my harness and grab my radio. I check on my dad and am glad to hear that he



**It's as if we
were inside a
washing machine
being tossed up
and down,
tumbling from
left to right**

is fine and has safely landed some distance away. My heart is still racing. Local villagers gather to check on me but, surprisingly, I am unscathed.

Two children climb up to the roof to untangle my wing, and help me pack my canopy. They lead me to a dirt road where I walk for about 15 minutes to meet my dad. I am never more relieved to see my dad smiling at me. Our fellow paraglider pilots pick us up, and from the expression on their faces, they expect to find us

badly hurt. I can hear their sighs of relief as they approach us.

This is one of those times when we are reminded that no amount of preparation can prevent Mother Nature from surprising us. With this in mind, I know I will not stop flying. As a quote attributed to one of the fathers of flight, Leonardo da Vinci, says, "Once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the Earth with your eyes turned skyward, for there you have been and there you will always long to return."

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The Happy Hitchhiker

I thought I'd have to sleep under a tree – or in a ditch

BY STAN FOSTER

Stan Foster, 84, lives in Auckland, New Zealand. Now retired, he worked in the building industry. He is interested in natural health and nutrition and enjoys reading.

RECENTLY I HAVE BEEN REMINDED of the very unexpected generosity and kindness I once experienced on a hitchhiking trip through New Zealand.

In 1981, I decided to visit my girlfriend, who lived in Napier, and since I was short of money, hitchhiking was the only way to go. Leaving Auckland fairly early in the morning, carrying only a small backpack, I set off by bus to the entrance of the Southern Motorway. I soon got lifts, and most were short, but nevertheless I was on my way. I enjoyed the friendly conversation and was lucky enough to have made some distance by dusk.

As I walked along a tree-lined country road, I wondered where I would spend the night. It was summer and the weather was warm so I thought I could sleep in a dry ditch or under a tree. An elderly gentleman greeted me and asked me where I was headed, interrupting my thoughts. I replied that I was hoping to get to the next town, “Op-o-tiki”.

He laughed and asked if I meant “Opotiki”. Being English, I was not familiar with the correct pronunciation and sheepishly replied that I was. “You won’t get there before



dark,” he said. “So come with me and we will put you up for the night.”

Opotiki was a further 25 km away, so I followed him to a comfortable, warm house nearby. He introduced me to his wife who was in the process of preparing dinner. They invited me to sit at the table and before too long I was enjoying a nice cup of tea followed by a hearty beef casserole.

After dinner we all chatted for a while about where I was from and how I was finding Auckland and then I was shown to my room: an old bus that was parked in the back garden. It had a double bed in it and I had a very comfortable night's sleep.

My host was a retired sea captain, and he told me that he was used to being up early and would wake me.

In the morning I woke to a cup of tea and a nice hot breakfast. I began saying goodbye and thanking them profusely for their kindness, when the lady handed me a wrapped-up sandwich, saying that it should keep me going until I reached Opotiki. We had a laugh and bid each other farewell. I have never forgotten their amazing kindness and magnanimity.

Share your story about a small act of kindness that made a huge impact. Turn to page 6 for details on how to contribute and earn cash.

Smart Animals

Sometimes they need a little loving care themselves



Lucky Ducks

WINIFRED BASS

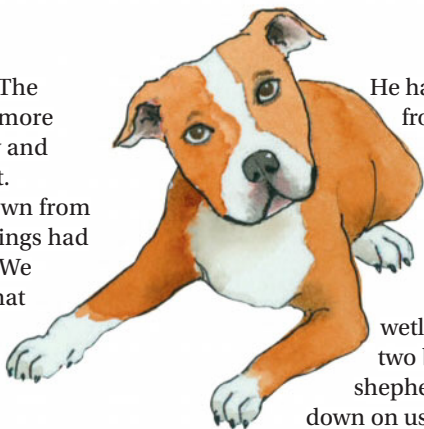
Many years ago, we lived on a property just south of Rockhampton, Queensland. We kept fowls and also had about 20 Muscovy ducks. A large, very old gum tree grew near the road in the gully to the side of our house. The tree had a branch about eight metres up with a large hollow that one of our ducks decided would make an ideal nesting place. She laid her eggs in the hollow and began to sit on them. We knew when the eggs were expected to hatch but wondered how to get the ducklings down.

From the kitchen window, I had an uninterrupted view of the gum tree and kept watch. One morning, I saw a butcherbird on a fence post hitting something yellow that was perched on it – it was killing a duckling. I raced down to the fence just in time to save the next duckling as it floated down. One by one, the ducklings tottered on the edge of the hollow before drifting down into

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWINA KEENE

my outstretched arms. The butcherbird caught no more little ducklings that day and I managed to save eight.

Mother Duck flew down from the tree once her ducklings had been safely evacuated. We settled them in a pen that my father had made until they were old enough to join the other ducks.



He has saved me from aggressive dogs on numerous occasions.

Once we were coming out of the wetlands when two big German shepherds bore down on us. As I tried to get Gomez out of the way,

the dogs made for me. I needn't have worried, though, because within a minute my little mate had grabbed one and sent the other squealing off into the distance. He's always been protective of me and he preened himself after any incident. When the owner of the German shepherds abused me for not having my dog on a leash, Gomez and I gave each other a knowing look and both had a giggle. He can read me, knows when to play and when to back off and I know when he needs a break from me.

Now Gomez's time is nearly up. From the way he looks at me he knows I can't help him, but he's OK with that. He's content as long as my wife and I continue to cuddle him and give him a good rub on the tummy. He's taught me what it is to be brave and I'll miss him.

For Gomez

LESTER O'BRIEN

Our dog, Gomez, follows the sun's warmth. For now, his favourite spot to lie is near the car, looking up at me bravely from between his paws. I can't say the word 'walk' to him any longer – he gets too excited and falls over a few times before he is able to stagger over to me. He has a neurological problem, a suspected brain tumour, that has been getting progressively worse over the last few months.

As he falls over again and again, he gives me that look as if to say, "What is going on, dude?" Each time, I tear up. Gomez, a tan and white American Staffie, has been my mate for 11 years. He has even managed to win over my wife – and she's not really a dog person.

I used to walk him for at least an hour each day; we'd go off and explore the nearby lake, run around the oval or check out the local shops.

You could earn cash by telling us about the antics of unique pets or wildlife. Turn to page 6 for details on how to contribute.

THE DIGEST

HEALTH

How to Get Rid of Dandruff

Take control of those unsightly flakes

Our skin is designed to shed old skin cells and grow new ones. Dandruff, however, is a kink in this assembly-line process, causing old skin cells on the scalp to build up and clump into the unsightly flakes that land on your favourite black shirt. About half of the adult population will suffer from a flaky scalp at some point.

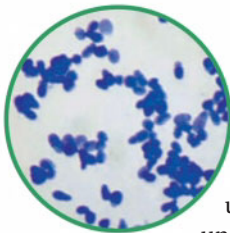
Factors that may contribute to dandruff include seborrheic dermatitis, dry skin and certain skin conditions. Seborrheic dermatitis is a skin condition marked by large yellow scales, redness and inflammation of

the scalp, or of other areas of the skin. While you might associate dandruff with a dry, flaking scalp, “it is actually caused by excess oiliness,” explains dermatologist Dr Charlene Linzon.

Over-the-counter remedies should take about a month to work, says pharmacist Debra Sibbald. That's how long it takes for skin cell turnover



PHOTO: ISTOCK



Malassezia has been associated with dandruff

The culprit here is a common group of yeasts called *Malassezia* that grow on everyone, and it feeds on oil from the scalp, Linzon says.

What tips the scale in dandruff's favour depends on the individual: how much oil your scalp produces, and how vigorously the yeast grows. "The yeast breaks down scalp oil, leaving behind a by-product [unsaturated fatty acid] that causes the flaking associated with dandruff, and the irritation, inflammation and scaling that define seborrheic dermatitis," says Linzon.

Dandruff is also more likely to develop at certain stages of life, such as in infancy (called cradle cap), and around puberty, when oil (sebum) secretion increases, providing more food for yeast. Stress also increases

oil production.

Thankfully, you can usually get this problem under control with over-the-

counter (OTC) products. Start by shampooing your scalp frequently with a medicated shampoo to reduce oiliness. Here are your choices.

1. ANTIFUNGALS The active ingredients in these are zinc pyrithione, selenium sulphide and ketoconazole. They slow down the growth of the yeast that causes the flaking and scaling.

2. COAL TAR The active ingredient in this product slows skin cell turnover, and also works as an anti-inflammatory, says Linzon.

3. SALICYLIC ACID These shampoos boast a keratolytic agent, which helps to loosen and dislodge scales, explains Linzon.

How you use dandruff products can affect how well they fight flakes. Dr Charlene Linzon offers these tips



■ Switch products regularly, alternating between two or three kinds. For example, you could use, say, Nizoral one day and Head & Shoulders the next; or alternate every second or third time you shampoo.

■ Leave shampoo on long enough to do its job – five to ten minutes, or, for a more intensive treatment,

20 to 30 minutes (once every couple of weeks).

■ Use more frequently. Labels usually suggest using a shampoo twice weekly, but daily use is helpful for some. (Just watch for hair breakage and dryness – signs that you're overdoing it.)

■ Consult a GP or dermatologist if you have no relief after a month.

NEWS FROM THE World of Medicine

Just Say 'I Can Do It'

When over 44,000 volunteers played an online game against a computer, those who were asked to use self-talk (eg, telling themselves "I can beat my best score") and imagery (eg, imagining playing well) excelled beyond the control group, suggesting that psychological skills are of real use in competitive situations.

Nearly Half of Heart Attacks Are Silent

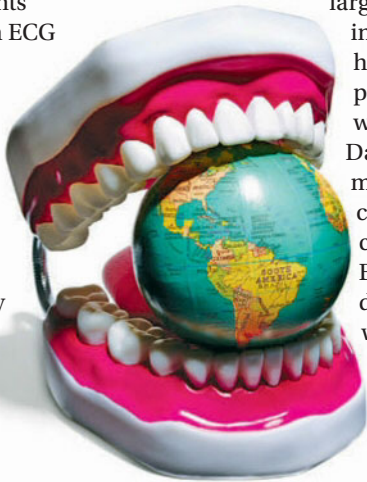
Heart attacks don't always present with symptoms. An article in the journal *Circulation* found that around 45 per cent of them go unnoticed initially. The damage is discovered only later, when patients undergo an MRI or an ECG during a check-up or after showing signs of poor heart health. 'Silent' attacks triple the risk of eventually dying from heart disease, so once they're detected, they should be aggressively treated with blood pressure control and lifestyle changes.

Caution to Daily Pill Takers

People with conditions requiring a regular pill routine sometimes experience adverse effects when they first try using a pill organiser, a UK study found. The probable cause: if they had been forgetting to take their pills before using the organiser, they may not have been getting expected results, so their doctors increased the amount prescribed. Once they take their medicine properly, they may end up with too much in their system, leading to incidents such as falls or low blood glucose.

New Tummy Trouble Culprit

A slower passage of food through the large intestine seems to increase the amount of harmful metabolites produced along the way, according to Danish research. This may raise the risk of colorectal cancer and chronic renal disease. Eating a fibre-rich diet, drinking lots of water, and exercising are all ways of speeding it up.



What to Do When Someone Faints

BY DR JAMES HUBBARD

No matter the cause of fainting, if someone suddenly appears sweaty or has a vacant look in her eyes, suggest she sit down and bend over so her head is lower than her chest. If she's willing, lying down is even better. If she starts to fall, try helping her down so she won't get hurt.

Never keep her upright, because this may continue to keep blood from getting to the brain. Once the head is as low as or lower than the heart, the victim should regain consciousness, albeit probably in a groggy state.

Have her stay in that position for several minutes until the fainting symptoms subside. Check her pulse and blood pressure if you have a cuff. Make sure they're normal before she tries to get up. Let her sit for a few minutes, and if there are no symptoms, she could slowly try to stand.

If the fainting symptoms recur, help her lower herself

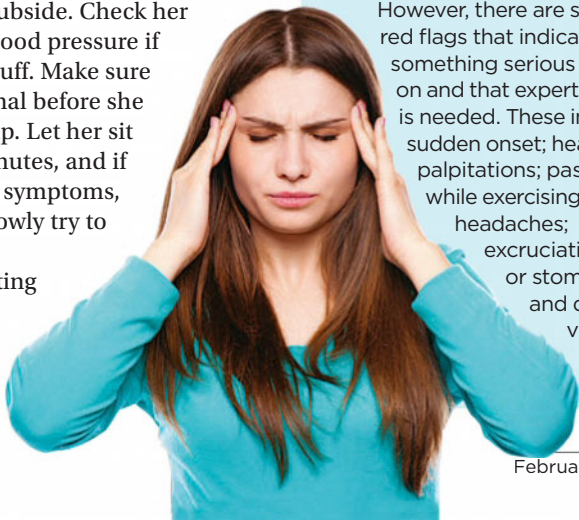
again, let the symptoms subside, and slowly try once more.

If the person is able to sit up for a few minutes and eventually stand, the cause is likely vasovagal (associated with a temporary fall in blood pressure), especially if you can pinpoint a trigger, such as a fright or the sight of blood. If you're not sure it's vasovagal, call emergency services or a doctor.

WHEN IT MAY BE DANGEROUS

Often, the likely reason for the fainting is pretty obvious, such as if the person has lost a lot of blood or is dehydrated from vomiting.

However, there are some red flags that indicate that something serious is going on and that expert treatment is needed. These include sudden onset; heart palpitations; passing out while exercising; severe headaches; excruciating back or stomach pain; and double vision.



DRINKS

Making your own refreshing drinks is easy. As you control what goes into them, you can ensure they are healthier than commercially made ones

Melon Refresher

Preparation 10 minutes

Serves 2 (makes 2 cups/500 ml)

¼ honeydew melon (about 400 g)

1 tablespoon firmly packed, roughly chopped fresh mint

2 teaspoons elderflower or lime cordial

1 cup (250 ml) sparkling mineral water

► Remove skin and seeds from melon. Roughly chop the flesh. Put melon, mint, cordial and 2 tablespoons tap water in a blender. Process until smooth. Pour into 2 serving glasses. Slowly top up with mineral water and stir to combine.

PER SERVING

276 kJ, 66 kcal, 1 g protein, <1 g fat (<1 g saturated fat), 14 g carbohydrate (13 g sugars), 2 g fibre, 97 mg sodium



Pink Grapefruit Yoghurt Shake

Preparation 10 minutes

Serves 2 (makes about 2 cups/500 ml)

1 ruby red or pink grapefruit

1 lime

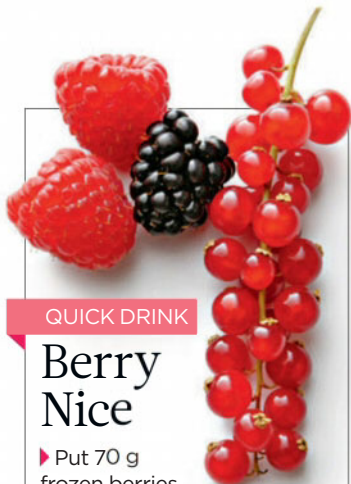
½ cup (125 g) natural (plain) yoghurt

2 teaspoons honey

► Remove skin and all the white pith from grapefruit. Chop flesh and discard any seeds. Repeat with the lime. Put all the ingredients in a blender and process until smooth.

PER SERVING

443 kJ, 106 kcal, 4 g protein, 2 g fat (1 g saturated fat), 17 g carbohydrate (14 g sugars), 1 g fibre, 41 mg sodium



QUICK DRINK

Berry Nice

► Put 70 g frozen berries, such as raspberries, strawberries or blueberries, and ½ cup (125 ml) apple juice in a blender and process until smooth. Pour into 2 serving glasses and top with mineral water, sparkling or still.

Fresh or Frozen?

It's good to know that frozen berries are just as high in antioxidants as fresh berries. Don't thaw the berries before blending, as the iciness adds a pleasant texture.



Creamy Chai

1 cup (250 ml) milk

3 cardamom pods, bruised with a rolling pin

1 cinnamon stick

½ teaspoon ground ginger

4 cloves

4 peppercorns

2 tablespoons tea leaves

2 teaspoons honey

► Combine milk with 1 cup (250 ml) water, cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and peppercorns in a small saucepan. Bring slowly to the boil over medium-low heat. As soon as it boils, turn off the heat and add the tea leaves. Leave to stand 10 minutes. Stir in the honey, then pour through a mesh strainer into a warmed serving jug.

Preparation

5 minutes,
plus 10 minutes
standing

Cooking

5 minutes

Serves 2

(makes 2 cups/500 ml)



PER SERVING

494 kJ, 118 kcal, 4 g protein, 5 g fat (3 g saturated fat),
14 g carbohydrate (12 g sugars), 1 g fibre, 56 mg sodium

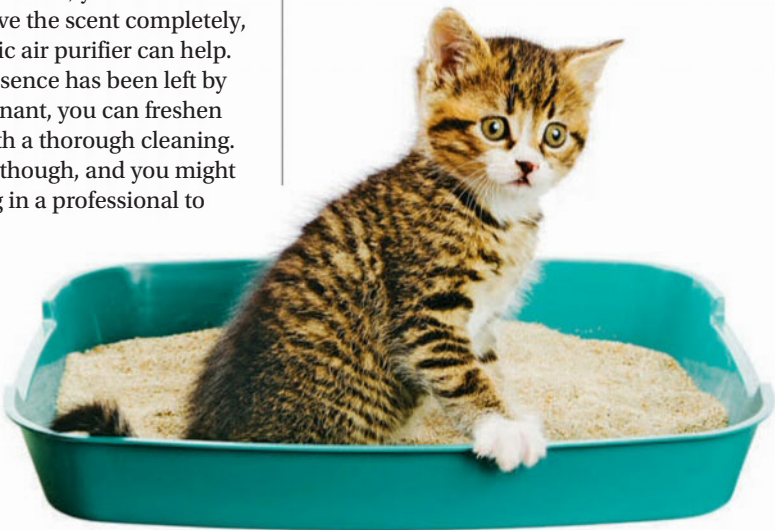
How to Banish Bad Smells from Your Home

Whether you moved somewhere new and are dealing with someone else's leftover odours or you live with a smell factory (like a litter box or a smoker), there are ways to deal with a malodorous situation aside from a clothes peg on your nose.

SMOKE IS A KILLER Tobacco smoke is a particularly stubborn smell. If you are the smoker and you continue to smoke in the house, you will not be able to remove the scent completely, but an electric air purifier can help. If a smoky essence has been left by a previous tenant, you can freshen things up with a thorough cleaning. It's not easy, though, and you might have to bring in a professional to

steam the carpets, curtains, drapes, and upholstered furniture. Walls also absorb smoke, unfortunately. You can implement the technique experts use in buildings that have absorbed smoke from fires: seal the walls and ceilings with shellac or a shellac-based primer – this helps lock in the odour – and then repaint. If your landlord is top notch, you may be able to get him or her to pay for it.

Scooping out a litter box daily and changing the litter twice a week will help keep you and your cat happy



WHAT CAN'T COFFEE DO? Have you ever been to a perfume store? You may have noticed that they keep jars of coffee on hand to keep the air from being overwhelmed with competing smells by absorbing them. This is a much better way to deal with smells than trying to mask them with other smells. Coffee can absorb your household odours, too. Keep an open can of coffee near the cat's litter box or in the corner of the laundry room, and your nose will thank you.

DON'T EVEN LET THE STINK HAPPEN Better than dealing with an odour, of course, is preventing it from happening in the first place. One of the most common stinks is caused

by mildew, which thrives in areas with prolonged moisture. If you want to prevent it from growing in your bathroom, get the air circulating when all that post-shower steam is in the air. A dehumidifier or an exhaust fan will do it. Also hang your damp towels separately so they can dry thoroughly.


