

THE EPOCH TIMES LIFE & TRADITION

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VALENTINE'S
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6 Surprising Things Homeschoolers Come to Realize

BARBARA DANZA

The decision to homeschool your children is not a decision to take lightly. Once you take the leap, however, and embark on the homeschool adventure, you may be surprised by what you learn about your children, yourself, school, and education in general.

Here are six common things that homeschoolers come to realize.

Deschooling Is Essential

If your children were in school and you've brought them home, you need to take some time to "deschool." Deschooling is the process of letting go of the many notions and assumptions about education and learning, the extent of which becomes apparent when you step away. Indeed, even if your children never attended school, but you did, you may find the idea of deschooling beneficial.

Rather than diving right into

textbooks, rigid schedules, and requirements, spend your days reading freely, enjoying nature, playing, exploring, and truly recovering that spark of curiosity and wonder that lives inside but was likely buried.

Learning Is Simple

You may have doubted your ability to teach your children, thinking surely you'd need teacher training or even an advanced degree before being qualified. The truth is that true learning is a natural and very simple process. It's the very same process you employed before your child became "school-aged." Somehow, with your inadequate credentials, you taught your child to talk, walk, eat, interact with the world, and likely a host of other very important skills. Perhaps you taught your child the alphabet or even how to read.

You did all this very naturally, following your child's development

True learning is a natural and very simple process.

and natural curiosities, supporting your child every step of the way, and providing the best environment for your child to grow in skill and competence.

As amazing as it was to watch your child take their first step, it's just as amazing to witness them solve their first quadratic equation or conjugate their first verb in a foreign language.

School and Education Are Not the Same Thing

The further away you get from formal schooling, the more you come to realize that school has little to do with education and learning. Perhaps it should be obvious to those who went through the school system when they try to recall what they learned there.

As parents, when you see how much more learning happens at home, and with much more ease and joy, you begin to wonder what purpose school actually serves.

Parents Are Students, Too

One of the ancillary benefits of homeschooling your children is everything you learn along with them. The math concepts that suddenly make sense, the inner meanings behind the finest works of art, the history of the world in sequential order, the joys of the greatest literature ever written, and more. You aren't as much a teacher as a facilitator, an architect and designer of the learning environment, a curator of educational materials and resources, and a fellow student diving deep, exploring, and basking in the wonder of all there is to behold.

Playing Is Learning

When many parents first set out to homeschool, they do all they can to ensure they give their children the best possible education. They buy all the books, make up complex schedules, sign up for an array of extracurricular activities, and run themselves—and their children—ragged trying to over-compensate for their feelings of inadequacy in the face of the task they've taken on.

However, as time goes on, they mature. They calm down and begin to see how each of their individual children learn best, what lights that spark inside them, and how tinkering, exploring, and playing—though it may look frivolous—can yield lasting and valuable lessons their children will absorb.

School Is Unnecessary

When homeschoolers thrive, they look back at the school that lies along the road most traveled in amazement. Perhaps they too were once convinced that school was a must. Experience proves out, all too clearly as one child sits reading Shakespeare and the other works away joyfully on a science project, that school itself, given the presence of a loving home, is truly unnecessary.

One of the ancillary benefits of homeschooling your children is everything you learn along with them.



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You Should Do What You Should Do

BARBARA DANZA

"Should" seems to have become a slur these days. We have become defiant at the idea of "should."

"Who says?" we say. Thinking about "should" leads to shame, and shame is bad, right?

On the other hand, there's this sense that maybe we "should" take care of that thing we've neglected, improve one area of our life or another, demand more of ourselves, try harder, or aim for our fullest potential.

Sure, there's a point when beating yourself over the head with "shoulds" does more harm than good, and offering "shoulds" to others may garner cold responses. Still, shouldn't you do what you should do?

Yes, you should.

You Should Curb Neglect

You stare at that pile of unopened mail and know you should sit down and process it. You see unheard voicemails or unread emails and know you should respond. You think of your loved ones and know you should reach out to them more often. You see the dirty dishes in the sink and know you should wash them.

You should become someone who doesn't neglect life's responsibilities—big and small. Start small to improve your habits, consider



(Left) From fixing things around the house to nurturing relationships, we know we shouldn't neglect our responsibilities.

(Right) Aim to make improvements in your life. In the long run, you'll benefit immensely.

others, stop procrastinating, and do what you can (and should) do.

You Should Take Care of Yourself

You wake up late, rush out the door, eat whatever you can quickly grab, agree to more than you can handle, rush around all day trying to keep up, crash at the end of the night, staying up way too late eating junk and scrolling through your phone to unwind.

Life has many seasons. Perhaps your current one looks like this, perhaps it looks different. Whatever season you're in, though, you should leave room to take care of yourself.

Arrange your life so that you can prioritize your mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. You should.



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You Should Let Go of Perfection

Perhaps the underlying reason you're not doing what you know you should do is that you also have a vision in your mind of how to do it perfectly. However, given your constraints, you don't feel you can live up to that vision. Perfection is a tall order, after all. So you do nothing instead.

You should let go of your perfect ideals and get down to what you should do, which is something, not nothing.

You Should Believe in Yourself

Somewhere inside you, you know you can be more than what you are now. You're playing a smaller game than you're truly capable of.

You should demand more of yourself and do better—at work, in your relationships, in your creative pursuits, at home. Do what you should do to make improvements and aim for that potential that you know, deep down, has been there all along.

You Should Aim High

You've been blessed with a very specific personality, your own character, unique gifts, and a variety of talents. Perhaps you haven't discovered all of them yet. Perhaps you've overlooked or even belittled some of your gifts.

You should know yourself better, embrace your gifts, and aim to put them to use toward the greatest good you can think of.

Aim high. You really should!



Nicole Neily, president of Speech First, in Washington on Jan. 26, 2020.

CATHERINE YANG

Nicole Neily was in college when the 9/11 terrorist attacks happened.

She remembers sending an email to one of her professors, saying she assumed that class would be canceled the next day. She swiftly received a reply to the contrary: class would take place as usual, and if she were not present, her grade would reflect that.

"Contrast that with what's going on today," Neily said. "After the 2016 election, midterms were canceled, safe spaces, the 'cry-ins'—our students are not resilient. There are horrible things that happen in the world, but an election is not one of them. A peaceful transfer of power in a democratic nation is not the kind of thing that you need to melt down over."

As universities feed into this "safety-ism," the troubling phenomenon on college campuses has in just a few years morphed into something dangerous that's bound to have effects off-campus soon, if not already. Free speech simply can't exist in some of these climates, so in 2018, Neily joined the fight to defend it as president of the organization Speech First, so those concerned could help affect change along with students.

"There's strength in numbers," Neily said.

The College Secret Police

Neily had worked in the advocacy and think tank world for a decade before she started looking into the college campus hysteria—and at first, she really did think it was just hysteria.

"The more I dug into it, and talking to reporters, I realized it's not only not made up, it's a lot worse," Neily said. "It horrified me."

Neily is on the phone or texting with students every day about what they're experiencing, and she hears about the phenomenon of "chilling."

"Chilling" refers to regulations

that don't ban speech, but are too broad or vague, causing people to self-censor for fear of violating the law.

For example, while student handbooks may say that "unwelcome" or "offensive" speech is prohibited, students don't know what qualifies as such until they've been reported.

She puts the issues into two categories, the seen and unseen. The "seen" issues are the visible and hotly contested issues such as designated free-speech zones and hefty fees that student groups have to pay when they invite an unpopular speaker.

Neily says the "unseen" issues are the much bigger ones.

"The fact that students are just not talking about so many issues on campus, because they're scared," she said.

"I learned about these policies [that create] bias response teams. That horrified me. I mean, it's ripped from East Germany, where students are encouraged to report on each other. Schools have portals on a website where you can report your fellow classmates' speech," she said.

"You can do so anonymously. You could also make a false report. I could really jam up somebody who I dislike—on the basis of speech alone."

The besmirched party may ultimately be deemed not guilty by a university panel, but by then, they've already been dragged through a whole disciplinary hearing process. This also sends a message to other students that if you voice an opinion others dislike, you will suffer similar consequences.

"And frankly, the kinds of issues that get reported are political issues, and they're religious issues, and those are the very issues that we, as a society, that students need to be debating. Not shutting people up, not scaring people into silence," she said.

A Dangerous Path

Neily realized quickly that there

wasn't much that one person could do. As an alum, she could opt not to give the \$200 her alma mater asked of her, although the school likely wouldn't even notice. But if there were hundreds or thousands like her, the school would need to take these issues seriously.

That was the genesis of Speech First.

It's ripped from East Germany, where students are encouraged to report on each other. Schools have portals on a website where you can report your fellow classmates' speech.

Nicole Neily

The organization sues universities with regulations that violate free speech, and it has the added benefit of letting students remain anonymous. Even if you know you're in the right, most students don't want to be the one to have their name attached to a lengthy, controversial lawsuit against the school you still want a degree from. And then there's the peer pressure and ostracism.

"Even if students know that there's a problem there, they're scared to speak out, and accordingly, schools can get away with murder," Neily said. "I think that's unacceptable."

Neily's interest in defending civil liberties began early. Her paternal grandparents, Japanese-American citizens born in California, met when they were both in the Manzanar War Relocation Center during World War II.

In college, she joined a student



The University of Michigan was the first of four universities against which Speech First has filed lawsuits.

branch of the ACLU and would pass out "know your rights" cards to students who'd been drinking; it was common for campus police to keep an eye on them, and they didn't know their rights. Her first job in Washington was at the Cato Institute, and before joining Speech First, she was the president and publisher for a branch of Watchdog.org.

What is most baffling to her about these campus issues is that students are the ones requesting these censorship policies.

"If students want to give governments, in schools, this broad authority over their lives to pick winners and losers, you're always assuming that the school will pick your side," Neily said. "A government that is big enough to give you everything you want is big enough to take it all away. And it has. And it did that to my family."

"For students to be requesting to cede their authority, to give schools power to do things over them is mind-blowing," she said.

Speech First members aren't just students. Many are concerned citizens, such as alumni, parents with kids in college, grandparents, college professors, and administrators. People paying attention have realized these issues won't stay contained on campuses.

Students who head to universities determined to express their opinions, listen, and debate, won't stay that way for long, Neily says. In some places, she said, they'll get four years of being told to "keep your head down, keep your mouth shut, recite the talking points, don't think for yourself, don't challenge the status quo," or else face punishment—not just from the administration but also on social media, being called out by peers.

"You do that for four years and I think it starts to become second nature," she said. Everyone—those doing the censoring and those being censored—ultimately loses.

"Not only are you learning these dangerous ideas that speech is violence, that we should shut up and censor viewpoints we disagree with, but then also you've stopped learning to push back, to challenge others, to think for [yourself]."

"I think those are horrible behaviors—horrible things to teach our students—because they get out, they need to go into the workforce, they need to go exist in a community, they need to go to meetings at their children's school," she said.

"And if your default setting is, 'I don't like what you're saying, I think you're hateful' and calling somebody a name."

"That's not how civil society works. That's a really dangerous path to take."

School is where you learn to coexist with others, and, right now, students are learning that they shouldn't. They're not just reporting on each other, but also on professors, if they don't like a book assigned or a topic taught in class. Neily has also heard from administrators who feel their hands are tied as they go through social justice training workshops.

"That is really dangerous, frankly, for the country," she said.

"That's why Speech First is doing the work it does. With the stories Neily has collected, the organization has sued four schools and recently scored a victory."

Court Cases

Speech First has filed lawsuits against the University of Texas, the University of Illinois, the University of Michigan, and, recently, Iowa State University.

The University of Michigan case was the first in which the organization challenged the school's student code of conduct, which had overly broad regulations that could stifle free speech, and its bias response teams. After the lawsuit was filed, the school quietly revised its student handbook, and a district court deemed the case was over and that the bias response teams didn't pose harm, so Speech First appealed.

In September, the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the district court's decision, and the lawsuit was reinstated.

"That's exciting," Neily said. "Because the higher up it goes, this now controls ... all of the schools that are within that [6th Circuit] jurisdiction."

The University of Texas and the University of Illinois also had their versions of a bias response team, along with other regulations, such as needing school permission to hand out fliers for an election. One included a rule where if you were to send "rude correspondence," you could be subject to discipline up to and including expulsion.

"Funny enough, the University of Texas is my husband's alma mater and the University of Illinois mine. So our kids are basically not going to be legacies anywhere," Neily said.

Her daughters are 4 and 6, so they're not off to college yet, but the prospect of their education has Neily very personally invested in the fight.

Another benefit of being organized is that the group can handle the lengthy appeals process. Cases can drag on, and students often graduate before any decision, and courts drop the case because the harm has gone away.

"And that stinks, because for very serious issues like chilling, a university is never going to admit 'We're chilling. There are certain viewpoints we don't want on campus.' So they're going to fight it and appeal it," Neily said. "The courts are very slow. And so even if a student is right, their cases might be thrown out."

But with Speech First, if even one of their members is still a student at the school, the case can continue.

"My cases can take 10 years," Neily said. "I can have the longevity to get a case to Supreme Court, whereas an individual challenging their school might not."

There are also issues that students contact her about that they can't sue for.

Neily often hears from students who experience prejudice from professors because of differing political views. Since it's hard to prove that a professor gave a bad grade because a student's politics differ from the professor's, she will offer advice instead on how the student can appeal these individual issues, or, in some cases, publicize them.

"Not everybody wants to sue their school ... some students just want their student group to be able to exist," she said. "So what are the best ways to get students a happy outcome?"