WET TOWEL SOLUTION Speaking of, *ugh*, wet-towel smell, here's how to get that particular odour out: mix equal parts of Borax and laundry soap and pour the mixture into the washing machine with the towels. Start the water, and then pause the cycle to let the towels (or clothing or shoes) soak for about 20 minutes before you run the machine on the regular cycle.

FROM *DON'T SCREW IT UP!* © 2013. BY LAURA LEE. PUBLISHED BY READER'S DIGEST

DON'T CLEAN YOUR HOUSE TO DEATH

There are many commercial cleaners available for mildew and grime. You may be tempted to mix these chemicals together when you're dealing with stubborn filth that no single product is curing, but this is the biggest mistake you can make. Certain cleaning agents, such as bleach and ammonia, are great on their own, but they can have deadly chemical reactions when mixed. Most people have heard not to mix straight ammonia and bleach – the gas can inflame your airways and damage the lining of your lungs – but they might not read the label of that great toilet cleanser and the fantastic toilet scrub or know that the chemicals in them, when mixed together, can create potentially deadly chlorine gas.





A night street market in Hoi An, Vietnam, provides vivid colour

Ideal Cities for the Solo Traveller

BY MARIA BARILLARO

Whether you're looking to experience adventure or escape into peace and quiet, a getaway on your own might be for you. The beauty of solo travel is that you can choose what you want to see and when. Here are some of the safest cities in the world guaranteed to meet the solo traveller's needs.

HOI AN, Vietnam When travelling alone, people tend to form new friendships more easily and Hoi An is a great place to do so. The city offers up the best of everything: beaches, historical landmarks, lavish hotels and more. With so much to do and so many friendly locals to meet, you'll never feel lonely.

AUCKLAND, New Zealand

Auckland is known for being one of the friendliest cities in the world, according to surveys by *Condé Nast Traveler*, so the single traveller will feel right at home. An affordable city with lots to see, such as the Civic Theatre, the Sky Tower and the harbour foreshore, Auckland is a wonderful place to visit on your own.

VIENNA, Austria One of Europe's finest and most beautiful cities, Vienna has so much to offer, you can't possibly get bored. You can opt for a museum tour, a morning exploring historic St. Stephen's Cathedral, a cruise of the Danube, or

visit St. Anton, known for being the best ski party city in Europe.

NAPA, California While many consider Napa to be a romantic destination for two, it's also an attractive spot for the solo traveller. With its beautiful vineyards, Napa is the perfect getaway from the everyday, where you can enjoy fine wines and five-star accommodation. Many hotels are equipped with private pools and lounging areas, so you can enjoy a relaxing environment.

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia Travelling alone here will allow you the luxury of soaking in the beautiful and peaceful surroundings, affordable luxury hotels and fine cuisine, without worrying for your personal safety. Plus, the city is rich in architecture, magnificent mosques and historic sites.

LAHAINA, Hawaii Located in West Maui, Lahaina is a perfect destination for the single traveller. Hawaii is considered a safe place to visit, and not only are the beaches serene and beautiful, but there is no shortage of adult-only resorts for guaranteed relaxation. A plethora of five-star hotels offer beach access, private pools and spa amenities. Shopping and fine dining are only a skip away



St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna

from most hotels along the beach. Single travellers may also enjoy taking some surfing or kayaking lessons.

SYDNEY, Australia In case there weren't enough reasons to visit Sydney (historical landmarks, beautiful sights, beaches, botanical gardens, and more), it's also a safe spot to visit solo. Mild temperatures, fine restaurants and a fantastic nightlife for singles are a few more bonuses to visiting this amazing city.

SINGAPORE As Singapore is one of the safest cities in the world, it is ideal for a solo escapade. There's no shortage of good hotels and the locals and hotel staff are known for their friendly nature. Take a walk through Chinatown, spend a day at Jurong Bird Park, hit the shops on Orchard Road or simply watch the world go by at Clarke Quay.

What Factors Can Affect My Credit Rating?

BY MARIANNE CURPHEY

Paying bills late or forgetting to pay off the minimum amount on your credit card each month won't just land you in financial hot water. It might even affect the amount of credit you will be able to receive in the future.

WHY DOES MY CREDIT RATING MATTER? Failing to pay your bills on time can end up being recorded on your credit rating and that could affect the way lenders view you when you make a new credit application. Even if you succeed in securing a new credit card or other form of credit, you may have to pay a higher interest rate than someone with a perfect credit record.

For example, a report by Cranfield Business School in the UK estimated that a household might have to pay an extra £1000 a year for utility bills, mobile phones, finance, car loans and broadband due to a poor rating.

Here are the top eight factors that influence a lender's decision.

ARE YOU ON THE ELECTORAL ROLL? Make sure you have your current address registered. It is

proof that you have a fixed address and you are who you say you are. The electoral role is often used to verify an applicant's identity. If there is no record of where you live lenders will view you less favourably because their policy is to combat identity fraud.

DO YOU HAVE A CREDIT HISTORY?

Not having any credit contracts, be they credit or store cards, mobile phone contracts or other regular payments, can count against you.

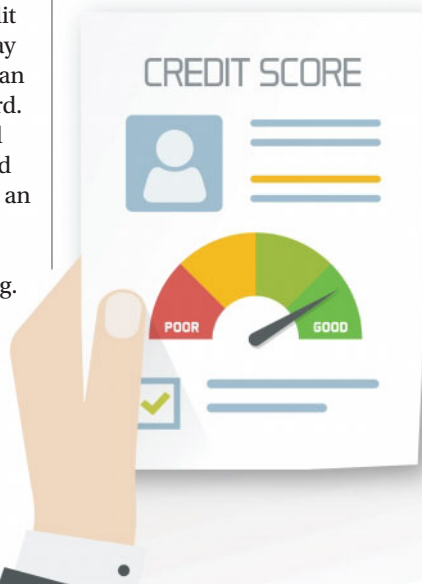


ILLUSTRATION: ISTOCK

By having some form of credit and paying it off in full at the end of the month you are demonstrating that you can handle repayments and that you don't default.

DO YOU PAY YOUR BILLS ON TIME?

It's important to be prompt not just in paying off your credit card bills, but also mortgage and utility bills, too. A series of missed payments will sound alarm bells for lenders, so make sure you at least pay off the minimum amount each month and seek help if your bills are getting out of control.

WHAT INFORMATION IS ON YOUR CREDIT REPORT? The only way to obtain this information is to contact a local credit reference agency (Google 'credit reference agency'). It's a good idea to apply for a copy of your credit report to gain an overview of your financial commitments and see exactly what a lender sees.

IS THE INFORMATION CORRECT?

A credit report lists all your credit commitments. It may list your credit and store cards in detail, showing balances and payments for the past 12 months. Lenders may also be able to see the lending terms, outstanding balance and monthly payments towards your mortgage, and the status of your current account. You can

write to the credit agency and put right any mistakes.

DO YOU HAVE SEVERAL CREDIT CARDS WITH HIGH LIMITS?

If you have a lot of potential credit this may count against you, even if you don't actually use it. That's because lenders are concerned that if the credit facility is available it means you could use it all if you needed to.

DO YOU BORROW CLOSE TO YOUR CREDIT LIMIT ON A REGULAR BASIS?

It's best to try to avoid carrying a balance on your credit cards that is more than 75 per cent of your credit limit on each of your cards. Lenders may worry that if you have too much debt you might not be able to keep up with any new repayments.

HAVE YOU MADE A LOT OF APPLICATIONS FOR CREDIT RECENTLY?

Each credit application search by a lender will leave a 'footprint' on your credit report. Too many searches in a short space of time can be perceived by lenders as you over-stretching yourself financially, or even financial desperation, and could affect your ability to get credit. Applying for more than four forms of credit in a year or applying for more than one credit product at a time can count against you.

Not Your Run-of-the-Mill Pet



Zebra finches are great low-maintenance pets in a small package

Looking for a more interesting friend for the kids than the usual budgie or guinea pig? Here are some slightly more unusual pets suitable for children

ZEBRA FINCH These songbirds come in a variety of colours and markings, including black-breasted, penguin and yellow beak. Zebra finches are sociable and you will need to bring at least two home with you. They need regular exercise outside their cage and will sleep soundly at night with the rest of the family. Or you could build an aviary outside and let your birds exercise as they please. They need stimulating toys to keep them happy and a gentle touch, so that they won't bite through stress.



CHINCHILLA This quiet and odourless rodent can be an affectionate addition to your family. The chinchilla needs a cool environment (no higher than 24°C) and a large cage for its active nocturnal lifestyle.

Chinchillas don't do well in high humidity. They are rather shy and will need an older and more patient child who will handle them carefully and is committed to them for their ten- to 20-year lifespan. Chinchillas do better in twos if you don't have a lot of time to devote to interacting with them. Keeping chinchillas is illegal in Australia, but is permitted in New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines and many other countries.

ANT FARM There are many different types of ants (22,000 species to be precise) with differing requirements. The common black garden ant would be more suitable for younger children as they don't sting and are low maintenance.

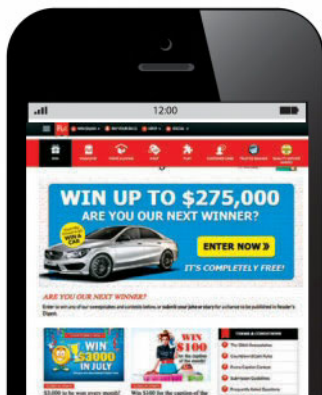
TROPICAL FISH You will need an aquarium and the right equipment. If your child is to be the main carer, more hardy fish breeds such as danios or black mollies can stand a little over-feeding and the odd missed tank clean.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Four great reasons why you should join us online...

We give away cash and prizes

Join fun competitions and quizzes



First look at future issues

Get a sneak peek at upcoming stories and covers



We give great advice

Get regular home, health and food tips from The Digest



Friends and good manners will carry you where money won't go.

MARGARET WALKER



We help you get motivated

#QuotableQuotes and #PointstoPonder to get you through the day



Life Beyond Dementia

BY KATE SWAFFER
AS TOLD TO HELEN SIGNY

A disturbing diagnosis triggered
a deep resolve to keep living

I WAS 49 when I was first diagnosed with dementia. As a retired nurse, it's the only disease I know of where you're told to just go home and prepare to die via aged care – not to fight for your life.

That's what I ended up doing. I am living every day as if it's my last, fitting in as much as I possibly can, and squeezing all the juice out of every lemon. Now I see dementia as a gift. It's given me a clarity about life I didn't have before.

When younger people experience cognitive changes, they're told it's because they are middle-aged, working, bringing up kids, paying mortgages. "You're stressed, you have hormone

changes, maybe you have depression." Research shows that most people under 65 don't get their diagnosis for three to four years after they first start discussing symptoms with their doctor. But for me it was a little different.

I had a busy life, with two teenage boys, a job and my university studies. I'd needed brain surgery a couple of years earlier, when I was 45, to fix a brain malfunction that I was born with. At one of my regular six-monthly check-ups with my neurologist, I mentioned I'd been noticing some changes in my language and maths ability, and was having some episodic short-term and long-term memory loss. I'd started



*Dementia rights
advocate Kate Swaffer*

to see numbers back to front and was having trouble with simple maths. Suddenly I couldn't spell 'that', and I couldn't differentiate between different spellings of 'their' and 'there'. I'd also started getting lost occasionally on campus, but had thought all of these symptoms were a side effect of the brain surgery.

I'd worked some years before in a dementia unit, but even I thought

that only older people get dementia. I never thought for a second that I might have it. Dementia isn't going into the next room and forgetting what you went in there for and remembering later. Everyone gets memory loss with ageing, just as your eyes deteriorate and your skin goes saggy.

Dementia is when cognitive changes are so great that they get in the way of you being able to get on with your usual daily activities or life or work. I was compensating, but it was really starting to impact my life. I sent out a quote that was completely wrong – I saw the numbers the right way round but I wrote them back to front. I also got badly lost in the Barossa Valley and ended up in a farmhouse with absolutely no idea where I was.

There were lots of things they had to rule out, so it took 18 months to get the diagnosis. It's hard to forget that day.

I was told I had a form of frontotemporal dementia, specifically in my left temporal lobe. There is no cure, nor for me, any medication that could change the progression of the disease. The only option offered to me was to give up my pre-diagnosis life, get my end-of-life affairs in order, and acquaint myself with aged care.

I was stunned, and I cried for weeks. I had a driving test and jokingly said to

the examiner when he asked me how I thought I had done: "Well I didn't kill you, did I?" I was totally unaware that he had not felt safe! I lost my licence as I only scored 35 per cent in the test. I had little insight that I'd lost my capacity to drive.

EVERYDAY life became more of a struggle. My

world was disappearing – the world I used to know, the capacity I used to have, my memory that used to be so sharp. I'd pick up a research article at university expecting to read it for the first time and I would see I had written notes all over it. Bits of my long-term memory started to be rubbed out. I could not remember being at a girlfriend's wedding, even though I'm clearly in the photos, yet I do remember her father's funeral six weeks before that. I also started to lose my spatial awareness, misjudging glass doorways. The acquired dyslexia



My world was disappearing – the world I used to know, the capacity I used to have, my memory that was so sharp

impacted things such as reading signs back to front and it became dangerous to cross a busy road.

The other thing I noticed was stigma and fear in the community, the misperception that all people with dementia are end-stage. People started to disappear from my life. I've heard this again and again from people with dementia living all over the world. It's not through unkindness; it's just that they don't know what to say. Others started talking to my husband and not even looking at me.

There is a misperception that people with dementia can't communicate, can't understand or won't make sense. We may have dementia, but this does not make us stupid – or deaf! But this disengagement only teaches us to be helpless – if you're struggling to speak and your partner keeps talking over or correcting you, it's easier just to say

nothing. So many people with dementia take on learned helplessness, and are often isolated and lonely.

Then I started searching online. I was inspired by an interview with a US clinical psychologist who was 62 when he was diagnosed with dementia. He'd found writing a journal to be therapeutic, so I started my blog – 'What the hell happened to my brain?' It helped me to get the angst and fear out.

It took me six to 12 months to stop being stubborn about accepting help. It's like when you first start needing to use glasses; at first you resist but then you realise they can be life enhancing. I pulled together a number of aids that help me maintain independence, such as laminated help sheets for when I can't work out how to make a cup of coffee, or to remind me to turn off the stove or how to use the shower. My husband and I have agreed that

HOW TO LIVE A BETTER LIFE WITH DEMENTIA

While Kate Swaffer recognises that living with or supporting someone with dementia is not easy, she stresses that laughter and love will get you through. She offers these tips on how people with dementia and their families can live better.

- Manage your symptoms of dementia as disabilities and demand proactive rehabilitation and disability support.
- Talk about it. Tell your family and friends how they can support you to

remain independent for as long as possible.

- Reclaim your pre-diagnosis life – don't go home and simply get ready to die via aged care.
- It *really* is possible to live a meaningful and productive life, even with dementia.
- Manage your lifestyle and health. Stop smoking, be active, eat healthy food.
- Get your end-of-life affairs in order – whether you have dementia or not!

he should never do things for me that I can still do for myself – I need to work really hard to remain independent for as long as possible.

I was friends with some of the lecturers at university. We discussed the idea of neuroplasticity, that all the symptoms I was experiencing were just disabilities that could be managed through the university's disability support unit. They organised disability supports, and also a buddy to help me find my way around campus, and software to manage the dyslexia. They helped me to keep living my life.

Since then I have gone on to complete a Masters of Science in Dementia Care and commenced a PhD in dementia in 2016. I have also published two books about dementia and two poetry books as well as continuing with my blogs. In 2014, I also co-founded Dementia Alliance International, an advocacy organisation for people with dementia. I'm now 58 – it's nearly nine years since my diagnosis, and I give conference presentations, and am continuing with my studies, writing and poetry.

The way I have survived is very different from what I was told to do. I have self-prescribed brain injury rehab. I have changed my lifestyle to be able to come off my blood pressure medication, got fitter, and I now rarely drink alcohol. All these things have the potential to reverse or slow the progression of dementia, especially if you are in the early stage.

THERE is a gross underestimation both in the community and the health sector about the capacity of people with dementia to contribute, to participate and to understand. Almost no-one is diagnosed end-stage with any disease, including dementia.

However, things such as reading have become more difficult now, and I have trouble following the plots of TV shows and movies. But with professional help, I have been able to keep finding my words, and to advocate for people with dementia. I had speech pathology from very early – usually with dementia it's reserved for the later stages, when you can't swallow. It has taught me to use my inner

WHERE TO FIND HELP

We recommend you consult your doctor if you are worried about memory or cognitive changes. For support if you have dementia or someone you care for has the condition, you can access help from the following organisations:

■ Alzheimer's Australia – 1800 100 500, www.fightdementia.org.au

■ Dementia Alliance International – info@infodai.org

■ Alzheimer's New Zealand – 0800 004 001, www.alzheimers.org.nz

■ Alzheimer's Disease Foundation, Malaysia – 3 7956 2008, www.adfm.org.my

■ Alzheimer's Disease Association, Singapore – 6377 0700, www.alz.org.sg

voice to search for the words I need. It's like my words are up there on the ceiling like helium balloons, and I'm constantly searching for them. Managing the symptoms as disabilities is very tiring. But it's better than not living – and functioning – as well as possible.

If we go on holiday, by day three I can't remember my husband's name. I'm like a newly retired person who has no idea what day of the week it is. So I keep myself very busy every day, I rarely stop. I'm like a swan – I look calm on the surface but underneath I'm paddling hard to stay afloat (to function). If I stop paddling, I will sink.

We have to change how we think about dementia. Forget about the human cost – we can't afford the economic cost to keep telling people to go home and become dependent on their families and the health system, as is currently happening globally. I'd like to see the healthcare sector stop prescribing disengagement and start prescribing rehabilitation and healthy lifestyle changes, as well as proactive disability supports for the symptoms of dementia, in the same way they would if I'd had a stroke. We need to have buildings that are dementia enabling – we have ramps, why not colour contrasting lines on stairs so we can find our way down? We need



I'd like the health-care sector to stop prescribing disengagement and start prescribing rehabilitation

to demand support to keep living as independently as we can, for as long as possible. Our symptoms are disabilities to be supported, rather than a death sentence. With all these things, it is possible for us to reclaim our pre-diagnosis lives, and to improve

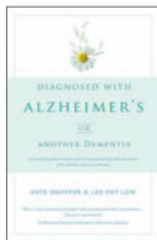
our quality of life and wellbeing significantly, at least until the later stages of dementia.

My biggest passion, which is also why I campaign for a human rights-based approach to dementia, is to empower and teach people diagnosed that they can live with dementia, not only

die from it, and to educate healthcare professionals it's also possible.

There are lots and lots of things about dementia that can be really sad. There are many days when I sit on the back step and cry. And it would be easy to get lost in the sadness of dementia.

But I can't cry all the time. There will be enough sadness down the track. For now, I am just trying to live. Really live. **R**



Drawing on real stories, *Diagnosed With Alzheimer's or Another Dementia* by Kate Swaffer and Lee-Fay Low focuses on managing the symptoms and living a productive life. New Holland Publishers, 2016, RRP A\$29.99



My daughter
approached a
strange man
on the beach.
What happened
next was a
real lesson



Give a Girl a *Fish*

BY VICKI GLEBOCKI
FROM QUEST FOR KINDNESS

“WE ARE GOOD MUMS,” I SAID TO MY FRIEND, as we sat on our very fancy beach chairs, under our very sturdily stabbed-into-the-sand beach umbrella and watched as our girls played in the surf.

In fact, I felt like an extraordinarily good mum on that summer morning – I’d woken up early, made a picnic lunch, herded my three- and five-year-old daughters into the car, driven to my friend’s house, packed her and her three- and five-year-old daughters into the car, and driven the hour and a half to the beach, where we unfurled our towels by 10am.

Out of nowhere, the girls took off running. About 50 metres from us, a man – maybe in his late 50s – was fishing with gigantic poles that looked like they could hook Jaws.