Speech First will also begin to request internal documents and communication around free speech through the Freedom of Information Act, targeting universities that have had incidents in recent years.

"We want to see, how do you talk about these issues internally? Do you actually care about the First Amendment or do you care about the PR aspect? That should be interesting," she said.

6 Ways to Celebrate Valentine's Day With Your Children

BARBARA DANZA

If you ask me, Valentine's Day gets to be much more fun when you become a parent. As parents, we get to toss aside the ridiculous expectations, the pressures, and all the entrapments of the "Hallmark holiday" and dive into the simplest of pleasures—celebrating the love in your family with all the sugary sweetness you can stomach.

Here are 6 simple ways to celebrate this Valentine's Day with your family.

Set the Mood

After the little ones have gone to bed on February 13, add Valentine's touches to your home that will delight them when they awaken! Some super easy ideas are: a Valentine's Day-themed tablecloth in the dining room or kitchen, cut-out hearts on the windows, a heart-shaped wreath on the front door, Valentine plates and napkins for breakfast, red and pink streamers hanging about, and fresh red or pink flowers, to top it all off.

Play Love Songs

Set up your mushy, gushy, sappy, but totally kid-friendly Valentine's Day playlist in advance. Some of my favorite songs to add are Louis Armstrong's, "What a Wonderful World," "You Are My Sunshine" by Elizabeth Mitchell, and "This" by Darius Rucker.

Serve Food With Heart

A simple heart-shaped pastry cutter can turn almost any food into a Valentine's Day treat. Toast? No, Valentine's Day toast. Pancakes? No, Valentine's Day pancakes. Meatloaf? No! Valentine's Day meatloaf.

Got strawberries? They were born to be Valentine's Day treats. Simply

Valentine's Day is a great holiday to celebrate family.



cut a v-shape when removing the stem.

The dessert options are endless. You can take that pastry cutter and make heart-shaped cookies, brownies, cakes, and more. You can take those strawberry hearts and dip them in chocolate or add them to the top of a strawberry shortcake. A red velvet cupcake with pink frosting is another no-fail option sure to delight all of your Valentines.

Craft Away

Get crafty as a family, making Valentine's for each other and others. There's no shortage of inspiration online, obviously.

Gift Experiences, Not Things

This would be my advice for every holiday, really. If you incorporate gifts in your Valentine's Day celebration, aim for experiences over things. Gifts like a trip to the zoo, a museum membership, tickets to a show, tickets to an amusement park, movie tickets, or a gift certificate to a pottery place or fun gym would all qualify and the memories will last a lifetime.

End the Day Reading

Theme your bedtime reading around Valentine's Day with stories like "Guess How Much I Love You" by Sam McBratney or "Me With You" by Kristy Dempsey.

Got older kids? What better time to introduce some Shakespeare than with an introduction to "Romeo and Juliet"? Or check out this list of the 10 Greatest Love Poems Ever Written by the Society of Classical Poets (ClassicalPoets.org/2016/10/27/10-greatest-love-poems-ever-written/). Happy Valentine's Day!



A simple heart-shaped pastry cutter can turn almost any food into a Valentine's Day treat.

Lifting Up Our Minds and Hearts: The Value of Prayer

JEFF MINICK

A good many years ago, in the monthly meeting of our book club in Waynesville, North Carolina, the subject of prayer came up during a discussion of Anne Tyler's "Saint Maybe." A doctor, an intelligent and well-spoken man with a wry sense of humor, asked of us, "What exactly is prayer? I mean, what do you do when you pray?"

His question was sincere. He had grown up in a non-religious household, and as it turned out, had never prayed in his life.

Several people tried to answer him, but when we said our goodnights my friend looked as puzzled as when he had popped the question.

So what is prayer?

Belief, Connection, and the Pathways of Prayer

From the old Baltimore Catechism, young Catholics learned that prayer "was the lifting up of our minds and hearts to God." Evangelist Billy Graham once stated that "Prayer is more than a wish. It is the voice of faith directed at God." Devout Jews pray so their hearts can reach out to the Almighty.

All these religions, and others, believe that we connect through prayer to God. My friend's atheism no doubt accounted for his inability to understand prayer.

People who worship a higher power pray in different ways. Some use devices like the rosary, prayer wheels, or the Jewish phylacteries. Some assume different postures for formal prayers. Some pray aloud, others silently.

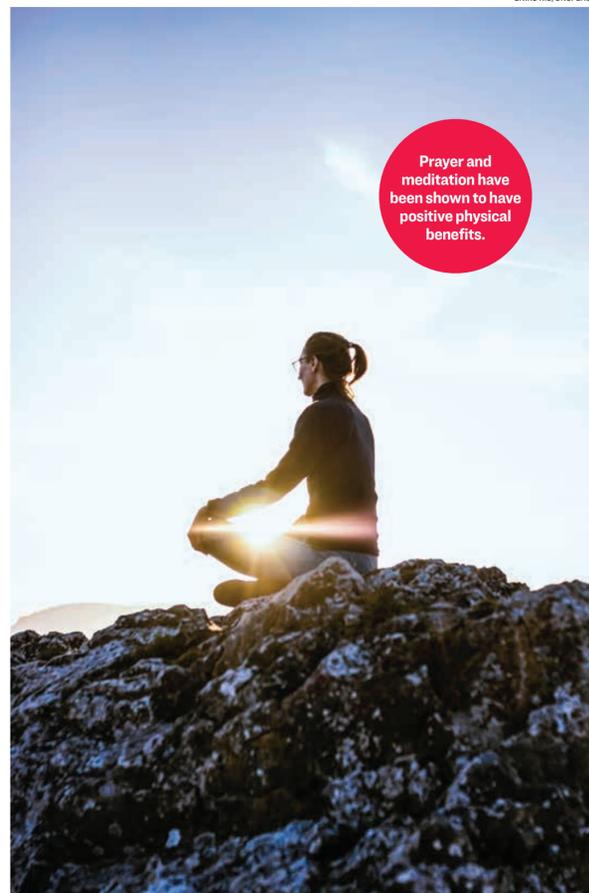
Although reasons for prayer may vary from individuals, most religious faiths promote prayers of thanksgiving, praise, gratitude, and intercession. This last form of prayer involves asking for help from heaven, begging for a miracle to cure a loved one's cancer, seeking strength and courage when your world comes crashing down around you, asking for wisdom in dealing with a wayward teenager.

Does Prayer Work?

So what about it? When you tell your friend whose husband has just deserted her you will pray for her, will your intercession help to bring her peace of mind? Will the "lifting up of hearts and minds to God" by family and friends do any good for that man being rolled on a gurney to the operating room for a heart transplant? By knocking at heaven's door, can we perform better at our job? Do our prayers go from our mouths to God's ear or are they just a waste of breath, the wishes of children lost and wandering in a cold, indifferent universe? Let's take a look.

Physical Health

In her online article at WebMD, "Can Prayer Heal?" Jeanie Lerche Davis pres-



Prayer and meditation have been shown to have positive physical benefits.

ents evidence from numerous studies showing that prayer not only heals, but can also prevent disease and even promote good health.

For 30 years, Davis reports, Harvard scientist and physician Herbert Benson has studied the effect of prayer and meditation on patients, and has discovered their positive effects on the brain, breathing, blood pressure, and heart rate. Duke University's Harold Koenig, MD, has uncovered some remarkable connections between health, faith, and prayer, reporting that "heart patients were 14 times more likely to die following surgery if they did not participate in a religion" and that "hospitalized people who never attended church have an average stay of three times longer than those who

attended regularly."

Mitchell Krucoff, MD, also of Duke University, reports that "all of these studies, all the reports, are remarkably consistent in suggesting the potential measurable health benefit associated with prayer or spiritual interventions."

Mental Health and Strength

In addition to possibly affecting our physical health, prayer and meditation bring mental and spiritual rewards as well. Some listen for the "still, small voice" of God while others empty themselves of the noise and hustle of the world. Such attempts can lower our anxiety and stress, improve our mental abilities, and increase our energy.

Many draw strength from prayer. The

soldier going into battle, the woman facing an important job interview, the football player who bows his head with a teammate before a game: all are examples of people asking for courage and intercession.

Family and Community Life

Prayer can also strengthen our marriages and families. Mark Merrill, founder of Family First, Inc., writes in "8 Benefits of Praying Together with your Spouse" that praying with a wife or husband increases "trust and intimacy with a spouse," teaches "you to be other-focused," and helps "your spouse know your struggles and needs better."

In "The Power of Prayer for Families," Alysse ElHage reports that praying together helps reduce family tensions, allows for the opportunity to pass on religious traditions, and creates a sense of family unity.

Finally, prayer can also strengthen communities. When faced by some disaster—a mass shooting, a hurricane, a terrible fire—some people offer up "thoughts and prayers" for the victims and the survivors. Others mock them, claiming, for instance, that "pie in the sky" orisons won't end mass shootings. They may be correct, but they fail to see that these prayers draw those who lived through that shooting closer together as a community.

Fifteen years ago, when my wife lay dying and in a coma in a hospital, our children prayed the Rosary and other prayers around her bedside. After a while, one of the nurses pulled me aside and said, "About these prayers ... your children do know that their mom will never recover, don't they?" "They do," I told her, "and they are praying for a miracle, but mostly they are praying their mother will be with God after she dies."

Stillness

The power of prayer does not prove the existence of a Divine Power. Those with religious faith believe that it does. Skeptics would reply that prayer and meditation might offer physical and mental relief but no indisputable sign of any god.

Whichever side of that fence we stand on, we might reflect on the famous words of Blaise Pascal, mathematician and philosopher: "All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone."

To sit quietly in a room alone is the beginning of prayer. It is the beginning of an answer to my friend's question during that book club get-together long ago.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin in seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.

On My Honor: A Memorandum to America

JEFF MINICK

"On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

—Scout Oath

The Boy Scouts of America is in decline. Membership is dwindling, the organization keeps changing its policies to keep up with the times, and scandals and lawsuits have battered the BSA image. Those of us who were Scouts or whose sons became Scouts look back and grieve its demise. It introduced millions of young men to the outdoors, awarded badges in subjects like citizenship, first aid, and swimming, and was for many one passage into manhood.

Scouting also gave these same young men the Scout Oath, which was recited before every meeting. And before scouting passes into history, that Oath deserves to be honored and remembered, for in that single sentence is a blueprint for civic responsibility and patriotism pertaining to all Americans.

Let's take a look at that Oath point by point.

Honor, Duty, God

"On my honor." There's a word rarely heard these days outside of the military, yet if we dust it off and polish it up, we find honor means integrity, the very core of what upright men and women live by. If we passed on the concept of honor to our children,

taught it in our schools, and preached it from pulpit and podium, we might bring it out of the attic and into the daylight.

"I will do my best." Here is a prescription against everything from shoddy work to poor relationships. Whether on the job, in a marriage, or as a rule for raising children, to do our best is the medicine needed to cure many contemporary illnesses.

"Duty." Another old-fashioned word. We may associate the word with the military or first responders, yet all of us have duties: caring for children, earning a living, tending to aged relatives. The following quote may be falsely attributed to Robert E. Lee, yet it nevertheless contains great wisdom: "Duty then is the sublimest word in the English language. You should do your duty in all things. You can never do more, you should never wish to do less." The Scout Oath helps us remember the meaning and value of duty.

"God." To do our duty to God—however we may perceive a Supreme Being—means living by a moral code. Even most of those who claim to believe in no god adhere to some sort of virtue or rule by which they conduct their lives.

Country, Law, Service

"Country." Being an American citizen involves duties and responsibilities: voting, serving in the military, paying taxes. Even more, country is belonging. No matter where we live—an

apartment in Manhattan, a suburb in Arizona, a farmhouse in Alabama—we should remember the line from Walter Scott, "Breathes there the man, with soul so dead, who never to himself hath said, This is my own, my native land!" America is our own, our native land.

"The Law." The Scout Law states that "a Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent." What else are these 12 points but the core of civic virtues? Obey them, and our lives become luminous. And when our personal lives shine like the sun, so too does our country.

"To help other people at all times." Most Americans are already in accord with this part of the Oath. We're in the top five nations in the world in volunteering our time and giving to charities. Most of us, I would wager, extend a helping hand both to our neighbors and to strangers when they face difficulties: a flat tire on the highway, a gift of cookies to the widow down the street, donating via GoFundMe to a

'I will do my best.' Here is a prescription against everything from shoddy work to poor relationships.

Scouting gave young men the Scout Oath, which was recited before every meeting, and deserves to be honored and remembered.



AMY KERKMEYER/SHUTTERSTOCK

stranger facing some drastic surgery.

Personal Maintenance

"To keep myself physically strong." We are living longer than our grandparents, but many Americans are overweight, indulge in drugs, drink too much alcohol, and partake of tobacco products. Sixty years ago, the Kennedy administration stressed the idea of American "vigor" and inspired people young and old to take 50-mile hikes. Today a number of us might find a five-mile hike exhausting. Time to shape up, America.

"Mentally awake." How many of us consider ourselves mentally awake? Do we read something challenging in the evening or flip on the latest television sitcom? Do we push ourselves, even a little, intellectually, or do we drift along day-to-day, same old routine, same old television news channels? Are our schoolchildren "mentally awake?"

"Morally straight." Are our politicians and other public figures free from corruption? Are they, by word and example, templates of how we should live our lives? Even more importantly, are we ourselves on the straight and narrow path?