The girls stood next to him and watched with their little mouths hanging open as he cast the lines. He smiled at them. They ran back to us – all except my three year old, Drew. Instead, she plopped her red-and-pink-flowered bum next to the white bucket where the man was probably planning to put the fish that he caught.

My brain immediately shot into Mama Bear mode: child molester. Paedophile. Felon.

“Drew! Come here! Play with your friends!” I yelled, very aware that my speeches about not talking to strangers weren’t working. It seemed like all parents heard these days were

stories about abductions and two year olds found dead on train tracks. Good mums should be wary. Good mums should teach their daughters that the world is a dangerous place. So I felt relieved when Drew trotted over to me and grabbed a shovel. Then she looked me square in the eye: “I want to be with man.”

SHE RAN BACK, sat down next to him, and started digging.

I watched them like a hawk, every few seconds darting my head towards my five year old to make sure she hadn’t been swept out to sea, then back to Drew to make sure there was no contact. Just a man fishing. A little girl sitting.

“What do you think she’s saying to him?” my friend asked. In the second I’d glanced away, Drew had started talking. Her mouth was moving at

warp speed. She was probably telling the man where we lived and how her father was away on business and how her mother sometimes let her ride bikes with her sister in the driveway alone. He nodded. She kept talking. He nodded again, then laughed. She laughed.

A few seconds later, she ran back to us, waving something very shiny and slimy.

"Look, Mummy! A fish!"

"A what?" I recoiled.

"A toy fish!" It was, indeed, a toy fish – yellow and rubber and covered in gold sparkles. This must have been what he was using for bait. And he'd given it to Drew. The three other girls were impressed, and they didn't try to hide how insanely jealous they were. They all lunged for the fish. Drew looked at me for help, then at the man, then back at me.

"My friend gave me that fish!" she protested. The sand in front of the umbrella turned into a preschool cage match with a yellow rubber fish

flipping through the air. Tears were fast approaching. I felt like I might cry myself. I tried to confiscate the fish, but that merely increased the volume of the tantrums-in-waiting.

Suddenly, there he was: the man, standing right next to us. He was holding three more rubber fish. He handed

them to each of the girls. "Thank you," they said, without prompting.

"Thank you," I said, realising that yes, there is evil in the world ... but there also is good, and kindness in strangers, and lessons for mothers to learn that only three year olds could teach them. The man half-waved at us and walked back to his poles. **R**

***The other girls
were impressed,
and they
didn't try to
hide how
insanely jealous
they were***

QUEST FOR KINDNESS (SEPTEMBER 2, 2010) © 2010 BY VICKI GLEMBOCKI. ALICIA BESSETTE.COM.



HOLIER THAN THOU EVEN IMAGINED!

The farewell word 'Goodbye' first came into use in the late 1500s as a contraction of the phrase 'God be with ye'. Similarly, the Spanish sign-off 'Adios' is a contraction of the words 'a Dios' – literally meaning 'to God'.

SOURCE: ENGLISH.STACKEXCHANGE.COM

Life's Like That

SEEING THE FUNNY SIDE

FEB
1952

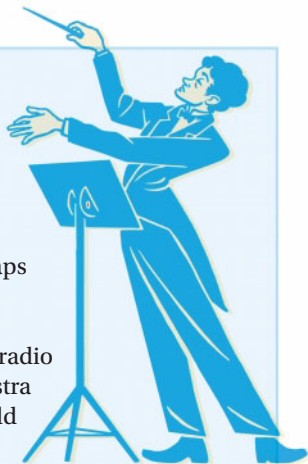
From the Archives

We think we live in a connected world – but in some ways that's always been the case, as this charming 65-year-old letter shows.

Radio stations get many strange requests, but perhaps one of the strangest was received by a big Chicago station. A Montana sheepherder wrote that he lived alone with his dog, 4000 sheep and a little battered radio set. He had a violin and when the symphony orchestra played he always tuned in and often wished he could play along. He had tried but his violin was out of tune. "Some time before you start the next programme," he wrote, "would you have the orchestra play 'A' for me?"

Just before the next Chicago Symphony broadcast, listeners heard this announcement: "The orchestra will now play 'A' – for a sheepherder in Montana."

SUBMITTED BY MRS O.H. DE VAUGHN



USE IT OR LOSE IT

I told my kids to get rid of toys they don't play with, so if you hear a commotion, it's them desperately playing with every toy they own.

@MAUGHAMMOM
ON TWITTER

SOBER ROVER

When we take our dog on car trips, we carry his drinking water in an old gin bottle. During one jaunt, we'd stopped to let him out of the car. As I was pouring some water into his bowl, I noticed a man watching.

He came over and whispered, "I hope you won't let him drive!"

Source: gcfl.net





KNOW THY NEIGHBOUR

We decided to move out of the house we'd lived in for four years. A few days before we left for good, my husband drove a rented truck up to our garage door so we could start loading boxes. Later that day, one of our neighbours arrived carrying a plate of muffins.

"Isn't that thoughtful," my husband said to me. "He must have realised we packed our kitchen stuff."

The man stuck out his hand and boomed, "Welcome to the neighbourhood!"

Source: gcfl.net

ON REFLECTION

"When parents say to kids, 'Go to your room and think about what you've done,' it's really good practice for what you'll do every night as an adult." @TASTEFACTORY ON TWITTER

SEEMS FISHY

My friend's daughter found a baby tooth that her kitten had lost. She decided to try to put one over on the tooth fairy, so that night she placed it under her pillow. And it worked. But the tooth fairy left a can of sardines.

SUBMITTED BY SANDRA E. MARTIN



The Great Tweet-off: Valentine Edition

Some Twitter users have a unique way of wishing their loved ones a happy Valentine's Day. Here are a few of our faves.

I told my wife her Valentine's Day gift this year is the privilege of being married to me. She's so happy she still hasn't stopped crying. @XPLODINGUNICORN

Impress your lady this Valentine's Day by giving her a delicious gourmet box of listening. @RANDILAWSON

This Valentine's give her what she really wants: a throne forged from the bones of her enemies & a relentless reign of terror over the masses. @PLEATEDJEANS

You are never alone on Valentine's Day if you're near a lake and have bread. @PRIMAWESOME

HOW TO MAKE A VALENTINE

1. Get paper.
2. Colour paper red.
3. It looks like bleeding paper.
4. This used to be a living tree.
5. We are monsters.

@SOMECHRISTTWEETS

Source: BuzzFeed.com



THE STRANGER WHO CHANGED MY LIFE



How a hardened criminal and the district attorney set on putting him away found common ground, as friends

“She Was My Prosecutor”

BY TOM HALLMAN FROM THE OREGONIAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTOPHER ONSTOTT

“Everyone on the street knew my dad. He got respect out of fear,” says DeQuandre Davis. “Everyone knows I’m his son”

DEQUANDRE DAVIS'S father was a legend, a feared and respected leader of the Crips until rival gangsters shot him dead on a Portland, Oregon, street in 1990. He left behind a one year old, a son who would be schooled by the street, spend time in prison, and have an extensive rap sheet by age 24.

Stacie Beckerman's father was a legendary Iowa attorney, a do-gooder who served on the boards of non-profit organisations and his church and died of a heart attack three weeks after she graduated from Harvard Law School. By 41, she was a US federal prosecutor with a reputation for toughness.

Davis and Beckerman were brought together nearly four years ago.

From the outset, Beckerman knew Davis's case would be easier than what normally came across her desk at the US Attorney's Office Gang and Sex Trafficking Unit. In June 2013, Portland police had stopped a car full of men and found a gun in the pocket of a coat that had been left by Davis. Already a felon after a robbery conviction as a teen, he was prohibited from carrying a gun. At arraignment, the judge released Davis from prison and required him to undergo random drug screening. He soon tested positive for marijuana. Beckerman thought he was dangerous and argued he be held until trial.

Instead, Judge Paul Papak released Davis and ordered him to participate in the Court Assisted Pretrial Supervision programme. It's a way to keep defendants out of trouble, and out of prison, while their cases make their way through the system.

"I was apoplectic," Beckerman said. "He needed to be put away."

Davis eventually pleaded guilty to the gun charge, and he faced up to ten years in federal prison. Over the months they awaited sentencing, though, Beckerman, Davis, his court-appointed defence attorney, and a pretrial employee were forced to meet twice a month with Papak.

"I was impatient, sceptical and frustrated," Beckerman said. "I'm an in-the-trenches prosecutor, and I had a million other things I needed to be doing."

Davis also saw the pre-sentencing meetings as pointless. "I thought she was going to say lies about me," he said. "I know the system. Justice isn't equal."

So the prosecutor and the criminal both brought a certain attitude to that first meeting, in January 2014. Davis, about 1.9 metres tall and muscular, didn't smile or look anyone in the eye. He seemed bored – barely talking, and mumbling when he did – and kept his distance from Beckerman, who reminded him of a strict high school principal. Beckerman, a good 30 centimetres shorter, was all business. In her



*“I’m an
in-the-trenches
prosecutor, and
I had a million
other things
I needed to be
doing”*

STACIE BECKERMAN

tailored black or blue business suits, she had one purpose: to put Davis behind bars.

WHILE BECKERMAN lived in a precise world – a defendant is either guilty or not – Davis lived in a grey place foreign to most law-abiding people, a place with its own rules and codes that must be understood to survive. Eight years after his father was gunned down, a nine-year-old DeQuandre threatened a classmate with a toy gun. He lived off and on with his mother and his father’s sister, and also in foster care. He spent time in juvenile detention and was expelled from an alternative high school after his freshman year. When he was

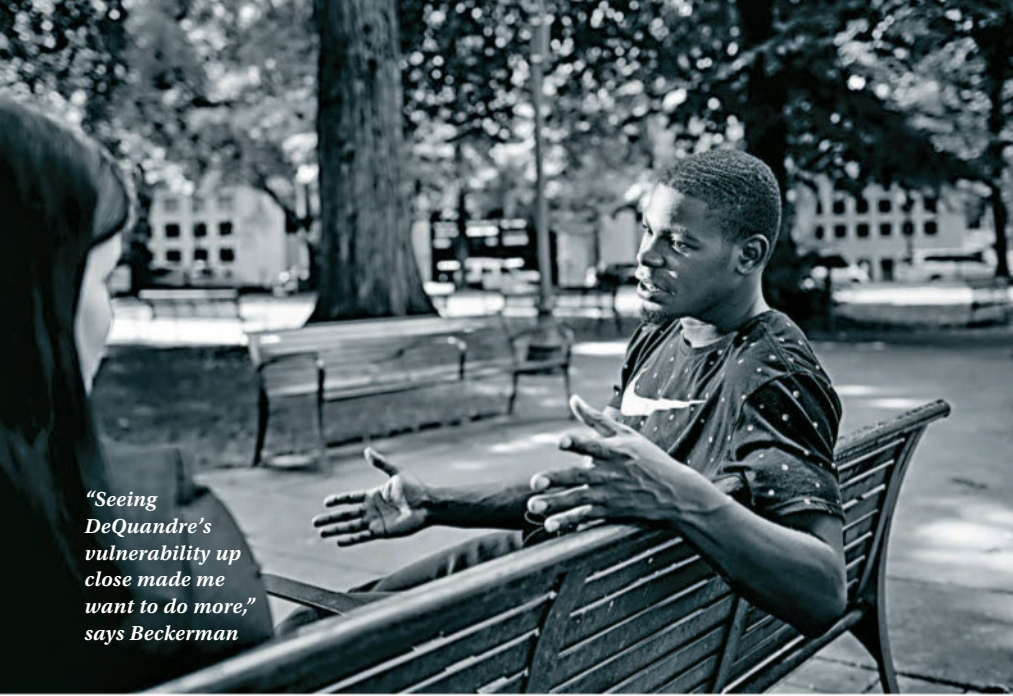
14, a close friend was shot to death. At 17, he was imprisoned after being convicted of robbing a man who was selling fake drugs.

“I didn’t let anyone walk over me. I didn’t care if I died young,” he said. “My mama always taught me not to fear nothing but God.”

January passed.

February.

At meeting after meeting, Beckerman and Davis went through the motions. They’d pick benches on opposite ends of the hallway as they waited for the courtroom doors to open. Inside, Beckerman sat alone at one counsel table; Davis and his attorney sat at the other. Judge Papak ran the meeting from his bench.



"Seeing DeQuandre's vulnerability up close made me want to do more," says Beckerman

March went by.
April.

It's hard to pinpoint precisely when something changed between them. Neither Beckerman nor Davis can remember the specific date, time or other details.

Perhaps it began the day that Beckerman decided to stop sitting at the far end of the hallway and asked Davis if she could join him on his bench. "I sat with him because I finally felt comfortable with him," she said. "I recall he didn't say much. I don't think he was comfortable with me yet."

Perhaps it was the day Davis listened to Beckerman talking about something and smiled. "A smile," he said, "goes a long ways."

Perhaps it was the day they walked into court together, after he held the door for her and let her pass first. Perhaps it was when they began saying goodbye at the end of meetings instead of merely stalking off in silence.

Beckerman had come to believe that Davis was trying to make meaningful changes in his life, that he had found the right attitude. He took a job on an assembly line at a local food company that made granola bars. In time, he was promoted to sanitation clerk. He started classes at Portland Community College.

Beckerman noticed Davis never complained or missed a meeting, even though he had to take two buses from the halfway house where he was

living during the pre-sentencing period. Davis was doing everything the law and law enforcement required: working hard, attending life-skills classes, remaining sober and staying out of trouble.

AFTER ONE MEETING, Beckerman returned to her office and glanced at her computer. Taped to the side was a quote from John Wesley, a cofounder of the Methodist Church. Beckerman had first heard the words from her father and kept them as a reminder of his values. Now they carried new meaning:

*"Do all the good that you can
In all the ways that you can
In all the places you can
At all the times you can
To all the people you can
As long as ever you can."*

May passed.

Then June.

At one of their last meetings before the September 2014 sentencing, Davis proudly announced that his girlfriend was pregnant with a boy. He'd picked out a name: DeQuandre Davis Jr.

A few weeks later, Beckerman walked to Target and bought a few books for Davis and his future son. "I wanted him to know I cared about him and his new baby," Beckerman said. "But I was also nervous about what my colleagues would think, because let's just say it's not every day a prosecutor is buying baby gifts for a defendant."

"Those books changed the way I saw her," Davis said. "It changed the way I saw the system." Davis cut ties to old friends. He stayed clean. "I wanted to not just be a father," he said. "I wanted to be a dad."

The case Beckerman had once thought would be easy was now keeping her up at night. She believed Davis deserved a second chance, a different kind of justice.

And so, early one July morning, as her family slept, Beckerman sat at her home computer to write a letter to US district court judge Michael Mosman: "If he goes to prison, he leaves behind another young boy to be raised by a single mother, or he receives a sentence of probation and is present the day his son is born, the day his son says his first words, and the day his son takes his first steps. The government votes for the latter path, in an effort to stop the cycle of paternal absence that likely played an important role in Mr Davis ending up before this court in the first place."

On the day of Davis's sentencing, he and Beckerman met in the hallway outside the court. He was wearing a sharp dark suit. He stood up, slipped on his jacket, and grinned at Beckerman. "See," he said, "now I look just like you." She smiled back, and he opened the door for her.

Inside the courtroom, Davis's attorney and Beckerman asked the judge to place Davis on probation with conditions. Beckerman wanted Judge

Mosman to restrict the neighbourhoods to which Davis could travel, prohibit him from associating with gang members, and require random drug testing. Beckerman even wanted Davis restricted from travelling in a car with other people, something that frequently led to trouble, without official approval.

Before ruling, Mosman asked Davis to explain himself.

"I'm being given the chance to show I can do something different with my life than crime," he told the judge.

Mosman agreed to the deal. Afterwards, back in the hallway, the prosecutor and the felon hugged.

"I learned a lot about the law at Harvard Law School," Beckerman said. "But no-one taught me about

why a 20-year-old black male in a tough neighbourhood feels like he needs to be armed. No-one taught me about what attracts kids to join gangs. I knew the law, and I could apply the law. But it is difficult to stand in judgment of other human beings without understanding human beings."

IN THE ENSUING YEAR, Davis became a father. Although he didn't live with his son, then almost the age Davis had been when his own father was murdered, he saw him often and read the boy the books Beckerman had given them.

"When I was little and saw other kids with a dad, I used to feel so sad," Davis recalled. "Now when I am with my son, I talk with him, hug him,

*"I'm being
given the chance
to show I can
do something
different with
my life than
crime"*

DEQUANDRE DAVIS



kiss him, and sing songs to him. He goes to sleep every night listening to church songs.”

Beckerman's life changed for the better, too. On June 5, 2015, she became a US magistrate judge in the district of Oregon. The swearing-in ceremony at the courthouse was crowded with family, friends and officials, all prosecutors or other representatives from the criminal justice system. Except for one person. When Beckerman entered with her family, she spotted Davis in the back and beamed. He smiled back.

A man in a suit took note of the exchange and asked Davis how he knew Beckerman.

“She was my prosecutor,” he said.

The man chuckled. “You’re joking, right?”

“No,” Davis said quietly. “She was my prosecutor.”



UPDATE Some habits are hard to break.

Davis started smoking marijuana and failed to show up for routine drug tests, resulting in a five-month prison sentence, which was subsequently cut to two months for good behaviour. Since then, he has found a job, has checked in as required with his parole officer, and has taken all routine drug tests.

Beckerman offered some perspective to those who would criticise Davis. “Anyone who has worked with offenders knows that there will be bumps in the road to change,” she said.

“It can be difficult for someone who has had no structure in his life for more than 20 years. I took a chance on DeQuandre because I believed he was ready to walk away from the gang lifestyle, and I continue to believe in him.

“I bought a DQ (Dairy Queen) onesie for DeQuandre’s kiddo a while back that I never had a chance to give to him,” she said. “Now it doesn’t fit DQ Jr., so I put it on a stuffed bear. I had a bag for DQ to hide it in when he walked out of the courthouse, but he tossed the bag aside and said he was going to walk around with the doll all day.”

FROM THE OREGONIAN (NOVEMBER 2015), © 2015 BY OREGONIAN PUBLISHING CO., OREGONLIVE.COM.



SORRY, I'M NOT SORRY

Children write the best apology notes, as these extracts show (all spelling unedited for authenticity).


“Dear Jase, I’m sorry for kicking you with a feather. Kicking is not okay because it hurts people. Also don’t forget about the time when you were a baby – crying little devil – but I liked you and now you still are a crying little devil who gets away with everything. Sincerely, Ty.”

“Dear mum, you are my favorit mummy ever. I’m sorry for calling you a pice of poo ... Love, your daughter, Karah.” HUFFINGTONPOST.UK

CONSUMER INTEREST



The Swedish home furnishings giant
has been quietly planting its blue and yellow
flags in places you'd never expect



HOW IKEA TOOK OVER THE WORLD

BY BETH KOWITT FROM *FORTUNE*

IT TOOK TIME to select just the right shopping complex, off just the right highway interchange and just the right distance from Seoul, to house a 59,000-square-metre store. It took time to solve certain mysteries, such as how to showcase kitchens that incorporate kimchi (a fermented dish) refrigerators, a uniquely Korean appliance – and even more time to untangle nuances of the market, such as the preference of South Koreans for metal chopsticks.

rather than the East Sea, as the South Koreans call it.

But the Koreans seem, for the most part, to have forgiven the Swedes. The Gwangmyeong store, which is the company's largest in the world by shopping area, quickly became one of Ikea's top-performing outlets.

IKEA IS A GENIUS at selling Ikea – flat-packing, transporting and reassembling its quirky Swedish styling all across the planet. Today the Ikea



THE IKEA MODEL IS BASED ON VOLUME, WHICH HELPS IT SECURE A LOW PRICE FROM SUPPLIERS

In all, it took about six years for Ikea to unveil its inaugural store in South Korea, in Gwangmyeong, from the first scouting trip to the opening in December 2014.

The lag was quintessentially Ikean. “The more global, the more complex it gets,” says Mikael Palmquist, regional manager of retail for Asia Pacific. “We need to get these things right or we will never be taken seriously.”

Even with all that careful planning, Ikea managed to get a few things wrong. It misjudged the number of parking spaces needed, and a world map for sale in the store upset some customers: the body of water east of Korea was labelled the Sea of Japan

Group has 328 stores in 28 countries. It's aiming for around 500 stores by 2020.

China, where Ikea has eight of its ten biggest stores, is the company's fastest-growing market. Singapore and Malaysia both have an Ikea presence. An outlet in Morocco opened in March last year, and there are hints that Brazil may not be far off. Meanwhile, in India, Ikea plans to invest about US\$2 billion over the next 15-20 years to open 25 stores.

Getting it right in emerging markets such as China and India, where Ikea is well-positioned to capitalise on a growing middle class, is a key factor in its goal of hitting €50 billion in sales



Top: Ikea founder Ingvar Kamprad shows the first Ögla café chairs in 1961.

Above: From this humble beginning, the chair collection quickly grew during the 1970s

by 2020. That's up from €31.9 billion in 2015.

The Ikea model is based on volume – producing a lot of the same stuff over and over, which helps it secure a low price from suppliers and in turn charge a low price to customers. One Billy bookcase, an Ikea classic, is sold every ten seconds. More stores mean more volume and the chance to drop prices even more.

For the company, this isn't just a business model. It's a mission: helping 'the many people' and those with

'thin wallets'. "We're guided by a vision to create a better everyday life for the many people," says Ikea Group CEO and president Peter Agnelfjäll. "That is what steers us, motivates us – that is our role. We feel almost obliged to grow."

RESEARCH IS AT THE HEART of Ikea's expansion. "The more far away we go from our culture, the more we need to understand, learn and adapt," says Mikael Ydholm, who heads research. Rather than focus on

differences between cultures, it's his job to figure out where they intersect.

For example, the company did a study of 8292 people in eight cities, examining morning routines. People are the fastest out the door in Shanghai (56 minutes) and the slowest in Mumbai (2 hours, 24 minutes). New Yorkers and Stockholmers are the most likely to work in their bathrooms (16 per cent). But regardless of city, women spend more time than men picking out their outfit for the day, a process many find stressful.

With this data in hand, Ikea came up with a free-standing mirror that has a rack on the back for hanging clothes and jewellery. The Knapper, as it's called, is intended to help customers assemble an outfit – clothes and accessories – the night before to cut down on morning panic.

The problem with surveys is that people lie. Ydholm puts it more delicately. "Sometimes we are not aware about how we behave," he says, "and therefore we can say things that maybe are not the reality. Or it could be that we consciously or unconsciously express something because we want to stand out as a better person."

One way Ikea researchers get around this is by taking a first-hand look themselves. The company recently put up cameras in people's homes in Stockholm, Milan, New York and Shenzhen, China, to better understand how people use their sofas. What did they learn? "They do

all kinds of things except sitting and watching TV," Ydholm says. In Shenzhen, most of the subjects sat on the floor using the sofas as a backrest. "I can tell you seriously we have not designed our sofas according to people sitting on the floor and using a sofa like that," says Ydholm.

The aim of gaining all this cultural knowledge is not to tweak the products for each market. Rather, Ikea has become awfully good at showing how the same product can mesh with different regional habitats.

Witness the full-size sample rooms that Ikea sets up in stores. The rooms play an essential, if secret, role: showing consumers how to fit Ikea pieces into their lives. Displays in Sendai, Japan, and Amsterdam could feature the same beds and cabinets, for example. But the Japanese version might incorporate tatami mats, and the Dutch room will have slanted ceilings, reflecting the local architecture.

Ikea's catalogues, which come in 32 languages, with each one reflecting local customers and customs, serve a similar purpose.

For every room set-up, there is an Ikea employee tracking any element that needs to be switched out – making sure that glass products produced in mainland China don't show up in Taiwan's catalogue and removing Persian rugs from the one that gets mailed to Israelis.

Ikea has not always got these local nuances right. The company came



Top: Over 8000 people queue for smoke-damaged bargains after a fire at Ikea's flagship store in Stockholm in 1970. Above: Ikea opening day in Gwangmyeong, Korea, in 2014

under fire for Photoshopping women out of its catalogue for Saudi Arabia and removing a lesbian couple from its magazine in Russia. "We have made mistakes," acknowledges Kajsa Orvarson, communications manager at the in-house media agency where the catalogue is produced, "but we are becoming more and more aware of how to improve and to share our values."

In the furniture world there's an oft-cited statistic that we have our sofas

longer than our cars and change our dining room tables as frequently as our spouses. Furniture can be its own kind of ball and chain. It's passed down from generation to generation, or it's so expensive that people feel it's forever. From the get-go, Ikea shook up that paradigm. "It traumatised furniture retailing," says Martin Toogood, who has run several companies that have competed against Ikea over two decades.

Ikea kept its prices down with an obsessive focus on costs. It might skip an extra coating of lacquer on the underside of a table that people never see or use. The company has also stripped out as much labour as possible from the system, pushing tasks that were once done by traditional retailers onto the customer. Flat-packed furniture made it easier for customers to take purchases with them, cutting out the expense of stocking and delivery – Ikea figured out flat-packing in

containers without wasting any space. Wasted space means wasted money and is also environmentally unfriendly. “I hate air,” says Dickner.

But he admits that sometimes Ikea has gone overboard with flat packing, putting too much of a burden on customers. To ensure it doesn’t take three hours to put together a tiny inexpensive item, the instruction-manual team is sometimes called on to give input. New employees who aren’t yet accustomed to the ways of the Allen



EMPLOYEES NOT YET ACCUSTOMED TO ALLEN KEYS ARE BROUGHT IN TO DO ASSEMBLY TESTS



1956, when a designer took the legs off a Lövet table to get it in his boot.

Ikea’s products are sourced from 1350 suppliers in 50 countries. Sixty-four per cent of Ikea’s goods are made in Europe, 33 per cent in Asia, and three per cent in North America. Some 12,000 products comprise Ikea’s range, but in reality it’s more like 50,000 because of variations in elements such as plugs for different countries. To pack it all up, the company uses 800 million square metres of cardboard every year. “I am not proud of it,” says Allan Dickner, deputy manager of packaging. “We try to minimise it.”

The magic of flat-packing allows goods to be jammed into shipping

key are brought in to do assembly tests. Products that take too long to put together are called ‘husband killers’, Dickner says.

IN RECENT YEARS Ikea has been killing far fewer husbands. The company has accomplished this feat in large part through improving its product design.

Design manager Marcus Engman and his team come up with some 2000 new products every year. Products under development go through rapid prototyping in the pattern shop to provide a sense of what they will actually look like in the flesh – or at least in plastic.

On a recent visit, one of the four 3-D printers was outputting a toilet brush. Apparently this is one of the more normal items. One of the oddest things Henrik Holmberg, who manages the department, has ever worked on was a lamp made from the same material as egg cartons. "I thought that was very crazy," he says, "but we proved the technique was possible."

If air is the enemy in shipping, it is the ally in design. "The more air in our products, the better," says Engman, who started working at Ikea when he was a teenager, pushing trolleys. In the design centre, Engman points out a table under development that consists of two trays cobbled together. Its hollow centre means the use of fewer materials. Its legs even attach without screws – part of a general move at Ikea to try to simplify assembly.

Ikea's designers look well beyond the furniture industry for expertise when it comes to trimming production costs. They commissioned a shopping-trolley manufacturer, for instance, to mass-produce a new table and a bucket maker to punch out a chair.

So, too, design inspiration comes from everywhere. Engman points out

a folding table that he saw in bars and restaurants throughout China. "It costs near to nothing," he says. "It is the smartest table. It has the construction of an ironing board."

Engman is also excited these days about acacia wood, which Ikea sources primarily from South-East Asia. Normally used in outdoor furniture, acacia has the properties of teak but the price of pine.

Walking through the design centre is a bit like seeing into the future. Some of the designers are already working on products for 2019. There's an electric bike on the horizon in some markets, as well as products that, Engman says, encourage social interaction and play. Socialising through devices such as smartphones is eroding togetherness, he says, and that togetherness is an essential part of home life and therefore vital to Ikea.

Electronic technology is one area where Engman says Ikea won't go. "We weren't any good there," he says. A venture into televisions was one of the company's great failures. "We are world champions in making mistakes," adds Engman. "But we're really good at correcting them." **R**

FORTUNE (MARCH 15, 2015) © 2015 BY TIME, INC. FORTUNE.COM.



AMAZING ANIMAL SLEEP SCHEDULES

Otters sleep floating on their backs in a posture of serene repose, sometimes holding paws with their friends so they don't drift apart. **MENTAL_FLOSS**



SEE THE WORLD ...

Turn the page ➡





An aerial photograph showing a large group of water skiers, likely participants in a world record attempt, skimming across the surface of the ocean. They are arranged in a long, narrow V-formation, with the point of the 'V' extending towards the bottom right of the frame. The water is a deep blue, and the skiers are leaving white wakes behind them. The skiers are wearing various colored gear, and their small figures emphasize the vastness of the ocean.

... DIFFERENTLY

One hundred and fifty-four people crowded together – nothing that unusual, at least at a market or in a cinema. However, it's very different when you are on skis being pulled over the ocean for one nautical mile (about 1.8 km) by a 3000 horsepower boat. That's what happened in January 2012 just off the coast of Tasmania when water-ski enthusiasts from all over the planet set a new world record. Only nine participants were not able to stand on their feet – or, rather, on their skis. In a spectacular display, 145 athletes stood their ground and achieved the watery milestone.

PHOTOS: CATERS NEWS AGENCY LTD

Laughter

THE BEST MEDICINE

WORLDLY WISE

Comedian Mitch Hedberg was eager to hang a map of the world in his house. "I'm gonna put pins into all the locations I've travelled to," he said. "But first I'm gonna have to travel to the top two corners of the map so it won't fall down."

Hell hath no fury like a four year old whose sandwich has been cut into squares when he wanted triangles.

@LURKATHOMEMOM ON TWITTER

BRIDGING THE AGE GAP

A wealthy 75-year-old widower starts showing up around town with a beautiful and much younger wife.

"How did you get her to marry you?" his friend asks.

"I lied about my age."

"You told her you were 60?"

"No, I told her I was 90."

Source: reddit.com

Q: What do
vegetarian

zombies eat?

A: GRAIIIIIIINS!

Source: reddit.com



"I hate airline food!"

KIDS WILL BELIEVE ANYTHING

Adults remember some of the more unusual lies they were told as children

■ When I was younger, my dad told me people only get to speak 10,000 words per month. If you reached the limit, he said, you couldn't physically talk until the new month began. Any time I was especially talkative, Dad would say, "Careful, you're over 9000 by now."

■ My mum convinced my brother and me that a penguin lived behind our fridge. She warned us that if we left the door open too long we'd use up his cold, and he'd get mad and come out and bite us.

■ My father told me that pears were apples from outer space.

Source: buzzfeed.com

You fill the space
between my fingers.

Tell me more about you.

I can't wait to hold
your hand and walk
along the sandy
beaches at sunset.

Last night,
in my dreams,
I saw you on
the pier.

Oh, Amy. You know
me better than that.

My life will never be
the same since I met
you. Happy New Year.

WHEN AMY MET DUANE *ONLINE*

She gave him her ♥ - and he
took \$300,000 from her.
A harrowing story of online
dating deception

BY DOUG SHADEL AND DAVID DUDLEY
FROM AARP THE MAGAZINE

SHE WROTE TO HIM FIRST, ON A THURSDAY EVENING IN DECEMBER 2013. "YOU WERE LISTED AS A 100% MATCH! I AM NOT SURE WHAT A 100% MATCH MEANS ... FIRST, WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN ME? CHECK MY PROFILE."

Later, when Amy* puzzled over their relationship, she'd remember this. She had contacted him, not the other way around. That had been a fateful move; it had made everything easier for him. But she didn't know that yet.

It had been over two years since Amy had experienced the death of her husband of 20 years, four since she had lost her mother – two sharp blows in her 50s. Now she was alone in a house in Virginia. Her family lived nearby but when it came to meeting men, however, her choices were limited.

In the autumn of 2013, she signed up for a six-month subscription to a popular online dating site. She considered herself pretty tech savvy. She had a website for her business, was on Facebook, and carried a smartphone. In her profile, she was honest about her age (57) and finances ("self-sufficient"), and her pitch was straightforward: "looking for a life partner ... successful, spiritually minded, intelligent, good sense of humour, enjoys dancing and travelling. No games!"

She exchanged messages and had a few phone calls with men; she even

met some. But either they weren't her type or they weren't who they'd said they were in their profiles.

Then she saw this guy with a mysterious profile name: darkandsugar-clue. The photo showed a trim, silver-haired man

with a salt-and-pepper beard. He was 61, liked bluegrass music, and lived an hour away. And he was a '100% match', so she wrote to him.

More than a week later, she got this message: "Thank you so much for the email and I am really sorry for the delay in reply, I don't come on here often ... I would love to get to know you as you sound like a very interesting person plus you are beautiful. Tell me more about you. In fact it would be my pleasure if you wrote me at my email as I hardly come on here often."

He gave her a Yahoo email address and a name, Duane. When she went back to the dating site to look at his profile, it had disappeared.

She wrote: "Your profile is no longer there – did you pull it? ... I'd like to know more about you. Please email me with information about yourself and pictures ..."

Duane sent a message that sketched a peripatetic life. He was a "computer systems analyst" from California who had grown up in the UK, and had lived in Virginia for five months. He made flirty jokes ("If I could be bottled I

*Names have been changed.

would be called ‘eau de enigma’”) and described an imaginary first meeting: “The restaurant is a white-painted weatherboard, simple but well-kept, set on the edge of a lake ...”

Duane was nothing like the men Amy had met so far. “You certainly have a great sense of humour and a way with words,” she wrote. She mentioned the deception she’d encountered on previous dates.

Within two weeks, they’d exchanged eight more emails. Duane suggested they fill out questionnaires listing their favourite foods, hobbies, quirks and financial status. He also sent a link to a song, Marc Anthony’s ‘I Need You’.

“It holds a message in it,” he told her, “a message that delivers the exact way I feel for you.”

Amy clicked on the link to the ballad, which ends with the singer begging his lover to marry him. Then she listened to it again.

SEDUCTION.COM

It’s an ancient con. An impostor poses as a suitor, woos the victim, then loots his or her finances. In pre-digital times, scammers found their prey in the personal ads of magazines. Today, technology has opened up a vast pool of victims. Fifteen per cent of adults in the US said they’ve used a dating website or app. In 2015, the FBI received 12,509 complaints related to online-dating fraud, with losses of \$203.3 million. That figure may be low because many victims never report the crime

or tell their loved ones. Their silence stems from shame, fear of ridicule and denial. “Once people are invested in these [romances], it’s extremely difficult to convince them they are not dealing with a real person,” says fraud expert Steven Baker. “People want to believe so badly.”

When Amy talks about how she fell in love, she mentions Duane’s voice. It was musical, clipped, flecked with endearing Britishisms. They began talking for hours every day in addition to emailing and texting. His years in England explained the accent, but there was also a wisp of something else in his voice. Still, this did nothing to deter her interest. In their conversations, Amy opened up to Duane about her marriage, her job and her conviction that things happened for a reason. She had never met a man who was so curious about her.

She was just as fascinated by Duane. Or was it Dwayne? The spelling had switched from his earlier emails. There were other curiosities. She’d be making breakfast, and he’d be talking about going out for the evening. He travelled for work, he explained. He was calling from Malaysia, where he was finishing a computer job.

He sent her a link to an old John Denver song, ‘Shanghai Breezes’, about two lovers separated by distance.

She wrote: “Wow ... It feels like the universe is manifesting my perfect partner right before my very eyes.”

Amy sent that note a week after her first message from Dwayne. In emails and calls, they shared their lives. Mixed in were his ardent declarations of affection: "Last night, in my dreams, I saw you on the pier. The wind was blowing through your hair, and your eyes held the fading sunlight."

Those florid words cast a powerful spell on Amy. "You are filling my days and nights with wonder," she confessed to Dwayne at Christmas. "Are you real? Will you appear someday ... hold me in your arms, kiss my lips and caress me gently? Or are you just a beautiful, exotic dream? ... If you are ... I don't want to wake up!"

When she returned from a trip to Florida with a friend, Amy found a bouquet of flowers, with a note: "My life will never be the same since I met you. Happy New Year. Love, Dwayne."

VULNERABLE HEARTS

Enitan* lives in a small village in Nigeria. (Most dating fraud originates in Nigeria and Ghana, as well as in some other countries with large West African communities.) In 2004, when he was 18, he fell in with a group of young Nigerian men known as Yahoo Boys, named for their use of free Yahoo.com email accounts. "Ignorance and desperation," he says, drove him to crime.

Enitan is not Dwayne; his fraud

WHEN AMY RETURNED FROM HER TRIP, SHE FOUND A BOUQUET OF FLOWERS AND A NOTE: "MY LIFE WILL NEVER BE THE SAME SINCE I MET YOU. HAPPY NEW YEAR. LOVE, DWAYNE"

career ended five years before Amy contacted her suitor. (Enitan agreed to talk on the condition that he would not be identified by his real name.) Based on his account, the playbook he followed has not changed. He estimates that over four years, he took more than \$800,000 from about 20 victims, both men and women. He'd change his voice to sound feminine when speaking on the phone to his male victims, he said; only once did he get caught.

He describes a three-stage strategy. Using stolen credit card numbers, he would flood dating sites with fake profiles. Photos were pirated from social media or other dating sites. To snare women, he'd pose as older, financially secure men. For male victims, he just needed a picture of an alluring woman. All his victims, he says, were divorced or widowed: "The lonely heart is a vulnerable heart."

Ideally, Enitan let the victims make the first move. "It's always better if they respond to your ad first because that means they already like something about you," he says. "If you respond first, you have a lot of convincing to

do." After learning everything about his target, he'd launch a campaign of love notes and gifts. "This is where you need lots of patience," he says. "This is where the real game is."

In the 2008 book *Truth, Lies and Trust on the Internet*, Monica Whitty, a UK psychologist, wrote about how online romances can be "hyperpersonal – more strong and intimate than physical relationships." Because the parties are spared the distractions of face-to-face interaction, they can create idealised avatars that command more trust and closeness than their true selves might.

Age is a factor: not only are older victims more likely to lose larger sums of money, but there's evidence that the ability to detect deception declines with age. When Whitty surveyed UK scam victims, she found that certain personality types were particularly vulnerable – people who were romantics and risk-takers, believers in fate and destiny. Women were slightly less likely to be scammed than men but were far more likely to report it.

One term that Amy later learned was *love bombing*, a phrase referring to the smothering displays of affection that victims receive from suitors. A person's defences are broken down by exhaustion, social isolation and an overwhelming amount of attention. Amy described the feeling as akin to being brainwashed. Enitan calls it "taking the brain", where the goal is to get the victims to transfer allegiance to

the scammer. "You want them thinking, *My dreams are your dreams, my goals are your goals, and my financial interests are your financial interests*," he says. "You can't ask for money until you have achieved this."

MONEY TROUBLES

Slightly less than a month after his first contact with Amy, Dwayne brought up his money troubles. He'd planned to fly back to Virginia in January after he finished a big project, but some components were stuck in customs. Dwayne had a UK trust fund and would retire after this job, he said. But he couldn't use the fund to cover the customs fees. And he couldn't come back to the US until he completed the job. If Amy could help him, he'd pay her back.

Amy had money, and Dwayne knew it. She owned her home and two other properties, and she had inheritances from her mother and husband. He also knew she was in love with him. Amy wired \$8000 to the fiancé of a friend of Dwayne's in Alabama, who'd get the funds to Dwayne.