In "The Abolition Of Man," C.S. Lewis defines this Way: "The Tao, which others may call Natural Law or Traditional Morality or the First Principles of Practical Reason or the First Platitudes, is not one among a series of possible systems of value. It is the

sole source of all value judgments. If it is rejected, all value is rejected. If any value is retained, it is retained. The effort to refute it and raise a new system of value in its place is self-contradictory. There has never been, and never will be, a radically new judgment of value in the history of the world. What purport to be new systems or ... ideologies ... all consist of fragments from the Tao itself, arbitrarily wrenched from their context in the whole and then swollen to madness in their isolation, yet still owing to the Tao and to it alone such validity as they possess."

The Oath reminds us to follow the Tao—the Way.

Let's Honor the Oath

Many men who have gone through Scouting are imbued with the precepts of this Oath. It was once one of the many ways the culture taught its citizens their duties and responsibilities. In the movie "Clear and Present Danger," the insidious character Robert Ritter says to Jack Ryan: "You are such a Boy Scout!" Ritter intends an insult, but if we know the Boy Scout Oath, we would take his remark as a badge of honor.

If we had a lick of sense, we'd make the Scout Oath one of the pillars of our Republic.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.



MONKEY BUSINESS IMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK

How you guide your children's approach to food can help form well-rounded, well-behaved adults.

broken by the deep voice of Mr. Johnson bellowing—presumably at his young daughter Susie—"EAT ... YOUR ... SUPPER!"

Mr. Johnson's firm insistence that his child focus on the food set before her is a rarity in contemporary America. Instead, many parents cater to their children's wishes, even going so far as requesting a separate kid-friendly meal when visiting a friend's house for dinner.

The family was having dinner, but all was not well. The stillness of my father's sandbox foray was

that in group situations, the welfare of the group comes second to their happiness and that there is no expectation to be polite or grateful to your host."

Self-esteem and autonomy are a big deal today, especially for parents who want to do right by their children. Far be it from them to do anything that would hinder their child's self-expression or potential to grow into a well-rounded independent person. Denying them food they like or forcing them to eat something that they don't like may have negative and long-lasting effects on a child's psychology! Better to give them what they want, even if it is inconvenient for the parents or others around them.

Karen LeBillon, author of "French Kids Eat Everything," thought this way once. "Fostering independent eating was an important step in building autonomy, right?" she asks in her book. "The kids should be in charge of their own eating, right?"

A move to France began to change her mind. She writes:

"The belief that parents should actively educate their children

about food in a gently authoritative way is at the heart of the French approach to kids' food. Deep down, I knew that this approach—which was much more authoritative than my approach—might benefit my children. But for a long time, I resisted it."

In the end, she learned that this authoritative approach to children's eating is the way the French train their children to be well-rounded adults—"well-spoken, well-mannered, and well-behaved." Such authoritative training often instills natural and healthy self-esteem in these children, the same self-esteem that American parents are trying to instill by letting their children walk all over them.

Might we be doing things backward? Are the results we want produced not by giving into our children's demands, but by gently and firmly leading them in paths that time and experience have taught us are wise ways?

Annie Holmquist is the editor of Intellectual Takeout. This article was originally published on Intellectual Takeout.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF TOM SATTERLY



Tom Satterly with his wife Jen at their wedding.

A Delta Force Veteran's Mission After Service

After breaking his own anger cycle, Tom Satterly is helping special forces vets—and their families—heal together

ANDREW THOMAS

Many combat veterans experience indelible psychological wounds, which often manifest as PTSD and make it difficult to adjust to civilian life. For Tom Satterly, a Delta Force veteran who served our nation for 25 years, the experiences he had in combat left him angry and isolated. But now, he's encouraging other veterans to take the hardest but most effective step toward healing: asking for help.

Satterly was taking college classes at Indiana University when his best friend from high school returned from Army basic training. The two were on their way to a John Cougar Mellencamp concert, and he was telling Satterly about how positive his experience in the Army had been so far. By the time they arrived at the concert, Satterly was committed to enlist.

Less than a year later, in February 1986, Satterly was in Army basic training. Initially, he only planned on serving for four years before attending college. Little did he know he would spend an entire career in the military. His commanding officer pushed him and his unit, which motivated him to try out for special forces.

"I wanted to end up being a Green Beret as soon as I could," Satterly said.

Delta Force

While he was in language school learning Farsi, two men from the special forces qualification course approached him.

They told him he should train for "The Unit," which was the original code name for Delta Force. In early 1991, he went to selection for Delta Force and made the cut.

Satterly's first deployment was to Mogadishu, Somalia, and he was immediately thrown into combat. His first five missions were what he expected, and nobody got hurt. However, on Oct. 3, 1993, Satterly went on a mission that would end up becoming an 18-hour-long firefight.

"That completely and utterly changed everything for me and everything for the unit and how we even did tactics from that day forward," Satterly recalled.

Satterly and his unit rappelled into dust, and were excited and jovial until the first Black Hawk helicopter crashed to their northeast. As they were fighting their way to the crash site, Satterly was firing down a street. When he turned to look at his friend, he was being dragged away. He had been shot in the head.

"At that moment I knew we weren't invincible. That [was the] lie that we told ourselves the whole time," Satterly explained.

Post-Traumatic Stress

Satterly continued to serve in Delta Force until 2010. When he returned to civilian life, he didn't have a plan. After working in Amman to train the Jordanian military to be special forces-qualified, Satterly began drinking to excess. Satterly found himself immersed in a "work-hard, play-hard" culture.

After two years of working in Amman, Satterly returned to North Carolina. He found



Tom Satterly, a Delta Force veteran.

himself awake all night and asleep all day, and not living a productive lifestyle for about four months.

"[I was] just really depressed that I had no mission, and no focus in life and what direction I was going to take," Satterly recalled.

Satterly began abusing alcohol and his prescription medication, and was living a reckless lifestyle. The day Satterly almost took his own life is when he realized he was contending with post-traumatic stress.

A year later, he almost ruined his fourth marriage within 24 hours. The Monday following his wedding, he started participating in anger management therapy.

Since his experience in 1993 in Mogadishu, Satterly had lost all feelings of empathy and compassion. He had been blaming others for his issues, but after seeking treatment, he began to take a hard look at himself. Like a lot of combat veterans, he struggled to show any perceived weakness or vulnerability. How-

ever, once he discovered asking for help took courage, it became easier for him to address his own issues.

"Once someone reaches down and helps you, that's when you realize how easy it is to help others," Satterly said.

Adapting to Civilian Life

The muscle memory, skills, and behaviors that had made Satterly an effective warfighter would not function well in civilian society, and the attitude that had kept him and his friends alive wouldn't work well in the home environment. For instance, coming home to a kitchen with dirty dishes or rowdy children would make him infuriated.

With the help of his wife, Jen, Satterly learned to interrupt the muscle memory that caused his rage, and he began telling jokes to his wife in order to break the anger cycle.

Satterly began to participate in emotionally focused therapy to objectify his emotions and address them and discover their root cause. Initially, he was skeptical of this method, but gave it a try.

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Once someone reaches down and helps you, that's when you realize how easy it is to help others.

Tom Satterly

"I started trying it and I realized how quickly I was breaking the cycle. How I was becoming aware of my emotional patterns, and I was able to feel them come on and stop them," Satterly said. Satterly had finally started to heal.

The Veteran Community

In his book "All Secure: A Special Operations Soldier's Fight to Survive on the Battlefield and the Homefront," Satterly recounts his experience in Delta Force and coming home. He and his wife, Jen, have also co-founded the All Secure Foundation, which helps special forces combat veterans and their significant others heal from the invisible wounds of war, and improve their relationships.

A lot of the work Satterly and his wife do is helping special forces veterans and their spouses heal together. They discuss the triggers that lead to specific emotions, and how the veteran can recognize those triggers. In turn, the spouse understands what the veteran is contending with, and can be more compassionate and understanding. The veteran also learns how to be empathetic toward their spouse, which creates a connection and eliminates the isolation that leads to feelings such as depression and anger.

"If you build a bigger foundation with the spouse and the veteran, they have a better chance of healing and working it out in the long run," Satterly said.

Another issue combat veterans struggle with is the loss of camaraderie and mission. Satterly helps these veterans by encouraging them to look forward—to learn skills that suit them or go back to school to discover their passion and purpose, which also helps them shake their feelings of unworthiness.

Satterly also suggests that veterans surround themselves with the people they want to emulate, even it means spending time with people who don't understand and haven't experienced combat. And above all, there is one crucial step they need to take in order to move forward.

"The second you start to ask for help, you'll start to feel better," Satterly said.

Is Student Loan Debt Now Dischargeable Through Bankruptcy? It's Complicated

BRITTANY HUNTER

History was made earlier this month when a New York judge ruled that U.S. Navy veteran Kevin Rosenberg's \$221,385.49 student loan debt balance is dischargeable under Chapter 7 bankruptcy.

Prior to the ruling, attempting to dismiss student loan debt through bankruptcy was exceedingly difficult, if not altogether impossible. Unlike other kinds of consumer debt, which can be erased after filing for bankruptcy, student loan debt is the only type considered ineligible for dismissal unless certain legal requirements are satisfied.

As the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid office explains, "You may have your federal student loan discharged in bankruptcy only if you file a separate action, known as an 'adversary proceeding,' requesting the bankruptcy court find that repayment would impose undue hardship on you and your dependents."

But proving undue hardship is not as easy as it may sound.

As one site so grimly puts it, for those struggling to pay back their loans "... the only real guaranteed situation for federal student loan discharge is death."

The ruling handed down in Rosenberg's case may usher in a new era in which the bar for the dismissal of student loan debt is lower than ever before. But the question remains: should individuals be let off the hook for their student loan debt?

A Common Occurrence

Like so many others, Rosenberg borrowed money for his undergrad degree at the University of Arizona from 1993 to 1996, and again for his law degree at Cardozo Law School at Yeshiva University from 2001 to 2004. After completing law school and accumulating a total of \$116,000 in student loan debt, Rosenberg got a job at a law firm. But he decided that practicing law was not his cup of tea. He left the profession and instead became an entrepreneur. One of his companies was once featured in *The New York Times*.

Thanks to accrued interest over the next 14 years, Rosenberg's student loan debt skyrocketed to \$221,000.

While he enjoyed some success in his entrepreneurial pursuits, the Great Recession of 2008, combined with other financial setbacks, resulted in severe financial strain for Rosenberg, who was struggling to bear the burden of his enormous student loan debt.

"All along, having this debt, it would ruin relationships for me. ... it just affects everything in your life," he said.

After years of working 10 to 12 hour days, seven days a week just to stay financially afloat, Rosenberg was left with no other option but to file for Chapter 7 bankruptcy in 2018, a decision he says wasn't easy. He also filed an adversary proceeding with the hopes of having his student loan debt dismissed as well, even though the odds of being granted relief were not in his favor.

On Jan. 7, 2020, U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Cecelia G. Morris shocked the nation when she ruled in his favor, declaring that Rosenberg's debt was eligible for dismissal.

Commenting on this landmark ruling, Rosenberg wrote in a statement: "The news today leaves me with a feeling of relief, not celebration."

"It also kind of incensed me that student loans are treated differently than other debts, especially given the bailout of corporations ... and the housing bubble."

Rosenberg isn't wrong. When large corporations have found themselves in the midst of pending financial doom, our tax dollars have been used to bail them out. In 2008, the very banks that perpetuated the financial crisis were given \$700 billion by the government when Congress passed the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP). In this instance, no judge was needed to approve this massive hand-out—just congressional approval.



Audience members during BET News' Young Gifted and Broke: Our Student Loan Crisis, at The Howard Theatre in Washington on Sept. 10, 2019.

The Brunner Test

But student loans are a different ballgame. In order to have loans considered eligible for dismissal under Chapter 7, judges must apply the "Brunner test," which was born out of the 1987 case of *Brunner v. New York State Higher Education Services Corp.*

The Brunner test requires a person to prove that:

1. The debtor cannot maintain, based on current income and expenses, a "minimal" standard of living for the debtor and the debtor's dependents if forced to repay the student loans;
2. Additional circumstances exist indicating that this state of affairs is likely to persist for a significant portion of the repayment period of the student loans, and
3. The debtor has made good faith efforts to repay the loans.

Morris believed that Rosenberg satisfied all the requirements, especially considering that his financial situation combined with his monthly student loan payments left him with negative earnings each month. But more importantly, Morris took the time to point out that the Brunner test had been used to set out "punitive standards" and "retributive dicta" over the year—something Morris set out to correct.

In her ruling, she said she applied the test as it was originally intended, adding that its past applications "have become a quasi-standard of mythic proportions, so much so that most people (bankruptcy professionals, as well as lay individuals) believe it impossible to discharge student loans. ... This court will not participate in perpetuating these myths."

Rosenberg's loan service providers will likely appeal the ruling, but the implications of Rosenberg's case could have far-reaching consequences.

Peter Frank, a bankruptcy lawyer from Kingston, New York, told the Albany Times Union:

RICHARD CHAPIN DOWNS JR./GETTY IMAGES FOR BET

"All of us have been discouraged from attempting to discharge student loans because it appeared that the law was a wall too high to climb for most debtors other than those with severe disabilities. If the district court affirms Chief Morris' order, there will be a lot more filers for bankruptcy all over the country."

A Problem without a Clear Solution

At the end of the first quarter of 2019, consumer debt in the United States had reached \$14 trillion, with student loan debt accounting for about \$1.486 trillion. To understand just how grave these numbers are, at the height of the financial crisis in 2008, consumer debt sat at around \$13 trillion, with student loans accounting for \$611 billion.