Then he asked her for \$10,000 to bribe officials because of an expired visa. Finally, he set a day for his flight home – January 25 – and emailed her his itinerary. Amy told her brothers and friends they'd finally meet her mysterious boyfriend.

Then a problem came up: Dwayne had to pay his workers. While he'd received \$2.5 million for the project – he even emailed her an image of the

cheque – he couldn’t open a bank account in Malaysia to access it. She sent more money. January 25 came and went without Dwayne. He apologized profusely and sent more flowers.

Soon he needed more help. She wired another \$15,000. This is a familiar pattern in love cons: the scammer promises a pay-off – a face-to-face meeting – that forever recedes as crises and barriers intervene. As February wore on, Amy told friends that Dwayne was coming soon. But she never mentioned that by now she had given him more than \$100,000.

Dwayne would pay her back, of course. When doubt crept in, Amy would look at his pictures or read his messages. Still, little things were odd. Once, she asked what he’d had for dinner. He said stir-fried chicken.

“But I thought you hated chicken,” she replied.

He laughed. “Oh, Amy. You know me better than that.”

One night she commanded Dwayne, “Send me a selfie, right now.” She got a photo moments later. There he was, sitting on a bench in the sun.

“How do I know you’re not a Nigerian scammer?” she asked one day, playfully.

He laughed. “Oh, Amy. You know me better than that.”

Psychologists call this confirmation bias – if you love someone, you look for reasons he or she is telling the truth, and Amy was looking, desperately, for reasons to trust Dwayne.

Besides, he’d be there on February 28. He sent a text from Kuala Lumpur airport: “I’ll be home soon, my love.”

Then he went silent, and Amy tried to tamp down the panic. He texted her three days later – something about being held up by immigration in Malaysia and needing money to bribe the officials. This was the third time he’d failed to show. Still, she wired him the funds, putting the total amount she’d sent him over \$300,000.

Amy’s sister-in-law figured it out. “You need to see this,” she told Amy, sending her a link to an episode of *Dr. Phil* that featured two women who had been unknowingly engaged to imaginary men they’d met online. Amy watched in horror.

A few days later, Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 disappeared. This was the same route that Dwayne had planned to be on. Amy couldn’t help worrying that he’d been on board. Finally, he phoned. They spoke for only a few moments before the call broke up. She was relieved but also disturbed. Something was different.

That week, the daily siege of calls, emails and texts from Dwayne ended, and Amy wondered, *How much did she know him?* She fed the photos he’d sent into Google’s image search. Eventually, up popped the LinkedIn page of a man with an unfamiliar name. She Googled the phrase *romance scam* and started reading. Yet even as she learned the truth, part of her hoped that her case was somehow different.

“PEOPLE THINK THAT VICTIMS ARE ALL LONELY OLD WOMEN WHO CAN’T GET A DATE, BUT I’VE SEEN DOCTORS, LAWYERS, POLICE OFFICERS [GET CONNED]”

VICTIM OF A CRIME

Romancescams.org, a resource centre and support group for dating fraud, has collected more than 60,000 reports, from men and women, young and old. “People think that victims are all lonely old women who can’t get a date, but I’ve seen doctors, lawyers, police officers [get conned],” says Barbara Sluppick, who founded the site in 2005.

Some of the most aggressive anti-scam efforts have come from Australia. Brian Hay, the head of a fraud unit in Brisbane, has orchestrated stings that have led to the arrest of criminals in Malaysia and Nigeria. But so dim are the chances of finding offenders that he rarely tells victims about these cases. “The strongest drug in the world is love,” Hay says. “These bastards know that. And they’re brilliant at it.”

When Amy went to her regional FBI office, she says, an agent took

her report – and told her that a woman in the next town had lost \$800,000. The psychological trauma suffered by victims is two-fold. First, they must cope with the end of a serious relationship. “It’s like finding out someone you

loved has died, and you’ll never see them again,” Sluppick says. To compound the damage, victims blame themselves – and their loved ones often do, too. “People think, *Why did I let this happen to me?*” she says. “But you’re a victim of a crime.”

Some victims try the risky practice of scam baiting, attempting to turn the tables on fraudsters. Months after she discovered the con, Amy continued talking to Dwayne, promising him \$50,000 if he sent various documents. She wanted to lure him into giving up something incriminating.

Eventually, Amy had to accept that Dwayne would never show his true face or give her the confession she yearned to hear. She emailed him, telling him not to contact her again.

A few minutes later, he texted. He promised not to call. “I know you’re innocent,” he wrote. “And so am I.” **R**

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WORDS TO THAT EFFECT

Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia is a fear of long words.



Animal Passion

Animals may not celebrate Valentine's Day, but they certainly know a thing or two about love

BY CORNELIA KUMFERT

Male gentoo penguins have their work cut out for them when it comes to attracting a mate. Before the fussy females will choose a partner to move in with, the males have to find an ideal spot for a potential nest.

NATURE





Wolves are true romantics. Once a pair has formed a bond, they stay together for life. That's why the vast majority of wolf packs consist of a pair of wolves and their offspring.

Male zebras keep a harem and are real Casanovas. But they give the females a lot of loving care and attention and enjoy joining in a bit of mutual grooming.



Polar bears are born loners but even they make an exception occasionally. Once a year during the mating season, they seek out bears of the opposite sex.

Burrowing owls reinforce their pair bond by preening. Because they nest and roost in underground burrows, these little birds need to be both cunning and courageous. To deter predators, they imitate the sound of a rattlesnake.

Pairs of Siberian tigers spend up to seven days together, playing and cuddling. Once the female is pregnant, they go their separate ways. For the rest of the year they prefer to live and hunt alone.

Female squirrels look for love in many places during the mating season. That's because these cute rodents don't set any store by monogamy and instead try to mate with as many partners as they can.





13 Things Your Dreams Reveal About You



BY MICHELLE CROUCH

1 How creative you are Creative people are more likely to dream about unusual settings (rather than home or work) and about obstacles in the natural world, such as a log or a rock they can't get around.

2 Your political views People who describe themselves as conservatives are more likely to have mundane, realistic dreams, while liberals have a more varied and active dream life. Does that mean liberals are more open-minded? Or that they're caught up in their own fantasies? Take your pick.

3 That you've got a heart problem People who have frequent nightmares may be significantly more likely to suffer from an irregular heartbeat or chest pain compared with those who don't have them, according to a study of older adults. That may be because heart problems can make it more difficult to breathe at night.

4 If you're avoiding something Do you ever dream about being pursued by a stranger, a scary monster or a giant tidal wave? This could indicate that you're afraid to deal with

something in your waking life. Ask yourself what issue, person or emotion you're not confronting.

5 How fast you'll bounce back from your divorce Divorced people who have longer, more dramatic dreams about the old relationship are more likely to adjust better to being single. Dreams may help divorced folks (and the rest of us) work through trauma.

6 How you pursue the big answers Adults who attend religious services frequently may recall fewer dreams than those who don't attend worship services regularly. If you're not relying on religion to answer big life questions, then your dreams may become a resource for insight.

7 That you're a workaholic Type A personalities tend to report more disturbing dreams than laid-back folks. Hard-driving types put more pressure on themselves, and that stress can appear in dreams.

8 If you'll pass a test with flying colours University students spent an hour learning how to navigate a complex maze. When tested later, the only students whose performance improved were those who had dreamed about the maze during a nap. Dreaming may consolidate memories, which boosts learning and problem-solving skills.

9 Whether you'll give up smoking for good One study found that the more you dream about smoking – and experience the guilt associated with falling off the wagon (even a phantom wagon), the more likely you may be to quit.

10 Your risk of Parkinson's Up to 90 per cent of people who act out violent dreams – by punching, kicking or yelling while asleep – may eventually develop Parkinson's disease. The behaviour may indicate REM sleep behaviour disorder, an early sign of the disease.

11 Whether you're depressed Depressed people start dreaming much sooner than others, as early as 45 minutes after falling asleep, rather than the usual 90 minutes.

12 Death may be near The closer a person is to passing, the more likely he or she is to dream about loved ones who've passed on.

13 What medications you're taking Many drugs are known to cause bad dreams, including antidepressants, antibiotics, statins and some antihistamines. **R**

Sources: Kelly Bulkeley, a psychologist specialising in dream research; Dr Michael Howell, a neurologist at the University of Minnesota; Stephanie Silberman, a board-certified sleep specialist in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Rosalind Cartwright, author of *The Twenty-Four Hour Mind: The Role of Sleep and Dreaming in Our Emotional Lives*; Veronica Tonay, author of *The Creative Dreamer: Using Your Dreams to Unlock Your Creativity*; Michael Schredl, of the Central Institute of Mental Health's sleep laboratory in Mannheim, Germany.

Intimacy can be created by asking
specific and personal questions

How to Fall in Love

BY MANDY LEN CATRON
FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

MORE THAN 20 YEARS ago, psychology professor Arthur Aron succeeded in making two strangers fall in love in his laboratory. Two years ago, I applied his technique in my own life, which is how I found myself standing on a bridge at midnight, staring into a man's eyes for four minutes.

Let me explain. Earlier in the evening, that man and I were hanging out for the first time one-on-one. He was a university acquaintance I occasionally ran into at the climbing gym and had thought, *What if?* We were nursing our first beers when our conversation took an unexpected turn, and he said, "I suspect, given a few commonalities,

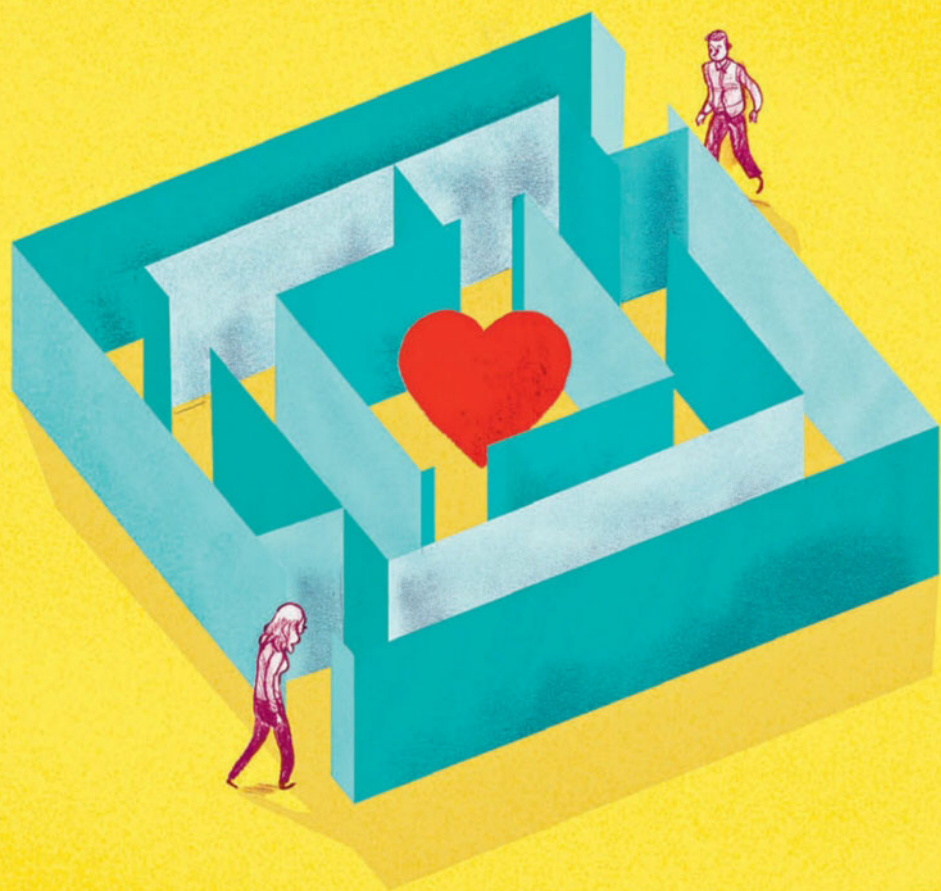
you could fall in love with anyone. If so, how do you choose someone?"

"Actually, psychologists have tried making people fall in love," I replied, remembering Aron's study.

I explained the study to my friend. A man and a woman enter the lab through separate doors. They sit face-to-face and ask each other a series of increasingly personal questions. Then they stare silently into each other's eyes for exactly four minutes. Six months later, the two were married.

"Let's try it," he said.

Let me acknowledge that, first, we were in a bar, not a lab. Second, we weren't strangers. Not only that, but I see now that one neither suggests nor



agrees to try an experiment designed to create romantic love if one isn't open to this happening.

I Googled Aron's questions; there were 36. We spent the next two hours passing my iPhone across the table, alternately posing each question. They began innocuously: "Would you like to be famous? In what way?" And "When did you last sing to yourself? To someone else?"

But they quickly became probing.

In response to the prompt "Name three things you and your partner

appear to have in common," he looked at me and said, "I think we're both interested in each other."

I grinned and gulped my beer as he listed two more commonalities I then promptly forgot. We exchanged stories about the last time we'd each cried and confessed the one thing we'd like to ask a fortune-teller. We explained our relationships with our mothers. I liked learning about myself through my answers, but I liked learning things about him even more.

We all have a narrative of ourselves that we offer up to strangers and acquaintances, but Aron's questions make it impossible to rely on that narrative. The moments I found most uncomfortable were not when I had to make confessions about myself but when I had to venture opinions about my partner. Such as: "Tell your partner what you like about them; be very honest this time, saying things you might not say to someone you've just met."

It's astounding, really, to hear what someone admires in you. I don't know why we don't thoughtfully compliment one another all the time.

We finished at midnight. Looking around the bar, I felt as if I had just woken up. "That wasn't so bad," I said. "Definitely less uncomfortable than the staring into each other's eyes part would be."

He hesitated and asked, "Do you think we should do that, too?"

"Here?" I looked around the bar. It seemed too weird, too public.



FOUR INTIMATE QUESTIONS

Arthur Aron explored whether intimacy between two strangers can be accelerated by having them ask each other 36 personal questions, four of which are below.

1. Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest?
2. What would constitute a 'perfect' day for you?
3. If you were able to live to 90 and retain either the mind or body of a 30-year-old for the last 60 years of your life, which would you want?
4. Do you have a secret hunch about how you will die?

FOR THE OTHER 32 QUESTIONS, GO TO
[WWW.RD.COM/ADVICE/RELATIONSHIPS/
 FALL-IN-LOVE-QUESTIONS/](http://WWW.RD.COM/ADVICE/RELATIONSHIPS/FALL-IN-LOVE-QUESTIONS/)

"We could stand on the bridge," he said, turning towards the window.

The night was warm. We walked to the highest point, then turned to face each other.

"OK," I said, inhaling sharply.

"OK," he said, smiling.

I've skied steep slopes and hung from a rock face, but staring into someone's eyes for four silent minutes was one of the more thrilling and terrifying experiences of my life.

I KNOW THE EYES are said to be the windows to the soul, but the real crux of the moment was not just that I was really seeing someone but that I was seeing someone really seeing me. Once the terror subsided, I arrived somewhere unexpected.

I felt brave and in a state of wonder. Part of that wonder was at my own vulnerability, and part was the weird kind of wonder you get from saying a word over and over until it loses its meaning and becomes what it actually is: an assemblage of sounds.

So it was with the eye. The sentiment associated with that clump of nerves fell away, and I was struck by its astounding biological reality: the spherical nature of the eyeball, the

visible musculature of the iris, and the smooth wet glass of the cornea. It was strange and exquisite.

When the timer buzzed, I was surprised – and a little relieved.

Most of us think about love as something that happens to us. But this study assumes that love is an action, that what matters to my partner matters to me because we have at least three things in common, because we have close relationships with our mothers, and because he let me look at him.

It's true you can't choose who loves you, and you can't create romantic feelings based on convenience alone. Science tells us our pheromones and hormones do a lot of the work.

But despite this, I've begun to think love is a more pliable thing than we make it out to be. Arthur Aron's study taught me that it's possible – simple, even – to generate trust and intimacy, the feelings love needs to thrive.

You're probably wondering if he and I fell in love. We did. Although it's hard to credit the study entirely, it did give us a way into a relationship that feels deliberate.

Love didn't happen to us. We're in love because we each made the choice to be. **R**

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LOVELY DAY FOR IT

Tired of the erratic weather? We're lucky – it snows
metal on Venus. HUFFINGTONPOST.COM



DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

The Shymanskis had taught their five-year-old daughter what to do in case of emergency, knowing it could save her life. They didn't know it would save her mother and baby brother, too

The Littlest Hero

BY OMAR MOUALLEM

ILLUSTRATION BY YUTA ONODA





ANGELA SHYMANSKI WAS making great time. It was 8.30am, the kids were fed and the car was packed with all the necessities for a road trip: a pop-up tent, toys and snacks for five-year-old Lexi, and, for ten-week-old Peter, a pink blanket and seven days' worth of clothes – all of which had been worn. No matter, thought Angela. It was 26°C in central Alberta – the hottest June 8 on record – so her infant would be fine for the eight hours home to Prince George, British Columbia, in nappies only.

The 28-year-old Canadian had driven these nearly 800 kilometres alone before to visit friends and family. Her husband of eight years, Travis, an instrumentation mechanic at an oil refinery, couldn't come on the week-long holiday, but Angela, a swimming and first-aid instructor, was eager to show off Peter to her friends.

IT WAS AN important trip for Lexi, too. The morning they had left Prince George – June 1, 2015 – marked the beginning of the 100-day countdown to kindergarten. Angela was keen to fill the holiday with fun; by week's end, Lexi had seen gorillas at the Calgary Zoo, picnicked with cousins, had got dizzy on amusement park rides and made sandcastles at the beach.

As she was driving along the Icefields Parkway, Angela missed her first turnoff, but decided to continue west on a slightly longer, more scenic route. The lost time would have been negligible were it not for a 30-minute stretch

of road construction. The stops and starts had begun to bother Peter, who was now shrieking in the back-facing car seat next to Lexi's. *This calls for a nursery rhyme*, Angela thought. She inserted a CD and hoped for the best.

"Zoom, zoom, zoom. We're going to the moon. Zoom, zoom, zoom. We're going to the moon."

In no time, both children were slumped in their car seats. Once out of the construction zone, Angela accelerated to just below the 100 km/h speed limit. The warmth of the sun, combined with the lulling music, soon began to have a relaxing effect, so Angela opened the window, hoping the blast of wind would keep her alert. She began searching for a rest stop.

"Zoom, zoom, zoom."

Angela's eyes closed for just a few seconds.

EXACTLY ONE YEAR earlier, Lexi was receiving the most important lesson of her young life. On this particular night, the Shymanskis were preparing Lexi for a future emergency – a cousin of Travis's had lost his home in a flood, and they wanted to be ready for such a scenario. Together the young family filled a duffel bag with water bottles, canned food, a first-aid kit, some cash, CPR masks, spare clothes and toys, and tucked it in a closet by the front door.

Then they showed Lexi the smoke alarms: if they start beeping, said her parents, hurry to the driveway. Don't

go searching for anything or anyone – just get help and don't look back.

To demonstrate, the three walked barefoot to the nearest neighbour's place, about half a kilometre away, as Travis and Angela believed that calling the emergency services wouldn't



LEXI SPOTTED
HER MOTHER IN THE
FRONT SEAT.
“WAKE UP, MUM!” SHE
SCREAMED. “PLEASE
WAKE UP!”

be practical for a child with limited vocabulary and geographical sense.

Lexi absorbed every instruction. This became apparent months later, when a smoke alarm went off during dinner prep. Before Angela could reset it, Lexi was running to the driveway. She never looked back.

THE FIRST THOUGHT that crossed Lexi's mind: *who turned off the power?* Seconds ago, it was a sunny day. Now it was dark, her neck hurt, the car horn was blaring and Peter was wailing. Lexi reached in his direction but hit a force field – her tent had flopped forward and popped open. The girl fished around the thin canvas and felt her baby brother's hand.

Lexi stretched for the door handle, but it was out of reach, hiding under

a big white pillow – one of the side airbags that now obscured all the windows. She pushed on the pins of her five-point harness, something Mummy and Daddy always did for her. Once they were unclipped, Lexi managed to wriggle out of the straps to exit the car, but when she pulled the handle, the door was stuck. Turning on her side, Lexi kicked at the door until it flopped open and the car filled with sunlight.

That's when Lexi spotted her mother in the front seat, sleeping on an even bigger pillow. “Wake up, Mum!” she screamed. “Please wake up!” Angela didn't respond.

Though it hurt to turn her head, Lexi looked over the side of the SUV and stared down a steep hill – it was just like the indoor rock-climbing gym she liked to visit, but with boulders the size of beanbag chairs, trees and no ropes. The only thing keeping her family from rolling down the incline was the large evergreen with which the vehicle had collided.

That would be the only time Lexi looked down, or back.

Her flip-flops had flown off in the accident, but Lexi felt no pain as she crawled over glass, rocks, branches and pine needles and up the embankment to the highway her mother had driven off. It was just as she'd practised.

LONI AND JEREMIAH JIRIK were about halfway through their journey when they pulled over for a roadside picnic. They weren't in any rush,

having decided to take the scenic route through Jasper National Park. When their bellies were full and their bodies were rested, the couple, their three children, aged seven to 18, and their two dogs climbed back into the silver minivan for the final stretch.

No sooner had Jeremiah steered onto the highway when Loni yelled "Stop!" She pointed some 15 metres ahead, to a tiny blonde child in shorts and a tank top climbing out of the ditch. Jumping up and down and waving her arms at traffic, the bare-foot girl seemed to have materialised out of nowhere. Jeremiah flicked on his hazard lights and pulled over.

"Help!" Lexi cried out as she ran toward them. "My mum needs help!"

Jeremiah scanned the tree-lined road. There was no-one around. "Where's your mama?" he asked Lexi. The child pointed into the ditch, to a crushed SUV. Without hesitating, he tore down the incline in his sandals.

Lexi tried to follow, but Loni convinced her to stay back. The girl's neck was red and bruised, and she complained that she couldn't move it. The woman summoned Isaak, her oldest child, to assist, but told her daughters KayDea and Analiseah to stay behind – she didn't want them witnessing a potential tragedy.

ANGELA SHYMANSKI WAS regaining consciousness when Jeremiah came hurtling down the hill. She looked over at the stranger, her face scraped

and swollen. "I'm so stupid," she told him. "I should've pulled over sooner." He could barely hear her words over the blaring of the car horn; the sound of the baby crying didn't even register until Angela mentioned Peter.

The seat the infant was attached to had become unhinged and had flipped forward, leaving Peter upside-down in his harness, with little room between the back of the steel-framed seat and the floor. Jeremiah unlatched the half-naked baby, wrapped him in his blanket and climbed up to Loni, grabbing at the evergreen's branches with his free hand.

His wife had been trying to phone for help but couldn't get clear reception. She gave up and started flagging down cars; five zipped past before one finally pulled over.

The driver, Lise Lord, was en route to Calgary with her business partner, Rick Nowicki, for a meeting. Long before Nowicki had turned to financial coaching, he had been a firefighter and emergency medical technician. He knew that whoever was still inside that SUV had to be stabilised.

Nowicki was preparing to make his way into the ditch when Jeremiah reappeared with something wrapped in pink – a baby girl, he said to Loni, passing her the child before returning to Angela with the former firefighter.

"That's my brother!" corrected Lexi, who, following a once-over from Nowicki, was lying on Isaak's sweater while the teen held an icy bottle

of water to her neck. Loni rocked the baby in her arms. About twice a minute, Peter would stop wailing, stare into the sky with a frozen expression, then shriek again. Loni, a special education teacher for 16 years, had seen this happen with her students and recognised it as seizures.

Down the embankment, Angela was now sitting sideways, trying to open the driver's side door. She kept referring to herself as a bad mother. "Let's not talk like that," said Nowicki. "This could happen to anyone." Anxious to comfort her, he opened the door, pushed aside the airbag and showed Angela her children. There, at the edge of the road, was Peter in Loni's arms and Lexi safely in the care of Isaak and Lise.

Once Angela had calmed down somewhat, Nowicki began going over the injury-assessment checklist. The seat belt had bruised her chest; more alarmingly, the woman was complaining of severe pain in her lower back. "Can you move your hands? Can you squeeze your fingers? Wiggle your toes," said Nowicki. Everything seemed to be working, but he still wouldn't allow her to leave without a stretcher.

Instead, he asked Angela for her husband's phone number – he would give it to the first responders Loni had called using a satellite radio from a passing forestry worker. While he wrote the digits on the dusty, cracked windshield with his finger, Jeremiah, worried the smoking vehicle would catch fire, was fishing under the bumper for



Lexi Shymanski being airlifted from Jasper

the battery cords. He wrapped his hand around the hot wires and tore at them until the horn finally cut out. The three of them then waited quietly for 20 minutes, with only the sound of birds chirping, until ambulance sirens broke the silence. The paramedics needed ropes to get up and down the embankment Lexi had climbed alone in her bare feet.

TRAVIS SHYMANSKI HAD just finished lunch at his desk in Prince George when Angela called, mumbling something about an accident and about the kids being OK. In less than an hour, the 29 year old was on a plane to Edmonton's University of Alberta Hospital, where his wife had been flown by helicopter. After going into shock at Seton General Hospital in Jasper, Angela had been resuscitated by doctors. She was now conscious, but she'd suffered a dozen injuries to her head, lungs, liver and back. Twenty-four hours after the accident, the situation looked slightly better for Angela. She had

permanent nerve damage in her left leg, seemed to be suffering some amnesia and was told she'd likely never again do rigorous exercise – but she might be able to walk. Peter had intracranial swelling and bleeding, but after a few days of worry, it was determined he would be fine.

Lexi, who refused to leave her father's side, had little more than a few scratches and bumps on her hands and feet. However, Travis was worried about psychological strain and didn't want his daughter spending more time in the trauma ward than necessary, so he sent her away with his sister, then left to pick up lunch for Angela and himself.

His phone rang as he crossed the street. "Is this Travis?" asked a gravelly voiced man. It was Rick Nowicki, who had memorised the number Angela had called out to him.

Nowicki, in the city for an appointment, was calling to see how the family was doing – and to ask if he could bring flowers for Angela and a teddy bear for the child who had saved her mother and baby brother.

Lexi's role in her family's survival was news to Travis. His sister and Angela had told him what they'd heard from Lexi – that his daughter had escaped from the car and got help



The Shymanski family at home, shortly after the accident

– but he didn't know the details of her courage. "She's a remarkable little girl," Nowicki told him.

IN NOVEMBER 2015 – while Angela, who could move with a walker, was awaiting disc-replacement surgery in Germany – the Royal Canadian Humane Association awarded Lexi a Bronze Medal for Bravery.

At the ceremony, a reporter asked Lexi about her plans for the medal. She replied that she wanted to take it to school for show and tell. However, once she arrived home, Lexi changed her mind. She decided to bring Peter to show and tell instead. **R**

SOONER OR LATER

My present self wants me to do my work later, but my future self wants me to do it right now. **PARADOXWATERMELON**

Quotable Quotes



Make-up can only make you look pretty on the outside, but it doesn't help if you're ugly on the inside. Unless you eat the make-up.

Attributed to **AUDREY HEPBURN**



I think I've discovered the secret of life – you just hang around until you get used to it.

Peanuts creator **CHARLES M. SCHULZ**

THEY SAY MARRIAGES ARE MADE IN HEAVEN. BUT SO ARE THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.

CLINT EASTWOOD, filmmaker



People who think they know everything are a great annoyance to those of us who do.

ISAAC ASIMOV, science fiction writer

If everything was perfect, you would never learn and you would never grow.

BEYONCÉ, singer and songwriter

I have noticed that even people who claim everything is pre-determined and that we can do nothing to change it look before they cross the road.

STEPHEN HAWKING, physicist

Do you open your hearts to the memories that your grandparents pass on? Grandparents are like the wisdom of the family, they are the wisdom of a people.

POPE FRANCIS, October 26, 2013 speech, St. Peter's Square



All in a Day's Work

HUMOUR ON THE JOB

GO TO THE HEAD OF THE CLASS

Teachers ask a lot of questions. Here are some of the answers they've been given in return.

Q: Who was Joan of Arc?

A: She was Noah's wife.

JENNIFER EVANS PFOHL

Q: Use 'etiquette' in a sentence.

A: I don't know the meaning of etiquette.

PREETHA RENGASWAMY

Q: Which US state is a peninsula?

A: Peninsylvania.

ROBERTA EDGAR

Q: What percentage of the European population died following the outbreak of the plague?

A: One hundred per cent, eventually.

KIM MCCOLLUM



PHONE NUMBER OF THE BEAST

I was searching for the phone extension of a new employee who already had the reputation of being unpleasant. Not having any success, I asked my colleagues: "Does anybody know Julie's extension?" A voice from the next cubicle over mumbled, "Try 666."

SUBMITTED BY MICHAEL BEST

I HATE ... WHATEVER DAY THIS IS

Our new employee did not have a great start. On his very first day, he was two-and-a-half hours late. Luckily for him, he called in to explain.

"I know this sounds bad," he began, "but I didn't realise today was Monday."

SUBMITTED BY MICHELE CHOATE

TO HER CREDIT

Filling out a credit card application, my friend came upon this question: "What is your source of income?" She wrote: "ATM."

SUBMITTED BY MICHAEL MCRAE

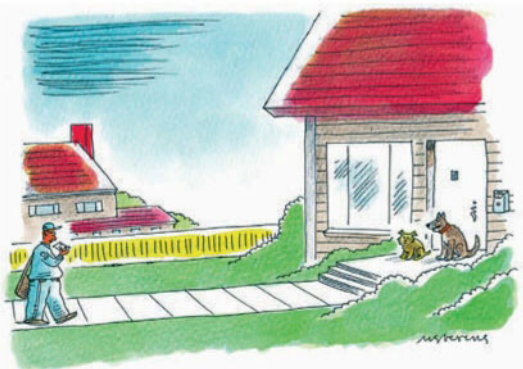


IN THE LINE OF FIRE

The line at our local post office was out the door, and, seeing that only one postal worker was on duty, the customers were getting testy. To help hurry things along, a customer called out, "How can I help you go faster?"

The postal worker yelled back, "Go home!"

SUBMITTED BY SCARLETT BUZEK



"Remember, I'll do all the barking."

SLEEPY JUSTICE

When I served jury duty recently, we were issued pads and pens with which to take notes.

On the second day, I noticed that the man next to me had filled a couple of pages. He showed me what he'd written: "Please don't fall asleep! Please don't fall asleep! Please don't fall asleep..."

SUBMITTED BY YEFIM M. BROOD



HARD AND FAST

I used to work in a doctor's office. Last year I was speaking to a patient about an upcoming medical procedure and advised him to fast for 12 hours leading up to the appointment. He looked at me quite shocked and said, "All at once?"

SUBMITTED BY RUTH LEE

A FAX?

You're sending me something via fax? What is it, an important document from 1993?

Source: meetingboy.com

WRONG SEAL

No-one has ever been more impressed to learn that I'm a US Navy SEAL than my grandson's kindergarten class. On career day, I told them stories of my exploits in the military. After I finished, hands shot up all over the classroom. One little girl enquired, "Can you balance a ball on the end of your nose?"

Source: gcfl.net



Serendipity isn't a game of chance.

Experts have identified four habits that can set us all up for good fortune


Ways to Get Lucky

BY KATE ROCKWOOD
FROM HEALTH.COM

WHEN ANNA Z. moved to Chicago, she joined a group for Arabic speakers. "I love trying new things," she explains. "I saw this group and thought, *Why not?*" As luck would have it, the organizer grew up in Fez, Morocco, where Anna had lived when she was learning the language. Today they're married with a little boy.

Some people might say that kismet led Anna to her future husband. But Anna's openness





to life's quirky possibilities put her in the right place at the right time. Luck isn't some mysterious force. "To a very large extent, we are responsible for much of the good fortune that we encounter," says Richard Wiseman, a professor of psychology and the author of *The Luck Factor*. Here are some of the traits that separate fortunate folks from the self-proclaimed unlucky.

1 EXPECT GOOD THINGS

When people feel lucky, it tilts the scales of serendipity in their favour. "Their expectations become self-fulfilling prophecies," says Wiseman. Researchers at New York University discovered that students who believed that they would get a date were significantly more likely to win over the object of their desire.

The simple explanation: self-assurance. If you believe that you'll do well, you'll be more motivated. Feeling lucky might even help you win a prize at a charity dinner: the more optimistic you are about your chances, the more raffle tickets you'll probably buy. Not an optimist by nature? Lucky charms can work by boosting confidence. In a 2010 German study, superstitious subjects played a memory game; people who used talismans scored higher than those who didn't.

2 COURT CHANCE

Lucky people cultivate lots of friends and acquaintances. In one study, Wiseman showed participants a list of last names and asked them to indicate if they were on a first-name basis with at least one person with each surname. Of subjects who considered themselves lucky, nearly 50 per cent ticked eight names or more. Only 25 per cent of unlucky people could. "Lucky people talk to lots of people, attract people to them, and keep in touch," Wiseman says. "These habits result in a 'network of luck,' creating potential for fortuitous connections."

Colleen Seifert, a cognitive scientist at the University of Michigan, advises getting out of an everyday rut: attend a conference or sign up for scuba lessons. "Throwing a little chaos into your life opens you up to a chance encounter," she says. That person could end up being your soul mate, business partner – or someone you chat with for five minutes and never see again. The goal is to stay open to possibilities.

3 LOOK FOR SILVER LININGS

Finding value in bad luck can help your brain process situations differently, according to Tania Luna, coauthor of *Surprise: Embrace the Unpredictable and Engineer the Unexpected*. Luna showed kids emotionally intense images – such as a

boy crying – while measuring their brain activity. Then she showed them again with a reassuring explanation, like “This boy has just been reunited with his mum.” Their brains showed a dramatic drop in activity in the amygdala, which is thought to process fear.

Lucky people are similarly able to transform a stumbling block into a positive event, which helps them keep taking chances. Face your next setback with these questions: What have I learned? What do I want now? How can I get it?

4

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

Elizabeth B. will never forget her luckiest moment: she was driving to New York when something told her to buy a lotto ticket. After she pulled over, a terrible accident occurred: “A pick-up truck crossed into my lane and crashed into a guardrail. If I hadn’t stopped, my car would have been totalled.”

When
people feel
lucky, it tilts
the scales of
serendipity in
their favour

Maybe Elizabeth’s pit stop was a fluke. Or maybe her intuition had warned her to avoid an erratic driver. She can’t be sure. But we process far more visual information and sensory details than we realise, which can lead to instincts we can’t explain.

In one UK study, subjects played a game with cards they had never played before while their heart rates were monitored. The game was designed so that there was no obvious strategy to follow and instead players had to follow their hunches. Researchers found the winners were those who listened to their heart rate, which would increase before they made a certain choice. This subtle bodily change was what people understood to be intuition.

So trust your instincts. Lucky people are more apt to do things to tune in to their inner voice, such as meditating and taking walks. **R**

HEALTH.COM (MAY 13, 2015). © 2015 BY HEALTH MEDIA VENTURES, INC.



WORD PLAY

Guess the popular sandwich we’re thinking of based on the following play on words.

CLUE Heavily interrogated gouda

Answer Grilled cheese

That's Outrageous!

ALL FIRED UP

RING OF FIRE

When first responders rushed to an address in Des Moines, Iowa, in the autumn of 2006, they were expecting a blaze; instead, they found a bonobo. The address was that of the Great Ape Trust of Iowa, a research centre where scientists study primate behaviour. It turned out, a 20-year-old female bonobo named Panbanisha had pulled the alarm. Researchers scolded her with a stern message: quit monkeying around.

Panbanisha died in 2012, but the centre (now the Ape Cognition and Conservation Initiative) isn't taking chances: protective cases cover all fire alarms within reach of hairy fingers.

GRILL OR BE GRILLED

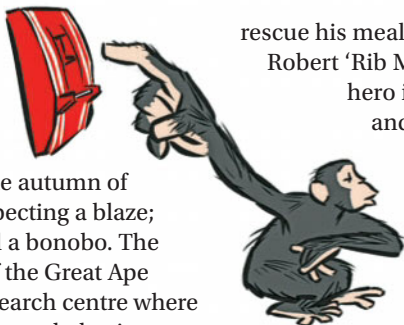
California resident Robert Wright leaves no man – or meat – behind. One evening, while he was barbecuing a late-night snack, Wright noticed flames shooting out the window of his neighbour's apartment. He ran into his building, which was filled with smoke, made sure his family got out safely, and then charged back in to

rescue his meal. The incident made Robert 'Rib Man' Wright a local hero in his town of Fresno, and a week later he was honoured by being asked to throw out the first pitch in one of Fresno's minor-league baseball games – while clutching a rack of tasty ribs in the other hand.

AN EXPLOSIVE IDEA

Talk about adding fuel to the fire. In October 2015, a man burning garbage in a field near Liberty, Missouri, found his blaze getting out of hand. He decided to remedy the situation by driving over the flames with his van. But the man had forgotten a crucial detail: there was firearm ammunition stored in his vehicle.


Black smoke billowing from the van caught the attention of a sheriff's deputy on a routine traffic stop nearby. The police officer arrived on the scene to the sound of rapid gunfire, but luckily, no-one was harmed – the van's distraught owner was watching the conflagration from a safe distance.



A man wearing a white shirt, shorts, and a cap is riding a bicycle on a wide, flat gravel path. The path is flanked by lush green trees on the left and rows of grapevines on the right. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The scene is bathed in sunlight, creating strong shadows on the path.

TRAVEL

*A flat path, gentle
terrain and sunshine –
Glen Allen among
the rows of vines
in Marlborough*



Cycling through the vines
to the tasting rooms of New
Zealand's premier wine region

Rolling Along on the Wine Trail

BY JANIE ALLEN

BY MID-MORNING light breezes have swept away the overcast dawn, leaving only wispy clouds. It's February – high summer in New Zealand – and the scent of flowering lavender is in the air. My husband and I are in the Marlborough wine region, located at the top of the South Island, and we're about to start two days of cycling through the vineyards.

"Ready?" says Jo Hill, handing us a map to nearby cellar doors. About 40 of Marlborough's 140 or so wineries are open to the public – many are within easy cycling range – but Jo suggests we visit at most five a day. "By the fifth

winery, your tastebuds are shot," she explains.

Jo and her husband, Steve, own Wine Tours By Bike in Renwick. The village is in the broad Wairau Valley, home to many family-owned and some corporate wineries, such as Cloudy Bay.

Jo's map lays out a 20-kilometre circuit for the first day. I hope I'm up to it – it's been a while since I spent that much time on a bicycle. Our route, she says now, avoids most high-ways and hills, but adds as we leave, "There's just one wee hill."

Glen and I push off to a wobbly start on the crunchy gravel driveway and turn our sturdy three-speed bikes onto a quiet country road, already among grape vines.

TODAY, THE MARLBOROUGH wine region, made up of the Wairau Valley, Southern Valleys and Awatere subregions, is known around the world for its sauvignon blanc – 'savvy', as the locals call it. But it wasn't always so. This was farming country in 1973, when Frank Yukich of Montana Winery in Auckland bought land south of Renwick and planted vines. Among the grape varieties he tested was sauvignon blanc. Marlborough's sunny days and cool nights created a surprisingly pungent wine, tangy and aromatic, soon to fulfil Yukich's prediction "Wines from here will become world famous."

In 1979, the year Yukich released his

first sauvignon blanc vintage, a young Irishman working in the liquor business in Christchurch, Ernie Hunter, also planted sauvignon blanc in the region. In 1986 he entered his wine in *The Sunday Times* Vintage Festival in London, England – and won both the gold medal and the popular vote. It stunned the wine world.