With the total amount of student loan debt now sitting at \$1.6 trillion, it's clear many Americans have a major problem on their hands. But is dismissal the appropriate remedy?

But the question remains: should individuals be let off the hook for their student loan debt?

The Moral Hazards of Dismissing Student Loan Debt

Student loan forgiveness has become a popular idea, with both Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) putting forth plans of their own. But these plans are problematic. In addition to being a slap in the face to those who borrowed and made the sacrifices necessary to pay their loans back in full, these plans are economically and politically unfeasible.

Making it easier to dismiss student loan debt through bankruptcy may

not be ideal, but it would give judges the opportunity to make decisions on a case-by-case basis rather than forgiving borrowers en masse.

The new Rosenberg ruling has provided the legal precedent needed to make dismissal through bankruptcy easier, but this won't solve the larger issue of soaring student debt. In fact, it perpetuates the problem.

Discharging the debt will undoubtedly help individual borrowers, but dismissing individual debt doesn't mean it goes away. There is no magic to make it disappear; it simply shifts the burden. Someone has to pay, and this will inevitably fall on taxpayers.

Agreeing to let borrowers off the hook also perpetuates the broken system we have now. If you know your loans can be easily wiped out, what's going to stop you from borrowing even more money and then filing for bankruptcy once the loans go into repayment?

Not to mention, student loans actually raise the cost of tuition. The more students borrow, the higher the tuition becomes, which results in more students taking out even more student loans to pay for the increase in cost.

Making it easier for individuals to discharge their debts does nothing to fix the underlying problem: surging costs.

Brandon Renfro, assistant professor of finance and financial planner, points out that dismissal of student loan debt creates a new problem in which no one is held accountable for the growing crisis.

"A point here is that schools aren't strictly accountable for the debts of their students," he explained. "If students also aren't responsible for their debt, then neither party to the transaction is responsible for the cost."

It is undeniable that this predicament needs a solution. But until we change the bad incentives in the higher education system, there is no end to this crisis in sight.

Personal responsibility is an important element of adulthood. It could most certainly be argued that 18-year-olds are not economically wise enough to make such an important financial decision, especially when they have not yet entered the workforce. But the fact remains that they did sign a contract promising to pay back their loans.

You can bet that the Rosenberg case will not be the last of its kind. With borrowers now filled with hope that they, too, can have their student loan debt dismissed, this will not be the last time we hear the word "Brunner test" come up in bankruptcy proceedings over the coming months. But we need to tread carefully lest we unintentionally exacerbate the problem.

Brittany Hunter is a senior writer for the Foundation for Economic Education. This article was originally published on FEE.org

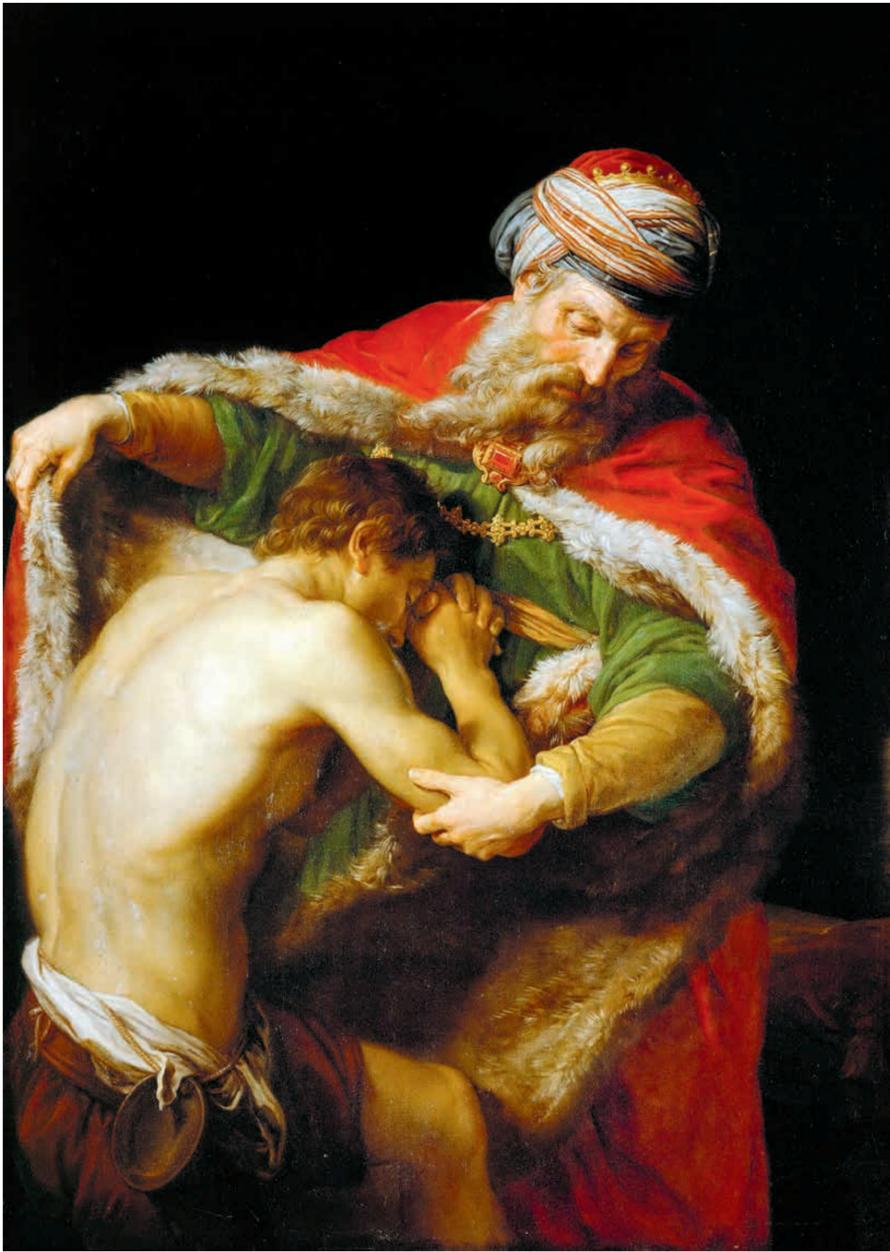
ROBYN BECK/APP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Pasadena City College students at the graduation ceremony in Pasadena, Calif., on June 14, 2019. With 45 million borrowers owing \$1.5 trillion, the student debt crisis in the United States has exploded in recent years.

REACHING WITHIN: WHAT TRADITIONAL ART OFFERS THE HEART

‘The Return of the Prodigal Son’: Love and Forgiveness



“The Return of the Prodigal Son,” 1773, by Pompeo Batoni. Oil on Canvas, 54 inches by 40 inches. Museum of Art History, Vienna, Austria.

Though there are just two figures, Batoni maintained the father as the primary focal point through several compositional methods.

ERIC BESS

I recently came across Pompeo Batoni’s “The Return of the Prodigal Son” and was immediately struck by the care and warmth between the two figures in the painting. What might this painting and the story it represents provide for us today?

Pompeo Batoni and the Grand Tour Pompeo Batoni (1708–1787) has been described as Italy’s “last old master.” During the 18th century, he was the most famous painter in Europe and dominated Italian portrait painting. He was also well-known for religious and allegorical paintings.

During the 18th century, the Grand Tour, which was a rite of passage for wealthy young men, was very popular. The youths traveled throughout Europe to gain a deeper connection to their traditions and cultural heritage.

Many wealthy patrons on the Grand Tour commissioned portraits from Batoni. The artist flattered his sitters by depicting them in a grand historical scene with historical dress. In a way, these portrait paintings became physical manifestations of the patron’s connection with tradition.

Alongside his portraits, Batoni’s allegorical and religious paintings were also highly prized. He painted scenes that exemplified Western culture. His painting “The Return of the Prodigal Son” depicts a biblical parable that shares principles of the Western traditions embodied by the Grand Tour.

Parable of the Prodigal Son

Jesus tells the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15: 11-31 (NIV). The story introduces a father with two sons.

The younger son requests his inheritance so he can travel, and his father agrees. But after the young son gathers his possessions and leaves for a distant land, he squanders his wealth.

A terrible famine terrorizes the distant land, and the young man finds that he needs to work; he ends up tending pigs. As times are so hard, he gets so hungry that he even eats pig feed. He decides to return to his father.

Upon seeing his son returning, the father runs to him and embraces him. The young man says, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.” But the father rejoices: He gives his young son a robe, a ring, sandals, and a homecoming celebration, stating, “For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”

The older son, however, refuses to participate in the celebration. Despite his obedience to his father, he believes that his father is favoring his younger brother. The father pleads with his older son to recognize and appreciate all that he provides for him and to also celebrate the return of his younger brother.

Batoni and ‘The Return of the Prodigal Son’

Batoni depicted the moment the younger son returns to his father. I believe this to be the moment the son falls to his knees and says, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.” The father takes his son’s elbow to help him up, and he goes to cover his son’s bare back with his robe.

Batoni depicted only the father and young son in his composition. Though there are just two figures, Batoni maintained the father as the primary focal point through several compositional methods.

First, the father has a higher placement in the composition. A hierarchy of importance is suggested between the father and his young son since the son kneels and makes himself lower in the presence of his father.

Next, there are more rendered details on the father than on the young son. The father’s clothing has an array of textures: He has donned gold and jewelry and has textured fur and a velvety robe. The son is depicted with a bare back and a simple peasant garment to cover himself. The details and textures make the father a more important compositional figure than the son.

Finally, Batoni used color intensity to maintain the father as the primary focal point. The father’s garb is much more colorful than the son’s. Batoni incorporated the complementary colors of red and green into the father’s clothes. Complementary colors are believed to be colors that naturally contrast one another and thereby hold our gaze longer than an area of lower contrast like the simple browns of the son’s clothes.

Even the father’s flesh has more color than the son’s flesh: The father’s rosy cheeks and hands are more vibrant than the son’s yellowish tones.

Traditional Values: Love and Forgiveness

I think Batoni wisely made the father the focal point. The father represents much more than just a father. Because of his actions, the father represents the traditional spiritual values of love and forgiveness—values that can be beneficial as the focal points of our lives.

I see the younger son representing a youthful curiosity because of his desire to embrace worldly life and travel to distant lands. I see the older son representing a sense of entitlement because he believes that he doesn’t get enough from his father.

The two sons approach the values of love and forgiveness that the father represents in different ways. The young, desiring the pleasures of life, steps away from traditional values and suffers immensely. It is only upon the return home that the young son is given a ring, a robe, and is celebrated for being “alive again”; that is, it is through these traditional values that the young son is truly alive and prospers.

The older son is also tempted by the pleasures of life. He wants more from his father. In other words, he feels that the love and care he has received have not been enough. His desire for more begins a journey down the destructive path of jealousy.

What the older son doesn’t realize is how much his father has already provided him. He never disobeyed his father; that is, he never strayed from home, and therefore was always wealthy. But without having embraced the values of love and forgiveness—the spiritual underpinning of life—he was never truly alive.

It is the father who must remind his older son that he has never suffered for lack of comfort or pleasure. The father not only forgives his younger son, but he also encourages his older son to love and forgive his brother. The father is the source of love and forgiveness. Therefore, the father is the focal point of the story.



“Portrait of a Young Man” by Pompeo Batoni. Oil on Canvas, 97 1/8 inches by 69 1/4 inches. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Bringing Tradition Forward

Traditional principles become tradition because they prove to be consistently beneficial to the people who engage in them. The Grand Tour encouraged traditional values by exposing youths to the outward manifestation of Western culture: beautiful architecture, artwork, and the best refinements that each country toured had to offer.

Let’s not forget the best of the inward refinements that Western culture offered: the traditional principles of love and forgiveness. With these in mind, maybe, like Batoni, we can be exemplars for reinvigorating these values—a Grand Tour of what it means to be loving and forgiving. Historically, these principles have been beneficial to us when we accept and practice them.

Now when I see Batoni’s painting, I am reminded to forgive and care for the people who are only trying to find their way in their own stories. It reminds me that I don’t need to wander away from these values in search of life’s pleasures, refuse to celebrate with those who seem to have more than I, nor attack people who are acting out their jealousy and entitlement. I need, instead, to embody and encourage love and forgiveness, and perhaps I too can physically manifest my connection to tradition.

All biblical passages are from the *New International Version*.

Art has an incredible ability to point to what can’t be seen so that we may ask “What does this mean for me and for everyone who sees it?” “How has it influenced the past and how might it influence the future?” “What does it suggest about the human experience?” These are some of the questions I explore in my series Reaching Within: What Traditional Art Offers the Heart.

Eric Bess is a practicing representational artist. He is currently a doctoral student at the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts (IDSV).

SHEN YUN PERFORMING ARTS

Audience Reactions

The Epoch Times considers Shen Yun Performing Arts the significant cultural event of our time and has covered audience reactions since the company’s inception in 2006.

The Epoch Times is a media sponsor of Shen Yun Performing Arts, and believes its mission to revive the 5,000-year civilization of China is history in the making, and in line with our mission of covering and preserving traditional arts and culture.



It’s exquisite, I love it. I’ve never seen such collective grace in all the dance shows I’ve seen. It’s amazing. Really, it’s the most well-executed dance performance I’ve ever seen ... There’s a different spirit to the show than other dance performances that I’ve seen, so there’s something special ... The message I received from it is the ability to rise above, and the ability to find grace and beauty despite what you have to face in this world.