"New Zealand sauvignon blanc was so different it surprised everyone," says Jane Hunter, an internationally respected vintner who has managed Hunter's winery since her husband's death at age 38 in 1987. "It was our oak-aged sauvignon blanc," she adds. "Back then we didn't do the work we do now in the vineyards, and the sauvignon blanc was really grassy – quite greenish and very overpowering." Aging it in oak barrels created a more mellow and elegant wine, she explained. Hunter's Wines won the competition three years in a row.

The trophies were game changing for New Zealand wines. "There had been nothing new in the world of wine for centuries," says Tessa Nicholson, a reputed New Zealand wine writer and editor. "Now it's a world-wide phenomenon. It has gone from nothing to more than 23,000 hectares and NZ\$1.2 billion in wine exports."

"IS THIS THE WEE HILL Jo warned us about?" I wonder aloud, as a half-hour later I am pedalling hard to get up the short but steep hill to Seresin Estate.



The Garden Café at Hunter's winery is surrounded by two hectares of native plants

But it's worth it. At the top is a horse-drawn wagon, and Melissa Rae, originally from Lapland, Finland, but who has worked at Seresin for ten years, invites us on board. She takes us to a lookout over the sunny valley. Six or so kilometres to the north, the Richmond Range is banked with rainclouds. These mountains and others to the south moderate Marlborough's weather, making it the sunniest region in New Zealand – the Maori named it 'the place with the hole in the clouds'.

Melissa tells us Seresin's vineyards are among a handful in Marlborough to be certified biodynamic. It is more restrictive than organic, she explains. "If we take anything from the land we put it back, that's the principle." To qualify, vineyards must be farmed in a way that promotes soil health. Everything – from mulch and fertiliser to sprays – is made on the estate.

At the small cellar door, manager Fran Broad has lined up four wines

on the antique wood counter for us to taste. She pours the sauvignon blanc, which slides over our palates with a tangy crispness and touch of sweetness – delicious. The chardonnay, riesling and pinot noir – the latter a Marlborough up-and-comer – are also exceptional. Olive oil and honey are made on the estate, too. Fran opens a bottle of olive oil infused with lemon for us to sniff.

We are at the bottom of the hill before Glen realises that he didn't pay for the bottle of oil he came away with. He turns his bike back up the steep slope. He returns laughing. Fran gave him the oil. "She says I earned it!"

Fifteen minutes later we veer onto a picturesque lane and cross a stream edged with old willow trees to arrive at Bladen Wines' cellar door. Owners Dave and Christine Macdonald arrived in Marlborough in 1989, part of a wave of small wineries that started up after Ernie Hunter's success.



The Wairau Valley in autumn, set against the Wither Hills to the south

Christine, a cheerful brunette in her 50s, poured us an off-dry gewürztraminer, sweeter than the savvies and creamy on the palate. “We’re quite chuffed with this gewürz,” Christine says with a smile, adding that *Cuisine*, one of New Zealand’s top food magazines, rated it second among 33 New Zealand gewürztraminer wines.

She and Dave were in their 20s, living in Wellington and working in jobs a world away from wine when they “got caught up in the fire that was happening here,” she says.

“We bought this bit of land – pure paddock – off a farmer. It was stony and dry,” Christine continues. They commuted from Wellington to Marlborough on weekends for three years, planting pinot gris, semillon and gewürztraminer grapes. “The varieties we liked to drink,” she says. They later added riesling and sauvignon blanc.

They banded together in a trading

company with other small wineries and went to international fairs to promote Marlborough wines. “That was the best thing that happened for all of us,” she added. “This industry has been amazing, watching it grow the way it has,” she says.

So far everyone we’d met had proven Steve Hill right when he had told us, “The beauty of this region is everyone’s small enough that they’re interested in meeting people and passionate about what they do!”

BY THE TIME we leave Bladen, it is midday, and we head north to Rapaura Road, known as the ‘Golden Mile’ for the dozen-plus wineries on it. We work up an appetite cycling the two or so kilometres to our next stop, Wairau River Wines, which has a restaurant.

Passing through the winery’s modern cellar door, we enter a busy dining room with a contemporary casual vibe

that looks more Manhattan than rural New Zealand. We're shown to a table on a covered patio overlooking a lush, manicured lawn.

We order the house speciality, a double-baked blue-cheese soufflé, with rocket, pear and walnut salad, and, of course, a glass of pinot gris. The soufflé was light and luscious and the wine a perfect pairing. We linger over a second glass.

The winery's owners, Phil and Chris Rose, farmed lucerne and alfalfa on the family farm here in the 1970s, says marketing executive Gemma Lyons. It took a court battle for the Roses to get permission from the district council to plant grapes. Farmers objected to the change in use of the land, the forestry industry feared they wouldn't be able to use sprays if grapes were growing nearby, and church groups objected to alcohol.

Would the district council have relented sooner, we wonder, had they known that land planted with vines here would be valued today at NZ\$250,000 a hectare?

We visited two more wineries that afternoon, ending the day at Te Whare Ra (Maori for 'house in the sun'). Owner Anna Flowerday, 42, greeted us at the small cellar door.

Some of the riesling, chardonnay and gewürztraminer vines planted on the 14-hectare wine estate go back to 1979, she says. "Marlborough makes great sauvignon, but it equally makes great aromatic whites of other kinds." Anna and Jason planted sauvignon blanc, pinots and syrah. "I'm quite proud of this pinot," she says, pouring tastings of the organic red.

Te Whare Ra was named 'Winery of the Year' for 2014 by Raymond Chan Wine Reviews. A New Zealander with more than two decades of wine judging, Chan called Te Whare Ra the "modern and young face of wine-growing in New Zealand," and cited its wines and respect for the environment.

"That's what gets me out of bed in the morning," says Anna. "I want to be the best. If people have only got one day and can only see five wineries, I want to be on that list." **R**



STAKING A CLAIM ON MARS

In 1997, three men from Yemen tried to sue NASA for trespassing on Mars. They claimed that they had inherited the planet from their ancestors three thousand years earlier. They didn't win their case because there is an international treaty stating that everything in the solar system, except Earth itself, is the property of everyone

on Earth. **MATTHEW SANTORO** IN *MIND=BLOWN* (2016)

BONUS READ

Balbir Singh Sr. has won three Olympic gold medals and holds an Olympic Games record.
So why don't we know his name?

THE BEST HOCKEY PLAYER IN THE WORLD IS INDIAN

BY PATRICK BLENNERHASSETT FROM *A FORGOTTEN LEGEND*

ILLUSTRATION BY SONIA ROY





I MAGINE YOU'RE ONE OF THE MOST DECORATED ATHLETES in India, a country of more than a billion people. In 1948, you were largely responsible for your homeland's first Olympic gold medal as an independent nation, yet your contributions have been all but erased. You imagine your statistics, awards and accolades spoke for themselves, but no-one was speaking for you.

FIELD HOCKEY WAS INDIA'S go-to sport for much of its existence, predating the country's independence in 1947.

After India became an independent nation, birthing Pakistan in the process and essentially quashing the British Raj team, competition grew fierce, yet Indian players nevertheless dominated. Balbir Singh Sr. was the dagger in the heart of Great Britain at the 1948 Summer Olympics in London, leading his homeland to its first medal as a sovereign nation a year after Partition.

Today, Singh Sr. is a soft-spoken 92-year-old Indian hockey centre forward with three Olympic gold medals, a Guinness World Record and an Olympic Games Record to his name. He is a devout Sikh from a predominantly Hindu country. He moved to Canada in the early 1980s and now splits his time between Burnaby, British Columbia, and Chandigarh, India. And he has been largely forgotten.

Instead, Dhyan Chand – a Hindu – is getting all the press. Although he died 37 years ago, his legacy appears to be growing. There's Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in New

Delhi, and multiple statues have been erected in his name.

One of the theories about the snub that's been gaining momentum is that the Hindu powers-that-be didn't want a Sikh player's accomplishments to outshine those of their star, Chand, who had also won three Olympic gold medals.

Not one stadium has been named after the Sikh athlete, nor a statue erected in his honour; the memorabilia he'd donated to Sports Authority of India have gone missing.

His story has all the makings of a Bollywood film, and yet he's fallen into obscurity.

METACARPAL BONE cracks like an eggshell. Proximal phalanx snaps like a twig. The resulting pain sensation sends shock waves to the brain, forcing a momentary blackout. The man falls to his knees on the field but regains his footing quickly. The sensory explosion pushes a tiger growl out of his mouth. The index finger on his right hand is broken.

Without this digit – which helps him turn his stick over on the ball to go

backhand – he's like a pilot who's lost control. He stops momentarily to inspect the damage. The finger has already doubled in size and turned shades of beetroot, deep blue and purple.

The play circles back to him. He receives a pass, but the pain overwhelms him as soon as he grips his stick. A defender swipes the ball from him, astonished that he's just pickpocketed the greatest player in the world.

The play drifts away like a receding tide. At 32 years old, number 13 Balbir

This moment would define the 1956 Melbourne Olympics for him.

IF YOU ASK SINGH SR. about when he was born, he will answer succinctly: "It was a cold day."

It was October 10 in 1924, at around sunset. A midwife aided Singh Sr.'s mother, Karam Kaur. His father, Dalip Singh Dosanjh, was an outspoken critic of British rule and a freedom fighter. He was in and out of jail, sentenced to hard labour in prison more than once.



LIKE A STEAM HAMMER RAMMING INTO HIS FINGERNAIL, THE BALL HAD CRIPPLED HIS ENTIRE HAND

Singh Sr. experiences an emotion he's never felt on the pitch: helplessness.

He'd been standing so close to the ball; he'd been so confident in his own body and reaction time, his ability to force a turnover. But then, like a steam hammer ramming into his fingernail, the ball had crippled his entire hand.

The Afghani centre back had fired such a low drive it was clear he was trying to injure the Indian star. Mission accomplished. Holding a stick was like picking up a hot metal rod.

Although he would tell no-one until the match was over, Singh Sr. knew what the X-rays would say: multiple fractures.

Temperatures fell close to freezing during Singh Sr.'s birth, which is rare for most of India but not unheard of in the small farming village of Haripur Khalsa, in what is now part of India's Punjab state. At that time, Haripur Khalsa had a population of a few hundred, a melting pot of Sikhs (such as Singh Sr.'s parents), Muslims and Hindus, all living together in relative harmony.

Singh Sr. couldn't sit still, even for a moment. One day, the toddler – against his mother's wishes – scaled his family's mud hut, pulling himself along using the loose straw. He made it to the top, but with his feet now slathered in

slippery clay he tumbled to the ground. He hit the dirt with a thud.

When the boy was a few years old, his father moved the family to Moga, a city located 70 kilometres southwest of Haripur Khalsa. In Moga, the farm boy would get an education – and a shot at a more prosperous life.

But the move did little to temper Singh Sr.'s mischievous nature. He'd climb high into fruit trees and perch on the tallest branch. He'd scale the wooden fences at school, get up on the roof and dart across the concrete as students stared in amazement. His body needed to be in motion.

Singh Sr.'s house was across from the school. From the front, he could see the hockey pitches behind the classrooms. Every day, in a rare show of stillness, he'd sit listening to sticks crackle like kindling, the tough leather ball whipping hard across the field, players yelling as they galloped after it like a herd of unruly animals.

His mother was stunned. Could this be her uncontrollable son, perched cross-legged like he was meditating? But her child wasn't seeking divine intervention. He'd found a different deity to follow.

Shortly after, on his fifth birthday, the boy was gifted the most important present of his young life. Once again, the patriarch of his family had found a way to steer his child in the right direction.

"My father bought me my first stick," says Singh Sr. "And the rest is history."

He darted from his house straight onto the pitch, his little legs barely able to keep up with his excitement. Immediately, he joined a game, running back and forth until he felt as if his lungs were about to burst. That night, he came home exhausted.

When he awoke the next day, his rambunctious soul had a purpose, and one purpose only: field hockey.

IN 1956, FOR THE FIRST TIME, the Olympic Games were being held outside of Europe and North America, in the southern hemisphere, in Melbourne. Singh Sr. had been named team captain, a huge honour, and asked to carry the flag in the opening ceremony. But none of that mattered if his injury would cost the gold medal.

India demolished Afghanistan 14–0 to win the first game of their group stage. Singh Sr. had notched five goals before his finger snapped.

That night, a doctor held an X-ray up to the light and showed Singh Sr. where the bones had broken, the seismic crack in his plans. Singh Sr. knew he'd been foolish; the team had never been under any pressure, and his bravado was needless.

All the kerfuffle had finally got to him. All the Indians telling him he was a god, a hero, unstoppable. Kids asking if he could score goals while juggling three balls.

The athlete sombrely made his way back to the Olympic Village, where an emergency meeting was being held.

The Indian officials who'd gathered quickly decided their star wouldn't play in the remaining two group matches against the US and Singapore. This would allow Singh Sr. a full week to rest his hand before the play-offs started against Germany.

The members of Team India were forbidden to speak about Singh Sr.'s injury; the official line was that he was being saved for the semifinals and finals. Their captain wrapped his finger in a cloth bandage and mostly kept his hand in his pocket.

With Singh Sr. out of the lineup, the team feared India's aura of invincibility would crack. On a 1954 tour to Malaya, Singh Sr. had scored 83 of his team's 121 goals in 16 matches. If he was out of the picture, opponents could attack fully, rather than give up two defenders to man-mark. It would be like the New York Yankees at the World Series without Babe Ruth.

ALL TOO SOON, the team headed to the Melbourne Sports and Entertainment Precinct for the semifinal game against Germany. After winning gold in London in 1948 and Helsinki in 1952, India was going to have to scrape its way to a third win as an independent nation.

Quickly, Singh Sr. was trailed by two defenders from the well-trained German squad. They knew who he was



At the age of 16, Singh Sr. snagged the title of lead goal scorer at his first tournament

and wanted to make sure he had zero time with the ball. What they didn't know was that he was in no condition to score. The Indian captain was the perfect decoy. A fit man, he dragged the two players all over the pitch. The game became a tough, ugly affair.

By halftime, the teams were tied 0-0. Singh Sr. quietly headed to the locker room. Shame dripped off him like sweat. He could do nothing more than rope in defenders; passing was almost out of the question.

His long-time friend Udhham Singh approached. As a centre half, Udhham was responsible for getting the ball



Singh Sr. (middle row, centre) with the rest of Team India, the gold-medal winners at the London Olympics in 1948

to Singh Sr. in scoring position. Now he was lost. He sat down beside his despondent brother-in-arms.

"I will score," said Udham. "Just get me the ball and I will do it."

Udham came out in the second half with fire in his belly. He took the ball at centre, and rather than pass, as he usually did, he ducked past two German players. Suddenly the team's formation was out of whack; the centre half was encroaching unguarded on the defence. But two of the fullbacks were reluctant to leave Singh Sr.'s side.

Heading straight for the goal, Udham darted between the defenders' line. Singh Sr. remained by his side, four players tearing towards the German goalkeeper. Udham took one more tap right outside the crease but pushed the ball a little too far to regain control. Singh Sr.

and Udham both darted forward, with defenders on their heels and the German goalkeeper racing out to cut off the angles.

Right before the pile-up, Singh Sr. stretched out his arm, extending his stick ahead of the pack of players. Although he couldn't shoot, he managed to tap the ball enough to change its direction, throwing the keeper out of line. Everyone then collided in a glorious mess, the ball dribbling into the goal.

IN THE OLYMPIC VILLAGE that night, Singh Sr. tried to remain stoic despite a right hand that wouldn't do as it was told. He took a sleeping tablet, but it did no good. He tossed and turned for hours.

His thoughts moved to his family back home in Ferozepur. His wife,

Sushil, their daughter, Sushbir, and infant son, Kanwalbir, entered his mind. He remembered taking them to the Hamandir Sahib, the Golden Temple of Amritsar, where they prayed to give thanks for his being named captain.

Since 1928, India or the British Raj had won gold in Olympic field hockey five times in a row. A sixth was in reach, but doubt plagued Singh Sr. How would his country receive the team if they lost? He needed to find the strength to overcome this mental hurdle. He needed God by his side.

Gandhi starving himself to stop people who'd shared villages for centuries from killing one another. Hindus and Sikhs forced to head east, and Muslims forced to the west. Singh Sr. remembered the lifeless bodies hanged in trees, the smell of cooked flesh and kerosene. The horror caused in the name of religion.

This was about more than just a hockey game.

GAME DAY. INDIA'S STAR awoke from another terrible sleep. He looked down at his swollen finger – he could barely make a fist.



INDIA OR THE BRITISH RAJ HAD WON GOLD IN OLYMPIC FIELD HOCKEY FIVE TIMES IN A ROW. A SIXTH WAS IN REACH

COMPOUNDING THE STRESS was India's opponent in the gold medal match: Pakistan. The political ramifications of the final, to be played on December 6, were heavy. Images of Partition – the 1947 division of the Indian subcontinent, after the British departed, into Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan – hung over the event. Each player struggled to shake the terrors they had endured: Muslims watching the slaughter of friends and family by Hindus, and vice versa; Sikhs witnessing unspeakable atrocities in the name of freedom;

Suddenly he noticed a letter tucked into his suitcase. It was from his father. Written in Urdu, it was typical of his dad's letters, all business, no nonsense:

"Dear Balbir,

Sat Siri Akal. [God is the only truth.] By now you have fulfilled every desire of yours in hockey. The honour that you have earned in this field is also perhaps your last. I believe you are the only player selected to captain India twice in succession in international matches. Your game has been acclaimed all over the world.

Another ambition of yours, to become deputy superintendent of police, has also been fulfilled ... I congratulate your wife, your dear children, your mother-in-law, maternal uncles and your loving mother on this achievement.

As captain of the team, you will have to be extremely cautious.

1. You must never be arrogant.

Arrogance is a disease. Yes, everybody has the right to a certain amount of pride, but not arrogance.

2. It is likely that some members of the team are jealous of you, but you must treat them with kindness.

3. On account of your brilliance, teams of various countries will be itching to pull you down. You will have to be very careful and guard against injuries. At the same time, you will have to out-dribble and out-manoeuve [opponents].

4. You will have to be friendly with everybody.

5. You will have to keep the honour of the national flag ... You will have to play not for yourself but for your country. You will have to enhance India's prestige.

6. You must score at the first available opportunity. Hockey is not a game for selfish players. You must never allow a good chance to go a-begging.

7. You must always remain calm and keep your presence of mind. Needless excitement will only spoil your judgment.



The three-time Olympian in March 2016

8. Alertness is the need of the hour.

9. You must always respect your well-wishers and be of help to them.

10. Every player must live in an atmosphere of mutual trust and friendship and play for the country.

We in Moga are praying that India's hockey team wins another Olympic gold medal.

You must go to Australia with an easy mind and perform your duty ... As soon as you reach Melbourne, send us your postal address and also mail your schedule of matches.

Your loving father."

Singh Sr. wished he'd found the letter at the outset of the games. His

father's words felt like a premonition: he had been neither alert nor careful, and had not kept his presence of mind.

SINGH SR. VALIANTLY headed out onto the pitch. He could see Pakistani players who were once his friends. Now these Muslim men were enemies, their own families raped and murdered during the period of national strife. No one was innocent; everyone was to blame.

As soon as the whistle sounded, number 13 was knocked around, his

stick whacked out of his hands, his knees targeted; any part of his body in striking range was punished.

All Singh Sr. could do was run, so he did. From the first moments of the match, he sprinted long looping routes, heading out to the corner, backtracking, filling holes. The rest of the Indian team knew their captain wouldn't be putting the ball in the net, so they moved the ball through the gaping holes he left for them.

Right after the half, when it looked like the two teams were going to come to a nil-nil draw, India took advantage of a penalty corner and moved into the lead. Now all they had to do was play evenly for another 30 minutes.