REBECCA COLEY *dance instructor at Carnegie Mellon, at the Benedum Center for the Performing Arts in Pittsburgh on Jan. 25, 2020*



It was absolutely stunning, really, I’ve never seen anything like this ... I’ve never seen anything that expresses a culture the way that this performance does ... It’s always rather refreshing to see that in this world in which we live, there still is music that is rather alive and dynamic, that expresses, however, a culture that is quite different from ours. When we do, [we] are able to share in likeness, because we’re connected by our human spirits.

NORAH DUNCAN IV *chairman of the music department at Wayne State University, at the Detroit Opera House on Jan. 25, 2020*



I heard it never [had] a chance to perform in mainland China. That is so unfortunate ... That would be a loss of the Chinese heritage to most of the Chinese people ... I would say that [the energy and beauty of the show is] something like lots of flowers ... I watched the water sleeve[s], [in which the artists] show [much] beauty, what we can feel in the Chinese literature. So that’s a performance in a very classic way, I would say, and that’s a very good way to show that really traditional Chinese culture to the foreign eyes. And I think that is very good to observe, that’s [the] kind of Chinese history and culture which we can’t see in mainland China.

SIMON CHENG *ex-British Consulate worker who was detained in China after a visit to Hong Kong, at the Eventim Apollo in London on Jan. 25, 2020*



It’s spectacular, and [the music] is so sweeping and I feel like it lifts the dancers as it plays ... They’re very much alive, and they very much love what they do, and it comes across in their faces. ... [How] enveloping of an experience it is, how complete it is, and you just lose yourself in the performance. And that’s the best, to go to the theater and lose yourself in the performance. You feel transformed when you do that.

JERRY JAMISON *owner of an advertising firm, at the San Diego Civic Theatre in California on Jan. 24, 2020*

FILM REVIEW: ‘PANGA’

A Heartwarming Tale About Achieving Your Dreams

IAN KANE

Sports-drama films are pretty popular in mainstream East Indian cinema. However, many of these Bollywood productions tell the same stories over and over. Writer-director Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari took a different tact, centering her new sport film, “Panga,” on a female Indian kabaddi (an Indian tag and tackle sport) player, or at least a former one.

The film’s opening paints an idyllic picture: Young mother Jaya Nigam (Kangana Ranaut, “Tanu Weds Manu Returns,” “Queen”) lives in a small town in India with her loving family. Indeed, we see Jaya preparing her 7-year-old son, Adi (Yagya Bhasin), for school, telling him how

to behave properly, as well as helping him with his homework. We also see her spending quality time with her husband, Prashant (Jassie Gill), who seems to wear a perpetual grin.

Jaya’s past as a kabaddi national champion has landed her a pretty nice job as a ticket salesperson at the local railway station. Her ho-hum middle-class lifestyle is the result of her choosing to wed eight years prior and quit the kabaddi team for her new life as a wife and mother.

Although Jaya is sometimes reminded of her former glory, she shrugs it off as if to indicate that she’s made the right decision. Her no-nonsense supervisor at the railway station occasionally reminds her that she’s just an-

‘Panga’

Director
Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari

Starring
Kangana Ranaut, Jassie Gill, Richa Chadha

Running Time
2 hours, 11 minutes

Not Rated

Release Date
Jan. 24

★★★★★

other worker now, not a famous athlete.

One day, Jaya runs into one of her old pals and former kabaddi teammates, Meenu (Richa Chadha), and the two have a heartfelt conversation about the past, as well as the present. Later, her hubby reveals to Adi that Jaya used to be a sports champion.

These events set off a chain-reaction within Jaya; she contemplates returning to her former life. Could she actually make a comeback at the age of 32, in spite of being out of the game for so long?

These questions aren’t typically investigated in Bollywood sports dramas, so they feel fresh and fascinating. And, unlike some dramas that come out of the

Western world, where the wife of the family dumps her husband/family in order to accomplish whatever she feels she needs to, writer Tiwari again takes a different approach: Jaya’s family is actually her strength.

Throughout the film, Jaya’s family and friends convince her to give her sporting life another shot and motivate her to keep going. It becomes quite clear that she doesn’t have to sacrifice one for the other.

In addition, as director, Tiwari takes her time and gives each scene a leisurely, yet deliberate pace. It’s always nice to see filmmakers move along at a relaxed pace in order to give certain scenes gravitas, and allow audiences to better sense what the

1



characters are going through. Meanwhile, Ranaut really disappears into her role as a devoted wife and mother whose fierce desire to compete is reawakened. There are a few issues that take away from the film, if only slightly: The film’s script (co-written by Nikhil Mehrotra and Nitesh

Tiwari) feels contrived in a few places. For instance, Adi comes off as too worldly for his age. And later in the film, Jaya meets the kabaddi team captain, Sinha (Rajesh Tailang), who is highly antagonistic toward the former star—but for what reason is never explained. Is the younger woman

2



1. Kangana Ranaut in “Panga.”
2. Jassie Gill and Kangana Ranaut play a happy couple in “Panga.”
3. Kangana Ranaut plays a woman going for her dream in “Panga.”

3



threatened by Jaya or does she simply not like her face? These factors feel like invented conventions of the screenplay and seem forced and artificial. However, these are minor gripes. In all, “Panga” is a delightfully entertaining film. It touches on having faith in your

family (and they in you) and pursuing your dreams against all odds, regardless of age or role in life.

Ian Kane is a filmmaker and author based out of Los Angeles. To see more, visit DreamFlightEnt.com

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STYLE

Classic Blue: How to Wear the Color of the Year

MANY NGOM

We can all agree that everyone loves blue, in different tones and shades, from royal blue to navy blue. As it happens, the Pantone Color Institute deemed "classic blue" the color of the year for 2020.

According to executive director Leatrice Eiseman, classic blue conveys a sense of trust and faith, which we need in this chaotic world. "A solid and dependable blue hue we can always rely on," she said when introducing the color in a press release. "Classic blue encourages us to look beyond the obvious to expand our thinking; challenging us to think more, increase our perspective and open the flow of communication."



Ladies: Formal Look

When it comes to fashion, blue, like black, is a classic color, elegant and simple, yet tranquil and easy to wear. For a formal event, opt for a monochromatic look, blue head to toe, whether with a dress, a suit, or a three-piece outfit. The key is to keep the shades closer together. This look is sophisticated and timeless.

IAN GAVAN/GETTY IMAGES FOR IMG



Ladies: Casual Look

For a more casual look, don't be afraid to contrast classic blue with bold colors like yellow or kelly green. The classic blue will harmonize them—like this blue sweater from Ralph Lauren that balances the flashy colors and conveys a colorful and fun preppy look.

SLAVEN VLASIC/GETTY IMAGES FOR NEW YORK FASHION WEEK; THE SHOWS



Men: Casual Look

Let's talk about menswear. While classic blue is usually seen in casual and sportswear, it has made its way into the formal world of suits. As for formal wear, mixing classic blue with a neutral gray is a quintessential combination that can be updated by playing with fabric textures and patterns. In winter, a wool plaid suit can be paired with a crisp cotton shirt, while in summer, classic blue canvas pants can be mixed with a nice white linen jacket.

FASHIONSTOCK.COM/SHUTTERSTOCK



Men: Formal Look

As for formal wear, mixing classic blue with a neutral gray is a quintessential combination that can be updated by playing with fabric textures and patterns. In winter, a wool plaid suit can be paired with a crisp cotton shirt, while in summer, classic blue canvas pants can be mixed with a nice white linen jacket.

VICTOR BOYKO/GETTY IMAGES

SKINCARE

How to Deal With Dry Winter Skin: Tips and Recommendations

The alternating cold air outdoors and dry heat indoors can be tough on one's skin, leading to itching, redness, and even premature wrinkling. Margot White, a health educator and founder of online boutique The Choosy Chick, which researches and curates nontoxic health and beauty products for the whole family, offers some tips for how to deal with dry winter skin. Here's her advice:

What Can You Do?

Stay hydrated and moisturized. While the temptation is to crank up the hot water in the shower on cold days, this is one of the worst things you can do. You should actually turn the dial down. When you get out of the shower, towel dry lightly, leaving the skin damp. Then, apply your body cream or oil while the skin is still moist. While this might not be the most comfortable routine on cold days, it can make a tremendous difference! Also, choose your products carefully. Most skincare products on the market are simply a cocktail of unnecessary, potentially hazardous ingredients, many of which can cause and aggravate dry, irritated skin.

Ingredients to Avoid

1. Sodium Lauryl/Laureth Sulfate. The chemical used in car washes and to re-

move grease is also used in skincare products such as bath washes, to make them foam, offering that "squeaky clean feeling." It can actually remove protective oils from your skin and is commonly associated with skin reactions and irritations.

2. Fragrance. Most synthetic fragrances are made up of hundreds of other chemical ingredients that do not need to be disclosed on the ingredient label because they are considered proprietary. Fragrance is an irritant and the cause of allergies, headaches, and skin upset. It is typically made of phthalates, which are known hormone disruptors. Opt for fragrance from natural sources like grapefruit that you can identify on the label, or no-scent skincare products and detergents.

3. Petroleum-based products. While we all grew up slathered in petroleum jelly, it can actually provide a barrier, smothering the skin, not allowing it to breathe. There are also contamination concerns leading to toxicity, depending on how well it is refined. Opt for organic oils and butters like shea butter, babassu oil, avocado oil, and grape seed oil.

4. Alcohols. Alcohol can be drying in skincare products. Look for in lotions and use sparingly.



FIVE NATURAL/ORGANIC PRODUCT RECOMMENDATIONS

For the Face

1. ORGAID Hydrating Sheet Masks restore, hydrate, and rejuvenate skin with organic ingredients that penetrate the skin to enhance your complexion. Sheet masks allow the serum to be absorbed deeper into skin (and not evaporate) for ultimate hydration that lasts. Orgaid extends their commitment to the natural world with recyclable packaging. All masks are made from an Eco-derma fabric that is biodegradable.

2. SCHAF Daily Moisturizer contains 100 percent organic rose and argan oils to transform the appearance of your skin over time, and prickly pear seed oil to instill radiance and brilliance. It does not leave a greasy feel, but instead plumps lines, preventing premature wrinkles, and has brightening effects such as lightening under-eye circles and helping to even skin tone.

3. Kimberly Sayer's Daily Moisturizer incredible formulation contains live organic extracts, antioxidants, and organic sunscreen to protect against free radical damage and aging. The antioxidant beech bud extract helps to repair damaged cells deep within the skin. Cold-pressed borage oil fortifies cell growth and provides anti-aging benefits. An excellent choice for dry, sensitive, and normal skin types.

For the Body

4. Kosmatology Lotion Bar: Developed by a pharmacist to treat her daughter's eczema without steroids, it has kept her eczema-free since! Made without water, these solid lotion bars are free of potentially hazardous preservatives and chemicals such as phthalates, parabens, formaldehyde, and petroleum that are used in water-containing lotions.

For the Lips

5. 28 Litsea Petala Lip Balm: This creamy, long-lasting, and incredibly moisturizing lip balm is made from only the finest ingredients, including babassu oil, organic cocoa butter, and sweet almond oil. It's available in four delicious, natural flavors.



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FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES



Little Things

by Julia Fletcher Carney

Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean
And the pleasant land.

So the little moments,
Humble though they be,
Make the mighty ages
Of eternity.

So our little errors
Lead the soul away
From the path of virtue,
Far in sin to stray.

Little deeds of kindness,
Little words of love,
Help to make earth happy
Like the heaven above.

ORI ARTISTE/SHUTTERSTOCK

WHERE DID THE RAT GO WHEN IT LOST ITS TAIL?

KEIGO YASUDA/SHUTTERSTOCK

“Knowing others is intelligence, knowing oneself is true wisdom; mastering others is strength, mastering oneself is true power.”

LAOZI (601 BC-UNKNOWN)

NATATA/SHUTTERSTOCK

ADOLF HITLER COMES INTO POWER

On Jan. 30, 1933, Nazi (National Socialist) leader Adolf Hitler was named Chancellor of Germany. His dictatorship was one of the most horrific and deadly in human history. He was responsible for the deaths of almost six million innocent Jews and millions of other victims he deemed "socially undesirable," among an estimated 19 million deaths of civilians and prisoners of war. He initiated World War II, the deadliest war in history.



Adolf Hitler in 1938.

The Holocaust Memorial in Berlin.



BEANALU/GETTY IMAGES

By Aidan Danza, age 13

NATURE CORNER: SMART ANIMALS

Many animals are well-known to be very intelligent, such as chimpanzees.

However, there are many other animals just starting to be recognized as big-brained.



CROWS

New Caledonian crows are arguably one of the smartest birds in the world. In the wild, they make tools out of sticks and leaves, which they use to "fish" for grubs and other creepy-crawlies in rotting logs and trees. Scientists from the University of Auckland captured seven wild crows to further understand the crows' intelligence. Three of the crows were given the test, after being allowed to become familiar with individual parts of the test. Then they were given the whole test, which consisted of a short stick, hanging by a string, which had to be used to reach a longer stick, in a cage, which was, in turn, used to reach a small piece of meat.

All of the birds in the first group passed the test on their first try. The second group, of four birds, were not given familiarity with the test. Two out of four got it on their first go, while the other two passed on their third and fourth attempts. New Caledonian crows are taught to use and make tools by their parents and older siblings, and it seems that parent crows are very keen on

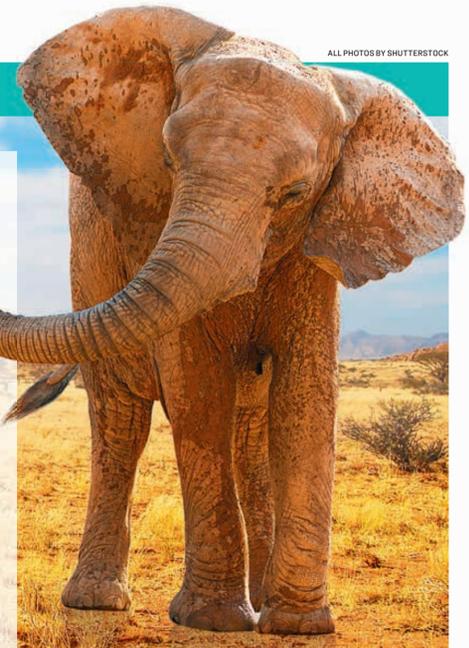
passing on their knowledge of tools to their children.

Other crows have improvised tools, as well. In Japan, there are crows that drop nuts in crosswalks, allow cars to run over the nuts. Then, when traffic stops, for people to cross, the crows pick up the pieces of their now-cracked nut and feast away.

ELEPHANTS

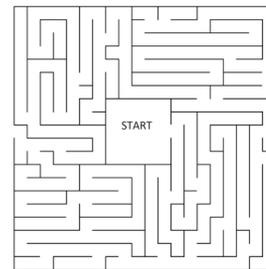
Elephants are very well-known to have very far-reaching memories, and this is true. Two former circus elephants still recognized each other 22 years after they had been separated.

Elephants also seem to have empathy—they mourn their dead, sometimes even trying to bury the dead elephant. They also console distressed elephants by stroking each other with their trunks and vocalizing.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

AMAZING ESCAPES!



USE THE FOUR NUMBERS IN THE CORNERS, AND THE OPERANDS (+, -, AND X) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one "unique" solution but, there may also be "equivalent" solutions. For example: 6 + (7 X 3) + 1 = 28 and 1 + (7 X 3) + 6 = 28

Easy puzzle 1

6	10		
3	8		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Easy 1
01 = 8 × (2 + 9)
8 - 01 = (2 + 9)

Medium puzzle 1

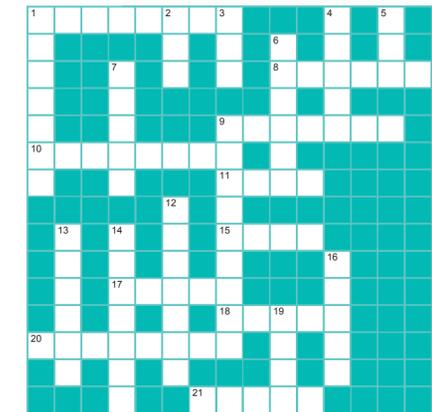
14	18		
6	17		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Medium 1
91 = 9 + 21 + 81

Hard puzzle 1

14	36		
13	32		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Hard 1
28 - 81 + 91 + 98



Across

- 1 Desk item (8)
- 8 Holiday fruit (6)
- 9 Whose New Year? (7)
- 10 Red ones contain money (8)
- 11 The gift we all want (4)

Down

- 1 They glow in lanterns (7)
- 2 2018 was the Year of the ____ (3)
- 3 Festive color (3)
- 4 This year follows the Dragon (5)
- 5 Last year was the Year of the ____ (3)
- 6 "Houses of Heaven" (6)
- 7 It comes in red envelopes (5)
- 9 Observe (9)
- 12 Festive day (7)
- 13 Panda food (6)
- 14 We burn this on holidays (7)
- 16 2014 was the Year of the ____ (5)
- 19 2015 was the Year of the ____ (4)

15

- 15 Tusked animal (4)
- 17 The Middle Kingdom (5)
- 18 It's got stripes (5)
- 20 Chinese New Year treat (8)
- 21 Presents (5)



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THE EPOCH TIMES

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

The Patron Saint of 'Woke' and Virtue-Signaling

JAMES SALE

It was King Solomon who wrote that there was nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9) and that all was vanity. Certainly we have enough vanity in our own age to satisfy all but the most dedicated narcissists. But I am always struck by how the myths, legends, and stories of the past resonate now—not only resonate, but also cast a fresh interpretation on what is happening and why.

Take, for example, identity politics and two of its most significant features: being "woke" and virtue-signaling. I cited in a previous article Professor Norman Doidge's comment that virtue-signaling may be considered the most common vice of our age.

What is "woke" and what is virtue-signaling?

Well, woke seems to be the self-congratulatory idea that one, as a person, has awoken to all the injustices of the world: sexism, racism, ageism, religion-ism, you-name-it-ism and add the obligatory word "inequality." Somehow this awareness—this "wokeness"—this knowledge makes for morally good people who by virtue of their understanding somehow contribute to the fight against these injustices or, at times, perceived injustices.

Virtue-signaling is the outward expression of this wokeness, whereby we let everyone know that we are aware and as a result we accumulate moral medals, badges, and "brownie" points.

Collecting Virtue Badges and Medals

When we are woke, we end up feeling really good about ourselves because we tell our own self-concept that "I am a good person because I am against homelessness, poverty, and inequality; the government should do something about all this and billionaires shouldn't have so much money; it's not fair, it's not equal..." And so on. "Wokers" always assume they are on the moral high ground.

Unsurprisingly, this phenomenon of moral self-righteousness has occurred many times before, and since the ancients were so wise, it's also been noted: I believe that I can identify the patron saint of all such woke and virtue-signaling addicts.

Incredibly, it is in one line of scripture only that the whole pattern unfolds: The patron saint of woke and virtue-signaling is, of course, Judas Iscariot.

What About the Poor?

We see that Judas is woke in that one dramatic moment (John 12:5) when he sees Mary massaging an expensive perfume into Jesus's feet and he asks: "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?"

Judas doesn't say this as a neutral inquiry—a matter of objective concern—but with anger, bitterness, and self-righteous indignation. How do we know this? Because of Jesus's reply:

"Let her alone ... for the poor you always have with you, ... but you do not always have Me." Jesus defends the woman, whom Judas is emotionally, morally attacking.

The attack is woke all over.

Continued on Page 16



In the Church of St. John the Baptist, in Yeovil, England, one stained glass window depicts the patron saint of woke with a black halo.

Woke seems to be the self-congratulatory idea that one, as a person, has awoken to all the injustices of the world.



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HISTORY

MOTHERS AND SONS:

George Washington and Mary Ball Washington

The hand that rocks the cradle

JEFF MINICK

If we look at his early life, George Washington (1732–1799) appears an unlikely candidate to lead an army against the British and earn the title “Father of His Country.”

In 1746, encouraged by his half-brother Lawrence as well as by others, 14-year-old Washington considered joining the British navy. And in the French and Indian War (1756–1763), Washington served with the British against the French, fighting for Crown and Parliament at Fort Mifflin, the first battle of the war, and surviving the disastrous defeat of General Braddock’s forces at Fort Duquesne, where four bullets passed through Washington’s cloak and two horses were shot from under him.

Washington was one of the richest men ever to be elected to the presidency, eclipsed only by John Kennedy and Donald Trump, with some of his fortune deriving from his marriage to the wealthy Martha Custis. At one point, he owned 50,000 acres of land.

A Leader of Rebels

Clearly, Washington had much to lose by entering into rebellion. So why did he become a revolutionary? Why take command of the American army and fight the British?

Some historians believe that Washington chafed under British rule for financial reasons, that Britain’s plans for America after the defeat of the French would limit the opportunities and westward growth of the colonies. Others contend that his four years of service in the British army during the French and Indian War caused him to resent the British for their arrogance and their contempt for the colonials.

And some historians argue that Washington’s mother bred in him a penchant for rebellion.

Widow, Mother, Exemplar

Orphaned at a young age, Mary Ball (1707?–1789) in 1731 married widower Augustine Washington. In addition to the three living children from Augustine’s first marriage, the Washingtons had six more children—George was the oldest, and the youngest died an infant. In 1743, Mary became a widow when Augustine died after complaining of stomach pains.

Unlike so many widows of her time, Mary Washington never remarried, choosing instead to raise her children and operate her properties alone. She focused much of her attention on Ferry Farm, a 276-acre plantation located near Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Mary’s responsibilities must have seemed crushing at times. She had to see to the upbringing and education of her many children, run a large farm, and manage the slaves who worked the land. She was not impoverished, but she lacked the means to provide George with a classical education like that attained by fellow Virginians Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, and was not a part of the upper echelon of Virginia society. In some ways, George may have benefited from these circumstances, learning at an early age to keep house-

hold accounts and operate a farm.

Mary was a pious woman who believed strongly in such concepts as duty and honor, and she passed these virtues to George by example and by instruction. We see in the son the mother’s character, described by Washington Irving as “strong plain sense, strict integrity, and an inflexible spirit of command.”

Historical Takes on the Widow Washington

After her death, George Washington’s first biographers paid Mary homage for her sacrifices and for her hand in the formation of George’s character. Later, other historians investigated her and cast Mary in a different light, describing her as crude, whiny, and self-centered. These were the historians who found Mary particularly overbearing and protective in her refusal to allow George to join the navy, and greedy in her later requests for money from him.

In a new biography “The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington,” Martha Saxton takes a different view, pointing out the many similarities between mother and son: their love for the outdoors, their religious views, their careful attention to money matters, their stoicism, their sometimes prickly temper. She also shows us the rigors of Mary’s daily life and the obstacles as a single woman with which she had to contend.

Coincidentally, Craig Shirley, author of such books as “Reagan’s Revolution” and “Citizen Newt,” has also written a revisionist biography of Mary. In “Mary Ball Washington: The Untold Story of George Washington’s Mother,” he writes of Mary that “she is seen as a saint or a villain, nothing in between,” and then adds that “Mary’s seemingly contradictory character traits complimented each other. Mary’s kindness and control were one and the same.”

A Complicated Relationship

In several places in “Mary Ball Washington,” Shirley cites Lawrence Washington, George’s cousin, who offered this observation of Mary: “I was often there with George, his playmate, schoolmate, and young man’s companion. Of the mother I was ten times more afraid than of my own parents. She awed me in the midst of her kindness, for she was indeed truly

kind ... and even now, when time has whitened my locks, and I am the grandfather of a second generation, I could not behold that majestic woman without feelings it is impossible to describe.”

To answer those historians who believe that Mary’s influence was negative or inconsequential, Shirley directs us to a quote from George himself, that it was his mother by whose “maternal hand (early deprived of a father) I was led to manhood.” He reinforces this evidence with another quote from George’s cousin Lawrence: “Whoever has seen that awe-inspiring air and manner so characteristic in the Father of his Country, will remember the matron as she appeared when the presiding genius of her well-ordered household, commanding and being obeyed.”



A 1916 photomechanical print of a portrait of Mary Ball Washington called “Mary Ball Washington at the Age of About Four-Score,” attributed to Robert Edge Pine. Library of Congress’s Prints and Photographs division.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Honored Madam

As a teenager, George may have felt constrained by his mother’s demands, though he also spent a large amount of time in the homes of his relatives. As an adult, he quarreled with Mary over control of Ferry Farm, which Augustine had left to him. He may have also felt removed from Mary when, like Thomas Jefferson’s mother, she refused to support the American Revolution.

On the other hand, in 1772 George purchased a house for his mother in Fredericksburg, where she lived until her death, and had water delivered to her daily from the “medicine springs” on Ferry Farm. In her will, Mary made George her chief executor and left him the bulk of her property. Such acts seem to indicate a bond of affection and trust.

Perhaps their tangled relationship is revealed, too, in the salutation with which Washington greeted Mary in their correspondence: “Honored Madam.” As Shirley points out, “This salutation served two purposes: it showed his respect for her while holding her at arm’s length.”

Martha Saxton’s words in “The Widow Washington” may sum up their relationship best of all: “Like mother, like son.”

On battlefields around the world, soldiers have cried out for their mothers as they lay dying. And memorably, Abraham Lincoln once said, “All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother.” In our series “The Hand That Rocks the Cradle: Mothers and Sons,” we will look at a number of famous men strongly influenced by their mothers. Not all these women were angels, but their love, disposition, and sense of principle left an indelible stamp on their sons.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.

“George Washington and His Mother,” from John Cassell’s “Illustrated History of England” (Volume 5).



She awed me in the midst of her kindness.

Lawrence Washington, George’s cousin

Mary was a pious woman who believed strongly in such concepts as duty and honor, and she passed these virtues to George by example and by instruction.

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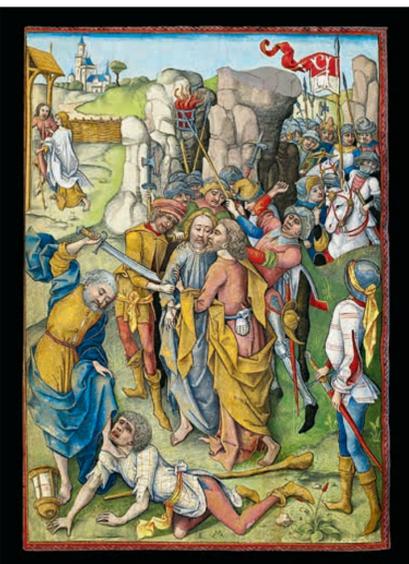


"The Ointment of the Magdalene," 1886-1894, by James Tissot. Opaque watercolor over graphite on gray wove paper.

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

The Patron Saint of 'Woke' and Virtue-Signaling

The patron saint of woke is best known for a kiss. A colored engraving from a book of hours commissioned by Charles d'Angoulême, 1503-1508, National Library of France.