THE SOUND OF THE final whistle was like an angel calling out. Singh Sr. looked up at the sky and wept. He had amassed 22 goals in the Olympics. He had won three gold medals for his country.

As he led his team out to the victory platform, the pride he'd lost during these games returned. Regardless of his selfish play against Afghanistan, his team was golden and all would be forgiven – he hoped. Slowly, his stern demeanour cracked. Stepping up to the middle box, with the captains of Pakistan and Germany at his side, Singh Sr. smiled. **R**

In March 2016, Hockey India presented Singh Sr. with its first-ever lifetime achievement award, the Major Dhyan Chand Lifetime Achievement Award.

Puzzles

See page 122

MAKE A BEE LINE



A TALL ORDER

The moves below could be performed in any order: • Move 6 to the position after 5. • Move 1 to the first position. • Move 2 to the position before 3.

SUDOKU

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

HIDDEN MEANING

- A.** An outside chance
B. Geography lessons

Unbelievable

TRUE TALES TOLD TALL



Accidental Purchases

Nury Vittachi relates what can happen when fingers do the walking



ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO,

I tried to remove a bubble from my smartphone protective screen and accidentally bought a camel. Luckily, I managed to back out of the purchase by switching the phone off and turning around three times for luck, a useful trick I learned from my children.

At the time, a 500-kg live, single-hump

camel cost US\$1540, a sum which I considered intriguingly affordable, although it was the thought of explaining it to my spouse that put me off.

Her: "You said you wouldn't buy any more ridiculous junk."

Me (covering camel's ears): "He can hear you."

So I was sympathetic when reader Alice May Lo told me about a UK man

ILLUSTRATIONS: ISTOCK

who accidentally bought a bus. Dave Little, 27, woke up after a night of partying in Ibiza, Spain, to see on his smartphone that he had the previous night purchased a full-sized tourist coach on eBay for US\$36,000, media reports said. “That beats the silliest thing I ever accidentally bought, which was a banana-only lunchbox that my daughter slipped into my shopping basket,” Alice said.

It doesn’t beat my record. In the 1990s, I accidentally bid at a Hong Kong land auction. For a tense half-minute I was a major property tycoon in the Trump bracket. Luckily, a passing billionaire outbid me, or I would have had something even harder to explain to my wife that evening. Her: “How was your day, darling?” Me: “Nothing special. Except that I bought Kowloon.”

Simple accidents can have dire consequences. This columnist has written about cases in the US, Philippines and Vietnam where people dialled wrong numbers and got into arguments that turned into armed shoot-outs. Who would want ‘Died of a Wrong Number’ on their gravestone?

Better to respond to accidental calls good-naturedly. Reader Angela Sias told me she sang the whole of ‘Happy Birthday’ to a stranger on the phone. After the listener pointed out

her error, she said: “Oops, sorry.” He continued: “No problem. You need all the practice you can get.”

A techy colleague says that you no longer need to complain about annoying accidental calls. You just record them and wreak revenge. Adobe Systems has a new program that encodes voices from small

samples. You can then type whatever words you like and hear them spoken in that voice. If, like me, you have a wonderfully creative (‘desperately evil’) streak, you can use the sound of a person’s voice for literally thousands of

illegal and immoral purposes – I mean, harmless and amusing pranks.

But returning to accidental online purchases, a survey of friends and colleagues showed that they had bought items ranging from a sheep skull to pop-star memorabilia. One had bought huge amounts of spin-off merchandise (including ‘onesie’ outfits) of licensed characters from children’s television shows. “And I don’t have children,” she said.

That was when I started regretting my failure to complete my camel purchase. I saw myself swinging open the door to my spare room. “You think that’s a story? Meet Dromo.”

Nury Vittachi is a Hong Kong-based author. Read his blog at Mrjam.org

“

For a tense half-minute I was a major property tycoon in the Trump bracket

out & about

NEWS

BOOKS

FILMS

DVDS

Paris to Trial Flying River Taxis

As the world's cities get ever more populated, many are looking to exploit their often underused waterways in ingenious ways. Nowhere is this truer than in Paris, where a new form of eco-friendly transport is due to be tested on the River Seine this year.

The brainchild of record-breaking French yachtsman and inventor Alain Thébault, the SeaBubble is a novel form of water taxi that 'flies' above the surface on its four 'marine wings'. "The idea actually came from my daughters," he says. "They told me to invent a zero-emission cab because they were sick of seeing the pollution."

The SeaBubbles are powered by solar energy and have enough room for four passengers and a pilot, although Thébault hopes that they will one day be driverless. **Tim Hulse**




The solar energy-powered vessels can carry five people and reach speeds of up to 30km/h



SILENCE

Drama/History

 Martin Scorsese directs this historical drama – adapted from Shūsaku Endō's 1966 novel – that follows young Jesuit priests Fathers Sebastião Rodrigues (Andrew Garfield) and Francisco Garrpe (Adam Driver) as they travel to 17th-century Japan. Their mentor, Father Cristóvão Ferreira (Liam Neeson), is missing after reportedly renouncing his faith and, as the young men investigate, they find that the Christian population has been driven underground in the face of persecution. The circumstances surrounding Ferreira's disappearance come to light as they face the ultimate test of faith.



ANNIE SLOAN PAINTS EVERYTHING

Coco Books

 As this book indicates, internationally renowned decorative painting expert Annie Sloan literally does paint everything. Here are 40 'step-by-step' projects for your entire home, from walls, floors and furniture for curtains, blinds, pillows and shades'. Leather, rope, wood, ceramics – you name it, Annie applies her paintbrushes, paints and brilliant eye for colour, texture and pattern to dozens of surfaces. Get set to transform parts of your home and items that have seen better days into born-again treasures.

A Teddy a Day

Campbell Remess, 12, has made it his business to ensure sick children in hospitals across Australia receive a teddy bear to help them through their day. Over the past three years, the young boy, who lives in Hobart, Tasmania, has sewn over 800 teddy bears. He helps fund his fuzzy and fluffy creations with cash raised from his Facebook crowd-sourcing page, Project 365 by Campbell, and donations of materials from well-wishers. *Caitlin Quinn*

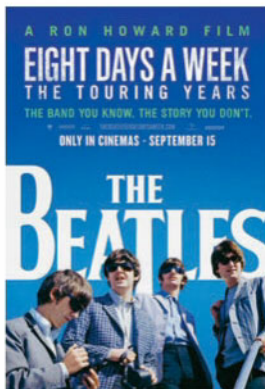


THE BEATLES: EIGHT DAYS A WEEK – THE TOURING YEARS

Documentary/Music

 Directed by Oscar-winning filmmaker Ron Howard, *Eight Days a Week* is a compilation of footage featuring music, interviews and stories of The Beatles' 250 concerts from 1962 to 1966. This is the period when 'Beatlemania' was at its peak and the group first toured Britain, Germany, the US and the rest of the world.

Beyond giving moviegoers the opportunity to see the Fab Four at their musical height, the film captures the spirit of the band at the time – for example, touching on their refusal to play for segregated audiences in the US.




BOLSHOI CONFIDENTIAL

Secrets of the Russian ballet from the rule of the tsars to today

Simon Morrison


HarperCollins




 To witness a Bolshoi Ballet production is to be transported to an enchanted world, where the mesmeric presence and steely technique of the dancers linger in the memory long after curtain fall. Equally captivating is what has happened offstage in and around the Bolshoi Theatre through its 250-year history. A chronicle of the events that have defined the present-day Bolshoi, this book, if it were a thriller, would be up there with the best. But we are dealing with real life here, not fiction, which makes it even more remarkable. Fire, pillage, defections, bombing, jealousies, intrigue, political diktats and scandals, one as recent as the 2013 acid attack on the artistic director – the Bolshoi has weathered many lows. But, lucky for us, its balletic legacy is still writ large in the world of dance.



PARIS CAN WAIT *Comedy/Romance*

 This light-hearted romantic comedy starts in Cannes and takes us on what becomes a two-day trip, through many charming towns, to Paris. Anne (Diane Lane), unable to join her husband, Michael (Alec Baldwin), on a private jet from Cannes to Paris due to an ear infection, accepts a ride with his business associate, Jacques (Arnaud Viard). So, in his battered Peugeot, Jacques delights in having Anne all to himself. Anne soaks up the attention and, although she doesn't fall for his routine, the two delight in the simple pleasures: museums, restaurants, markets, food, wine and good company.

Green Energy Overtakes Coal


 The world's capacity to generate electricity from renewable sources has overtaken coal, reports the International Energy Agency. It's the result of a worldwide push to use sources such as wind, solar and hydro. For instance, in 2015, half a million solar panels were installed every day around the globe. *Tim Hulse*

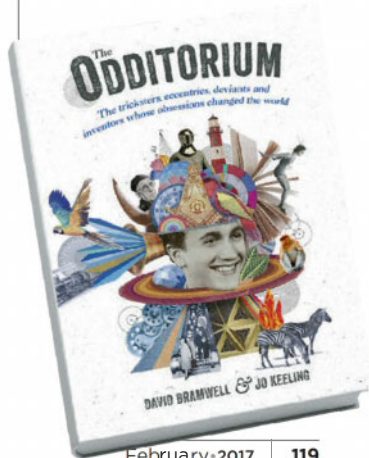
THE ODDITORIUM

The tricksters, eccentrics, deviants and inventors whose obsessions changed the world

David Bramwell
and Jo Keeling

Brewer's (by Hachette)

 'There's nowt so queer as folk', as the saying goes, and this mixed bag of non-conformists confirms it in spades. Consider Nellie Bly, an American journalist, who, in 1887, spent ten days in a New York mental asylum, pretending to be insane. Or John Hunter, the surgeon who stole an Irish giant. Or L.L. Zamenhof, who created a language Stalin called 'the language of spies'. Were they courageous, resourceful, obsessive or just plain crazy? You decide.





HIDDEN FIGURES Drama



Based on the true-life stories of the three women known as 'human computers', *Hidden Figures* is about Katherine Johnson (Taraji P. Henson), Dorothy Vaughan (Octavia Spencer) and Mary Jackson (Janelle Monáe). This film is a heartfelt tribute to the people who served as the brains behind one of the greatest operations in US history. As the US competed with the USSR to put a man in space, these remarkable African-American women were specifically tasked with calculating the launch of astronaut John Glenn into orbit and guaranteeing his safe return. Dorothy's, Mary's and Katherine's combined brilliance and ambition to accomplish what had hitherto only been a dream crossed all gender, race and professional boundaries, helping fuel some of America's greatest achievements in space.

Oldest Vertebrates

A University of Copenhagen study has found that Greenland sharks can live as long as 500 years. The reason for their remarkable longevity is not yet known, but it's believed that the deep, frigid waters of the North Atlantic where the rare creatures make their home are a contributing factor. With a growth rate of just a few centimetres per year, the slow-maturing sharks do not reach breeding age until they are at least 150. The largest shark the group measured was five metres, giving it an estimated age of at least 392 years. **Greg Barton**



Greenland sharks are the longest-living vertebrates known on Earth

HOUSE PLANTS

How to look after your indoor plants

Isabelle Palmer *Cico Books*



Are you one of those people with a knack for killing indoor plants? Fortunately, Isabelle Palmer is your knight with shining secateurs, an expert in small-space gardening whose inventive planting ideas and easy projects will bring vibrant

greenery and flowers into your home, no matter how limited your space, gardening skills or budget. Learn how to create terrariums and hanging baskets. Grow a sculptural display of air plants on a wall or make an indoor pond for aquatic plants in a glass vase. From fireplace to windowsill, from doorway to skylight, there are plants that, with a little love and attention, and a quirky container or two, will lift your mood and bring the outdoors in.



PHOTO: (TICKETS) ISTOCK



Culture Bonus for Youngsters



Remember when you were starting out, and wanted that best-selling book, or tickets to see a concert but you just didn't have enough money? Seems the Italian Government has decided money shouldn't get in the way of its youngsters having a good time. If they turn 18 between November 3, 2016, and December 31, 2017, they can download an app called 18app, which allows them up to €500 for spending on cultural activities such as buying books, concert tickets and museum trips. The scheme will cost the Italian Government €290 million. Parliamentary undersecretary Tommaso Nannicini told the press that the investment sends a clear message of the importance of 'cultural consumption' to an individual's wellbeing.

Caitlin Quinn

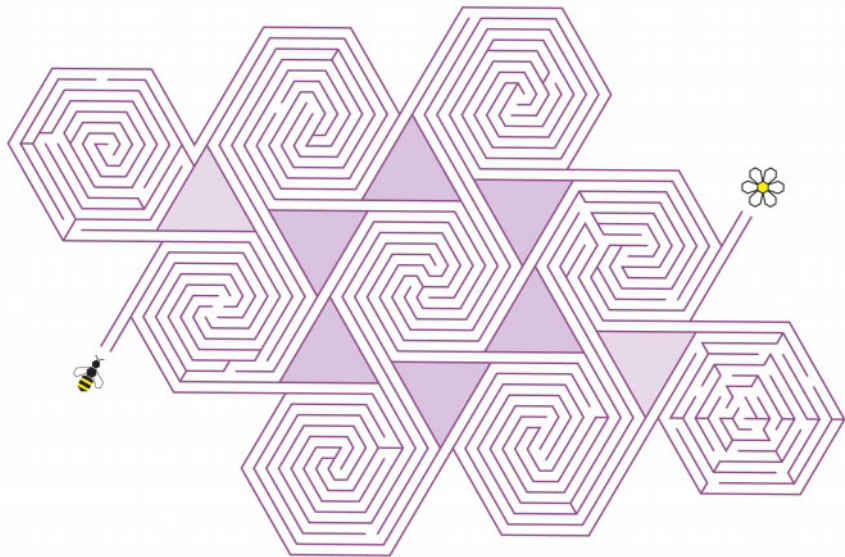
TEST YOUR MENTAL PROWESS

Puzzles

Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles and mind stretchers, then check your answers on page 113.

MAKE A BEELINE

Without crossing over a line, trace a path from bee to flower.



A TALL ORDER

Order these digits from shortest to tallest in only three moves. A move consists of taking a single digit out of the line and reinserting it at another position.

3 6 4₁ 5₂

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

TO SOLVE THIS SUDOKU...

You have to put a number from 1 to 9 in each square so that:

- every horizontal row and vertical column contains all nine numerals (1-9) without repeating any of them;
- each of the 3 x 3 boxes has all nine numerals, none repeated.

HIDDEN MEANING

Identify the common words or phrases below.

CH AN CE

A

Geography
- on on

B

BRAIN POWER
brought to you by



FRIXION ERASABLE PEN



TEST YOUR GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Trivia

1. Including Rio 2016, how many Olympic Games have been held in the Southern Hemisphere? **2 points**

2. Was Shakespeare's Juliet a Capulet or a Montague? **1 point**

3. The name of the US state of Colorado means what in Spanish? **2 points**

4. Which gladiator led an uprising against Rome? **1 point**

5. In what year was India partitioned to create the country of Pakistan? **2 points**

6. Which member of the pop group ABBA was fathered by a German soldier during World War II? **1 point**

7. The stomach of a cow has four compartments. Is this true of horses, too? **1 point**



8. *The 'beckoning cat' figurines seen outside stores and restaurants are Chinese or Japanese in origin?* **1 point**

9. How many people died when US Airways Flight 1549 landed in the Hudson River in 2009 after it was disabled by a flock of geese? **1 point**

10. What flower is described in the film *The Sound of Music* as "small and white, clean and bright"? **1 point**

11. From which language does the word 'magazine' derive? **2 points**

12. Deepwater Horizon, on which the 2016 film of the same name was based, was what? **1 point**

13. Fans of singer Taylor Swift are known as what? **2 points**

14. Who is the only batsman to have scored 100 centuries in international cricket? **2 points**

16-20 Gold medal

11-15 Silver medal

6-10 Bronze medal

0-5 Wooden spoon

ANSWERS: 1. Three Summer Olympics, zero Winter Olympics. 2. A Capulet. 3. Red-coloured (for the Colorado River, which is red-brown from silt). 4. Spartacus. 5. 1947. 6. Frida (Anni-Frid) Lyngstad. 7. No, the stomach of a horse has a single compartment. 8. Japanese. 9. None. 10. Edelweiss. 11. Arabic, from *makhazin*, meaning 'storehouse'. 12. An offshore oil rig. 13. Swifities. 14. Sachin Tendulkar.

IT PAYS TO INCREASE YOUR

Word Power

Straight from the Heart

Before sending a card this Valentine's Day, be sure you know the language of love. Here are some words perfect for would-be Romeos and Juliets. Don't know them by heart? See the next page for answers.

BY EMILY COX & HENRY RATHVON

1. ardent *adj.* – A: engaged. B: lyrical. C: passionate.

2. paramour *n.* – A: chaperone. B: lover. C: token of affection.

3. buss *v.* – A: kiss. B: elope. C: carve initials in a tree.

4. swain *n.* – A: intense crush. B: male suitor. C: gondola for two.

5. connubial *adj.* – A: coy. B: of marriage. C: about the heart.

6. troth *n.* – A: rustic altar. B: loyalty. C: Celtic wedding ring.

7. coquettish *adj.* – A: flirtatious. B: alluring. C: shy.

8. endearment *n.* – A: words expressing affection. B: fainting spell. C: recipient's address on a letter.

9. platonic *adj.* – A: of a honeymoon. B: smitten. C: without physical desire.

10. liaison *n.* – A: secret affair. B: exchange of vows. C: pet nickname.

11. beaux *n.* – A: traditional string used to join hands in marriage during the wedding ceremony. B: winks of an eye. C: boyfriends.

12. requite *v.* – A: ask for someone's hand. B: give back, as affection. C: fondly remember.

13. epistolary *adj.* – A: serenading. B: set in a gazebo. C: relating to letters.

14. philtre *n.* – A: love potion. B: a gentle caress. C: family keepsake or hand-me-down.

15. cupidity *n.* – A: heart shape. B: lust or desire for wealth. C: condition of instantaneous romance, as love at first sight.

Answers

1. ardent – [C] passionate. When the pop star checks his mail, he almost always finds one or two bizarre gifts from some of his ardent fans.

2. paramour – [B] lover. Claire was overwhelmed by the devotion and affection of her new paramour.

3. buss – [A] kiss. During the bus ride, Lauren and Alex sneaked off to buss in the backseat.

4. swain – [B] male suitor. The princess gave a weary sigh as she awaited the entreaties of her swains.

5. connubial – [B] of marriage. Aside from their celebrity status, Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward were famous for their connubial bliss.

6. troth – [B] loyalty. “It was in this gazebo, 20 years ago, dear, that we pledged our troth,” said Arthur.

7. coquettish – [A] flirtatious. Alison caught Dean’s eye with a coquettish smile and nod.

8. endearment – [A] Between hugs and kisses, Lawrence was murmuring endearments.

9. platonic – [C] without physical desire. I hate to disappoint the paparazzi, but my current relationships are all platonic.

10. liaison – [A] secret affair. The young couple stole away at midnight each evening for their liaison.

11. beaux – [C] boyfriends. I doubt that Sharon considers young Timothy one of her best beaux.

12. requite – [B] give back, as affection. Her lyrics tend towards requited love rather than heartbreak.

13. epistolary – [C] relating to letters. The romance between Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Browning is marked by an epistolary trail.

14. philtre – [A] love potion. Hoping for attention from my crush, I went to Madam Ava for her purported philtre.

15. cupidity – [B] lust or desire for wealth. The cupidity of the accused investors was clear.

GONE A-COURTIN’ ...

You may know that *horticulture* pertains to gardening. It comes from the Latin *hortus* (‘garden’). Add the prefix *co-* (‘with’) to that root, and you get both *court* (a yard) and *cohort* (a companion). In royal settings of old, and still today, a flowery yard is an ideal spot for courting a sweetheart. (A quaint old synonym of *courting* is *pitching woo*. But etymologists aren’t sure where *woo* came from.)

VOCABULARY RATINGS

9 & below: Flirty
10–12: Affectionate
13–15: Word Power Wizard

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