Continued from Page 13

So we begin to see deeper into the nature of the virtue-signaling and the woke: Why does Judas say what he says? Ostensibly, to show that he is committed to the poor, that he hates waste, that he abhors luxury and pleasure, that he is wholly committed to the cause, more so perhaps than even his master. But what are his real motives?

One motive is given: that he is actually a thief. Of Judas, the writer of the gospel observes that "Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it."

Thus, greed was a besetting vice for him. It is quite interesting in the UK how many of the socialist leaders are millionaires or multimillionaires, quietly squirreling away small fortunes for themselves while constantly and self-righteously criticizing capitalism and the system from which they are major beneficiaries.

A secondary vice following from this is profound hypocrisy: using the cover of his work to accumulate for himself. But note too, along with the hypocrisy, the concomitant treachery—Judas later accepts 30 pieces of silver to betray Christ. The former vice demonstrates the inability to be true to one's own self or one's own words, and the latter the inability to be true to one's master or leader or boss. It seems as if hypocrisy will lead to treachery.

The Depths of Envy

But there is, perhaps, an even more startling and revealing motive: envy. Judas envied Christ, envied his importance, and how others responded to Christ's goodness.

I am reminded of that wonderful moment in Milton's "Paradise Lost" when Satan first spies Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and reflects on how he will corrupt them. In doing so, he projects onto God his own motives when he says: "All is not theirs ... Why should their Lord Envy them that ... hence I will excite their minds / With more

desire to know, and to reject Envious commands, invented with design / To keep them low."

"All is not theirs" refers to Satan overhearing the couple discussing the condition of remaining in paradise: not eating the fruit. Their possession of Eden, therefore, is not absolute but conditional. Satan reasons that God withholds giving Adam and Eve the freehold (as it were) of Eden and instead provides a lease, because he is envious and wants to "keep them low"—they are merely renters not owners of paradise. This is a preposterous observation, except for a mind totally preoccupied with, and projecting, its own envy.

In John's gospel about Judas, the fragrance of the perfume is filling the whole house and all can enjoy it, but Judas doesn't; nor is Satan capable of appreciating the beauty of the world of Adam and Eve in paradise. Instead, they both envy.

As Samuel Johnson observed, "Almost every other crime is practiced by the help of some quality which might have produced esteem or love, if it had been well employed; but envy is mere unmixed and genuine evil; it pursues a hateful end by despicable means, and desires not so much its own happiness as another's misery."

Always Examine the Real Motives

If Satan and Judas are any indication, it would appear that real virtue always triggers resentment, envy, and resistance from the woke and virtue-signalers.

On top of all this, of course, they are invariably killjoys. They labor under the burden of their own self-seriousness, which means—as they project this on the world—they must be important. One cannot know this of Judas for certain, since the records do not inform us (although his inability to enjoy the perfume is a clue), but when we consider contemporary woke people, can one think of any with a sense of humor? I can't: They are invariably humorless and usually deficient in any sense of either joy or fun.

I conclude, therefore, with the obser-



(Top) Greed seems to be a motivating factor for some who are woke. "The Tribute Money," circa 1640, by Mattia Preti. Brera Art Gallery.

(Above) A photograph of the famous 19th-century American actor Edwin Booth as the villain Iago in Shakespeare's "Othello, the Moor of Venice," circa 1870. Library of Congress.

(Right) "Satan Observes Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden," 1825, by John Martin in an illustration for "Paradise Lost."



vation that in dealing with the woke people and virtue-signalers, we are often on the back foot or at a disadvantage: They have claimed the moral high ground by proclaiming their virtue. Who could argue, for example, about helping the poor? Or any of those other virtues they loudly support?

But we must remember two things: first, that their patron saint is Judas, and we are best advised to consider their motives. Rather than accept at face value their virtue, we might want to inquire as to its exact connection with them.

Second, and much more importantly in a way, we need to make a distinction, as I have in this article, between the nicey-nicey do-gooding sentiment of what they are saying and the ramifications of the real motive: envy.

Treachery is the word I have used, and backstabbing is the simple image I would use for it. If we go to a liter-

ary example, Iago in Shakespeare's "Othello" immediately springs to mind: "Honest Iago" as Othello thought him, an Iago who was persistently virtue-signaling. Othello learned too late how deep Iago's envy was and what it was capable of doing.

A moment's reflection on all the communist and socialist regimes that have ever been since 1917 shows not just the virtue-signaling of "for the people," but the deepest levels of treachery. One great example is the "cultural revolutionaries" creating environments in which children report on their parents and teachers, and so the great and only building block of society from the beginning of time, the family, is profoundly undermined.

Of course, this is beginning to happen now in the West where students are reporting on their professors because of their views or because the professors make them feel "uncomfortable"! Or

young children report on their parents because the children want a gender-change operation, which their parents may think unwise.

Woke and virtue-signaling are not simply threats, but real and present dangers to our culture now. Saint Judas Iscariot is, sadly, still alive and well in the West.

All quotes are from the New American Standard version of the Bible.

James Sale is an English businessman whose company, Motivational Maps Ltd., operates in 14 countries. He is the author of over 40 books on management and education from major international publishers including Macmillan, Pearson, and Routledge. As a poet, he won first prize in The Society of Classical Poets' 2017 competition and spoke in June 2019 at the group's first symposium held at New York's Princeton Club.

In dealing with the woke people and virtue-signalers, we are often on the back foot or at a disadvantage.

Correction

The article "Taki Katei: A Champion of Tradition in a Time of Immense Change" published on Jan. 28 misnamed a Japanese artist. The correct name is Ishibashi Kazunori. The Epoch Times regrets the error.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF KELLY GALINDO UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED



A survivor of sexual slavery from Iraq, as she appears in Kelly Galindo's documentary-film project "26 Seconds."



A Thai survivor of sexual slavery, in "26 Seconds."



A Cambodian survivor of sexual slavery, in "26 Seconds."

DOCUMENTARY

Bright Lights, Dark Nights: The Sexual Slavery of Children

The film project '26 Seconds' exposes the industry from the US to Asia and Africa

J.H. WHITE

As tens of millions of Americans watched the Super Bowl this past weekend on TV, a horrific black market trade boomed in Miami last week as well.

"[Men] leave their wives and say, 'I'm going to go meet somebody for the Super Bowl and have fun.' 'OK, honey. Bye, have fun,'" filmmaker Kelly Galindo told me in a phone interview. The week before the big game, for "all the parties that are happening, human traffickers bring in girls because men want to buy [underage] girls." She said this happens at any big sporting event, even the Olympics.

Galindo is the producer, director, and writer of "26 Seconds," a two-stage film project that reveals the global epidemic of child sex trafficking. The first stage is a two-hour feature documentary that's currently in post-production. The second stage is a dramatic documentary miniseries.

Both the feature documentary and miniseries will unveil underground footage and interviews from Thailand, Cambodia, Iraq, India, East Africa, Mexico, and the United States.

In 2018, Galindo went to Minneapolis to shoot footage for her project the week of Super Bowl LII. Typically, traffickers would bring in busloads of underage girls for parties, hotel bars, and to roam the streets.

"That's what I thought that I was going to encounter," Galindo said. But it was snowing that week in Minneapolis, so the entire illegal trade went on indoors, out of public sight, in-line. Johns—the nickname for men who buy prostitutes—ordered the girls online.

"[Online] is more discreet ... [Johns] can pick what they want. 'I want them 12, 14, blond, whatever,'" Galindo said. Then the trafficker brings the sex slave to the John's hotel room. "What's most upsetting is the demand is for a child. The Johns want to buy children. This is horrific."

Galindo, who is also a professor at Chapman University, at Dodge College of Film and Media Arts in Southern California, said faith has played a major driving force for her four-year project "26 Seconds."

"At this stage of my life, I only want to do things that matter," she said. "The whole problem is this is a spiritual issue globally, and traffickers and Johns are dehumanizing women and selling children."

An Accepted Evil

Sex trafficking is a complex issue that takes different forms in different countries, but the industry is the same at its core.

"Trafficking is all about money at the expense of children and the vulnerable," Galindo said.

The pilot episode of the docuseries "26 Seconds" investigates sex trafficking in Thailand and Cambodia. As it begins, disturbing statistics pop up on screen: Human trafficking is the fastest growing illegal industry in the world.

1.2 million children are trafficked every year.

There are more slaves today than any time in our history. Forced labor is a \$150 billion per year industry.

The last statistic gives the project its name: "One child every 26 seconds is trafficked globally."

The pilot tells the story of a young girl survivor, who had been repeatedly sold and raped, often up to seven times a night. "I was in pain," the survivor said in the episode. "I thought I'd never get out of that place. At the time, I didn't feel any love for myself."

One of Galindo's partner nonprofits, Destiny Rescue, rescued the girl. The organization is a Christian nonprofit that rescues sex-trafficked children in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Philippines, the Dominican Republic, and India.

Extreme poverty in Southeast Asia is often at the root of the sex trafficking industry.

Galindo explained that in Thailand and Cambodia sex trafficking is culturally accepted. The oldest daughter is chosen and sent away to these clubs to work, which pays unpaid debts and living expenses for the rest of the family.

"If you were to talk to the parents, they don't even know they're doing anything wrong. ... I've talked to some parents and they feel like they've won the jackpot. They're so happy when they have a little girl so that they can



Professor, activist, and filmmaker Kelly Galindo.



Kelly Galindo with a Cambodian child.



“The whole problem is this is a spiritual issue globally, and traffickers and Johns are dehumanizing women and selling children.”

Kelly Galindo, filmmaker

◀ A red-light district in Thailand.



Kelly Galindo with Kurdish soldiers while filming her documentary "26 Seconds" in Iraq. The commander of the group assigned soldiers to watch over Galindo as she filmed.

make money off of her. It's awful," Galindo said. The pilot notes that most of the parents are addicted to drugs as well.

The eldest girl won't embarrass her family, so she goes willingly into sex trafficking.

"They're not happy, of course, being in that environment," Galindo said. "When they get rescued, they're so happy—they're little girls." If an organization rescues a girl, the parents become infuriated at the loss of money, so the nonprofit will offer financial assistance to the family to save their little girl.

At the end of the pilot, you're reminded that during the course of watching the eight-minute pilot episode, 18 children have been trafficked.

The Underbelly of Sunny California

Before she was a professor at Chapman University, Galindo was a TV and film actress, guest starring on "ER," "Sons of Anarchy," and "The Closer."

"My experience in Hollywood, even though I was not trafficked, I was certainly exploited and I watched others even have worse experiences," she said. It's why she thinks sex exploitation hit home for her. "I just felt a kindred spirit for these women."

When Galindo started her research back in the spring of 2016, she found most sex trafficking documentaries focused on developing countries, especially Thailand, India, and Mexico. But she wanted to shine a light on the black market industry booming in Southern California. For example, one victim in her documentary is a 10-year-old girl survivor, who was raped in a hotel across from Disneyland.

Victims are lured into trafficking in a different way in the United States. Oftentimes, children have been sexually abused or molested, or they are from the foster care system with no money, no family, and no education.

"They [might] start out as a stripper, then it turns into a call girl, and then the next thing you know, they have a pimp," Galindo said. "[Or traffickers] go and befriend them, they behave like their boyfriends, and then they're taking their cell phones away and pushing them out and saying you owe us," threatening the girls who have no one to turn to.

In Galindo's feature documentary, which is currently being edited, one survivor had just graduated from high school and attended an interview at a busy hotel for a national sales job. "There were tons of people there, so it looked like a real interview," Galindo said. The girl got the job, and on the way out of state to her first sales prospect, her phone and identification were taken away, and her life was threatened if she tried to escape. She was then forced to sexually service men during their lunch breaks at their offices or hotels, traveling state to state.

In another story from the feature documentary, one of the girls was abducted at age 14 and taken to a house in Palm Springs, California.

"When she got there, there were all ages of children between 2 and up to their 20s. There was a big glass [window], and influential and really wealthy people would come in, pick who they wanted. Happening right here in the USA. A woman came in and bought her, a woman politician," Galindo said. "The reality is this is rampant in Hollywood; this is rampant in politics."

Since Galindo believes the root of human trafficking is a spiritual and moral problem, the best way to combat it long-term is with stricter prosecution and faith in God.

"All of [our partner] organizations are nonprofit Christian organizations," she said. Early on in the project, Galindo joined the human trafficking ministry at Rick Warren's Saddleback Church in Orange County, California. "We go out to rescue girls, [pray with them], and give them a bracelet with a phone number if they want to get out of the life," Galindo said. Very few victims would leave the night rescuers speak to them because pimps were always watching. But if they called later, the girls would be rescued and brought to safe homes.

"In safe homes, they take the survivor through the restoration healing process with trained professional psychologists for trauma. They're also being taught [how to approach] healing through spirituality and through God. It takes both," she said.

J.H. White is an arts, culture, and men's fashion journalist living in New York.



Mark Jackson grew up in Spring Valley, N.Y., where he attended a Waldorf school. At Williams College, his professors all suggested he write professionally. He acted professionally for 20 years instead. Now he writes professionally about acting. In the movies.

'The Last Full Measure': A True Tale of Vietnam War Valor

MARK JACKSON

"The Last Full Measure" is a true story about valor. It's based on Vietnam War hero William H. Pitsenbarger (Jeremy Irvine), an Air Force parajumper who flew on helicopters into hot landing zones and airlifted out wounded soldiers. During the vicious Operation Abilene on April 10 in 1966, "Pits" waved off his chopper and fought alongside 60-some soldiers from the Army's First Infantry Division, pinned down in a jungle ambush—none of whom he personally knew. He was killed by a sniper.

Valor

"Valor" is one of those words that's currently anchoring itself in the public consciousness, just like "warrior" did in the early 1980s. The 2012 film "Act of Valor," starring active-duty Navy SEALs, had a lot to do with that.

Currently, valor can be stolen, yet there are now personnel who track down and prosecute those civilians falsely claiming to have had careers as elite special operations warriors. There's clearly a spiritual movement afoot that's restoring our eroded American values by shining a light on the great deeds that often go unnoticed. "The Last Full Measure" is a tribute to our armed forces and the valor that accrues just by being of service, as well as from acts—such as Pitsenbarger's—of great heroism.

Pitsenbarger's story is told by the telling of a different story, namely, the quiet, 30-year, post-service war fought by his brothers in arms to get Pits' sacrifice the recognition it deserved, aided by Defense Department staffer Scott Huffman (Sebastian Stan).

In 1999, the young Mr. Huffman was ambitiously negotiating Pentagon bureaucracy with the customary ruthlessness required for that career. He was assigned by his boss to review a longstanding request to replace Pitsenbarger's less-than-appropriate Air Force medal with a posthumous Medal of Honor. This is the highest military medal of all, the one Eisenhower would have forgone his presidency to possess.

The classic character arc ensues: Firstly, it's an annoying dead-end assignment for an ambitious ladder-climber; Huffman would

'The Last Full Measure'

Director
Todd Robinson

Starring
Sebastian Stan, Samuel L. Jackson, Ed Harris, William Hurt, Peter Fonda, Christopher Plummer, Diane Ladd, Linus Roache, John Savage, Amy Madigan, Bradley Whitford, Jeremy Irvine

Rated
R

Running Time
1 hour, 56 minutes

Release Date
Jan. 24

★★★★★



▲ The real-life William Pitsenbarger. ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS



(L-R) Guy Ritchie directing Matthew McConaughey and Charlie Hunnam, who star in "The Gentlemen."

Filmmaker Guy Ritchie Rests on Laurels and That's Rather Fun

MARK JACKSON

Ever watch "Monster Bug Wars" on YouTube? There is no purer form of horror. These bug predators, the giant spiders, scorpions, centipedes, fangs, snares, jaws, venoms... the scuttling... "brrrrrr!"

The brain is the human predator's main weapon. Remember "Braveheart," where Uncle Argyle tells young William Wallace that he has to first learn to

crime caper, exclusively cast with Cockney-speaking Englishmen. "Lock, Stock, and Two Smoking Barrels" was first out of the gate, followed by "Snatch," "Revolver," and "RocknRolla"—all of them hilarious.

Then, for Hollywood, "Sherlock Holmes," "The Man from U.N.C.L.E.," "King Arthur: Legend of the Sword," and "Aladdin." The latter made a billion bucks. So now, as an established Hollywood player, Ritchie's back to his roots with "The Gentlemen" and in fine, funny form, albeit with a slightly miscast Matthew McConaughey.

The Shenanigans
Mickey Pearson (McConaughey) is an ex-Rhodes scholar who converted his little college sideline (selling pot at Oxford) into a giant, underground (literally) weed empire. Literally underground because his farm is hidden underneath the high-class compounds of the British upper crust.

Pearson waxes self-righteous (in McConaughey's inimitable, whistling Texas twang) to a heroin dealer: "My jam doesn't kill anyone, and I like that." Nevertheless, he's tired of it all; he wants out and would like to sell his business to the slightly effeminate Matthew (Jeremy Strong).



Sebastian Stan (L) and William Hurt in "The Last Full Measure."

rather not be hounded by Tulley, one of Pitsenbarger's fellow pararescuemen (William Hurt) into beginning the investigation.

Because out of approximately 248 Vietnam War Medals of Honor issued, only 14 have gone to Air Force personnel. And only three were awarded to Air Force enlisted men like William Pitsenbarger. Huffman doesn't like those odds.

Secondly, Huffman finally gets perspective on what he's up against; there's a conspiracy afoot, the revelation of which could cost him his job. He doesn't feel up to that task. This leads to one of the film's most powerful moments: the archetype of the excellent spouse, bolstering her man in his time of fear and need when he's on the verge of quitting. Huffman's wife giving him the strength to carry on is similar to Jean Arthur's character in "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," providing resolve to Jimmy Stewart's—and for the same reason—to honor the truth whatever the outcome.

Thirdly, as Huffman journeys to visit the soldiers whose lives Pitsenbarger saved (Ed Harris, Samuel L. Jackson, and Peter Fonda) and listens to their war stories, and as he also visits Pits' parents (Christopher Plummer and Diane Ladd), and hears their stoic heartbreak about the Flexible Flyer that's still in the shed, he's overwhelmed with resolve to lay it all on the line, to stand alongside the friends who toiled for 30 years, and to facilitate the honoring—with all parties involved present—of the blinding light and heat of Airman Pitsenbarger's sacrifice.

After all, one soldier's recollection of Pitsenbarger rappelling into the firefight to save him was of seeing an angel. That type of thing tends to not be a physical vision; people of faith know that's a straight-up vision of the higher beings that are present in times of such incandescent selflessness.

Seeing the Repercussions of One's Deeds

There's a bit of a conspiracy and cover-up subplot regarding Operation Abilene, but to tell it

would be a spoiler. Suffice it to say that it's of a similar nature to this one from "Top Gun":

Viper (Tom Skerritt):
What I'm about to tell you is classified; it could end my career. We were in the worst dogfight I could've dreamed of. There were bogeys like fireflies all over the sky. His F-4 was hit; he could've made it back, stayed in, it killed three of them before he bought it.

Maverick (Tom Cruise):
How come I never heard that before?

Viper:
Well, that's not something the Navy tells families, especially when the fight happened over the wrong line on some map.

The military covers up things for various reasons: some to lessen the grief of relatives, some to keep egg off its face, some to avoid lawsuits. Regardless, "The Last Full Measure" will undoubtedly be seen by veterans and their families, because they already understand sacrifice and the need to honor and pay tribute to it. The nonstop streams of biker-veterans roaring across our great nation, performing rituals of remembrance at burial grounds, is testimony to a mindset that really needs to be felt daily by all Americans again—not just on Veterans Day.

Self-help gurus stress living in the moment, and gratitude. Not taking for granted the brilliant sacrifices made by our armed forces—so that we can wander about with our faces in our phones, worrying about first-world problems—would go a long way toward dissipating the depression, loneliness, and isolation that is the resultant paradox of not holding our hard-won freedoms near and dear enough.

The last scene, of the award ceremony when group after group of servicemen and women, family members, and various and assorted people touched by this courageous airman's valorous deed are asked to stand—and one can see how vast the repercussions of good deeds are—it's truly moving.

'The Gentlemen'

Director
Guy Ritchie

Starring
Matthew McConaughey, Charlie Hunnam, Hugh Grant, Jeremy Strong, Colin Farrell, Henry Golding, Michelle Dockery

Rated
R

Running Time
1 hour, 53 minutes

Release Date
Jan. 24

★★★★★

This kind of tough-talking Brit miscraent tale smacks of the 1990s.

But it couldn't be that easy, because there would be no movie. So there's a feeding frenzy that ensues: The Chinese and Russian mobs try to get their hands on Pearson's pot, and so does Hollywood-bound tabloid reporter Fletcher (Hugh Grant), who attempts to extort Pearson's right-hand man Ray (Charlie Hunnam from "Sons of Anarchy").

The story is largely narrated to Ray, by Fletcher. He's going to turn the whole story into a screenplay and sell it across the pond.

There are kidnappings, many loquacious mobster monologues, and a kangaroo of a plot. There's plaid-tracksuit-wearing Colin Farrell as a mixed martial arts (MMA) coach (called Coach) to a group of also plaid-tracksuit-wearing Jamaican-English teens.

Coach is their mentor and attempts to give them direction. He's perhaps the moral heart of the story. Farrell and his boys are the highlights of the film, along with the MMA crew's social-media-posted reefer heist, replete with a dance number, parkour moves, and hilarious, catchy rapping about "boxes and boxes and boxes of bush."

There's Dry Eye (current rom-com king Henry Golding), an ambitious but notter-

ribly bright up-and-coming gangster wannabe. There's a tabloid editor (Eddie Marsan) who hires Fletcher to dig up dirt on Pearson.

Only One Misstep
McConaughey, still best known for his pot-addicted townie Wooderson in "Dazed and Confused," showed the world a deadly, scary side in 2011's "Killer Joe," which is most likely what Ritchie cast him for here. McConaughey extols the virtues of hemp; McConaughey is almost synonymous with all things weed.

McConaughey can be both cold and vicious as well as charming, which is what Ritchie's script calls for, but McConaughey's missing the third necessary ingredient for this type of Ritchie role, namely—very funny. Although McConaughey can be very funny. But this was a Jason Statham role (who got his start in Ritchie films) if there ever was one.

Though slightly taken with itself, very Guy Ritchie-centric, this kind of tough-talking Brit miscraent tale smacks of the 1990s. And so a bit outdated. But we shouldn't forget that when this genre was all the rage, it was Ritchie who put it on the map in the first place. The man can rest on his laurels if he wants to.

THEATER REVIEW

An Incisive Look at Family Relationships

JUDD HOLLANDER

NEW YORK—Each of us has links to our past, no matter how we may try to deny them. These connections, which can resurface at the most emotionally charged times, are made clear in Rona Munro's one-person stage adaptation of Elizabeth Strout's novel "My Name Is Lucy Barton."

As Lucy (Laura Linney) states at the outset, this is a tale told through the prism of memory. She recalls a time in the early 1980s in New York City when, as a struggling writer with a husband and two young daughters, she entered the hospital for a routine operation, only to develop unexpected and serious complications. Her supposedly brief stay turned into a nine-week ordeal.

One day, while lying in her hospital bed, Lucy is astonished by the arrival of her mother, whom she hadn't seen in years. She'd been estranged from her parents ever since she left her hometown to go to college in Chicago.

Lucy comes from what might be described as a repressive environment. There was never a television in the house, and going to the movies was not allowed. She felt culturally challenged for years afterward as a result.

After getting over the initial shock of seeing her mom (whom she did not ask or expect to visit), Lucy finds herself trying to reach out for comfort. This is not an easy task, especially since her mother

was always emotionally guarded. Yet through the stories the older woman tells, and the conversations the two have, Lucy begins to see her mother in ways she never did before.

As the play makes clear, everybody has a story to tell. Lucy tells hers from the added benefit of hindsight, and as she does so, the audience also begins to understand the people in Lucy's life.

Once her mom mentions that she had enjoyed the music of Elvis Presley—albeit only his earlier songs, Lucy recalls: "I couldn't believe my mother had listened to Elvis Presley. Had she ... danced?"

The one common thread linking mother and daughter is their loneliness, for "My Name Is Lucy Barton" is just as much a play about the inability to reach out to those closest to you as it is about family ties.

Lucy's mother, in her stories, relates gossipy information about people her daughter used to know. These tales often contain semi-disguised jabs at the life choices her daughter has made. One gets the impression that her mother feels Lucy betrayed the family by moving away—something Lucy herself admits later on.

Yet at the same time, her mom has come to New York, a city she has never before visited, simply because her daughter needs her. It seems Lucy may not have considered that at first.

While the play may be titled "My Name Is Lucy Barton," it is, ironically, Lucy's mother and the



Laura Linney in the one-person stage adaptation of Elizabeth Strout's novel "My Name Is Lucy Barton."

others in Lucy's orbit (husband, father, siblings) who catch our interest. For Lucy, as we see, has been down the rabbit hole and come out the other side, while it is the recollections and snapshots of the other characters that hint at issues still unresolved and all deserving of stories of their own.

The one common thread linking mother and daughter is their loneliness.

Laura Linney at Her Best

Having originated the role in London, Linney does an excellent job with the material. She is able to portray Lucy as both a lost and fragmented person, yet also one made self-confident with the passage of years.

Her experiences have been tempered by the realization that decisions made in any particu-

lar relationship may alter it forever—even if those decisions seemed perfectly reasonable at the time. In fact, Lucy's current relationship with her daughters at times mirrors her past situation with her mother, due to choices that she and her mom made.

Lucy's mom, through Linney's performance and Munro's text, comes alive as someone fiercely determined and proud—especially when it comes to her heritage. Neither Lucy nor her mother makes apologies for who they are or the life they have led.

The only real criticism of the play is that after a while monotony sets in. Each situation unfolds in the same quiet and roundabout way. While Munro (and Linney) is telling a fascinating, interlocking, generational tale, it would have been better to see some events in a straightforward fashion. It's not a case of there being too much information, but rather one where not everything is used as effectively as it could have been.

The set by Bob Crowley, basically a hospital bed and chair, works fine; the different video designs

by Luke Halls help to set the background as needed. Richard Eyre's direction is strong at some points and rather lackadaisical at others.

Presented by the Manhattan Theatre Club, "My Name Is Lucy Barton" gives an incisive look at family relationships and the loneliness that arises when one has some stories that he or she is simply unable to share. And where the best way to deal with them is to be as true to oneself as possible.

Judd Hollander is a reviewer for Stagebuzz.com and a member of the Drama Desk and the Outer Critics Circle.

'My Name Is Lucy Barton'

Samuel J. Friedman Theatre
261 W. 47th St.
New York

Tickets
212-239-6200 or Telecharge.com

Running Time
1 hour, 30 minutes
(no intermission)

Closes
Feb. 29

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