

THE EPOCH TIMES LIFE & TRADITION

Lessons
Judy Gaman took
from her friendship
with centenarian
Lucille Fleming.

10

SIMPLE
WAYS
TO CURB
ANXIETY

Page 2

THE
PLEASURES OF
GROWING OLD

Page 5

HOMESCHOOLING:
WHERE TO START

Page 2

Longevity and Vitality

SECRETS AND ADVICE FOR
A LONG AND HAPPY LIFE

Page 3



Homeschooling: Where to Start

Advice for parents during the pandemic

BARBARA DANZA

So, 2020's a regular laugh riot thus far, huh? If you're one of the countless parents who find yourselves suddenly home and wondering what to do about your child's education now that school has closed for an unknown period of time, this article's for you.

One of the interesting side effects of the pandemic we're all facing is that many parents around the world are about to find out that homeschooling is not only amazing from an educational standpoint, but (whispering) it's not even that hard.

Of course, being thrust into homeschooling is not the typical experience one hopes for. Given the fact that there are only a few months left in the traditional school year, considering the surrounding stresses of current events, and taking into account the lack of preparation afforded this particular homeschooling arrangement, here are some joyful, simple, and educational ideas to make the most of this unusual time.

De-School

For starters, take a moment to transition from school to homeschool. You're not going to need to incorporate most (all, really) of the trappings of traditional school at home, but both you and your children may need to take some time to get used to the idea of learning in a totally different way. Homeschoolers call this process "de-schooling." Look it up if you want to dive deeper.

Get to Know Your Child

The hamster wheel just came to a screeching halt. Take the time to reconnect with your kids and understand what they're interested in, what activities light them up, and what subjects they're curious about. You can spend the entire rest of your "learning" time diving deep into all of that through books, online resources, documentaries, creative projects, and more.

Cover the Basics

When you break down what your child has actually been learning in the typical public school, these days it's mostly math and language arts. They may spend time in other classes with different names, but those two subjects make up the vast bulk of the core curriculum.

So, find a fun way to practice those a few times a week. You can wing it, making up fun projects that center on math concepts or grammar, writing, and spelling. On the other hand, you may find the security of a curriculum helpful. There are countless options out there. MathUSee and The Good and the Beautiful are two companies that offer easy to use and effective curricula.

Learn History

You probably think your child has been taught history. They probably took classes named "history" or "social studies." Ask them, though, and they likely don't recall what they've been taught and they probably don't have a clear understanding of the overall progres-



LIGHTFIELD STUDIOS/SHUTTERSTOCK

Take the time to reconnect with your kids and understand what they're interested in, what activities light them up, and what subjects they're curious about.



Read aloud, set aside quiet reading time, listen to audiobooks, discuss stories, relish in a love of books.

PHOTO: BELLEVILLE/CONTRASTIVE MEDIA

sion of human history along a timeline.

What's more, unless you had a highly unusual educational upbringing, you probably don't know those things either. This is a major omission in most schools today and you now have the opportunity to fill this important gap.

Check out "The Story of the World" series by Susan Wise Bauer for the easiest way to learn chronological history from ancient times to the present. Their audiobooks would be perfect for this suddenly homeschooling situation.

Strew

"Strewing" is another homeschooling term that refers to scattering inviting materials in your home for your children to discover. Books, art supplies, science experiment materials, flashcards, toys, a game laid out and ready to play—anything that you think your child might enjoy can be strewn.

The idea is that you allow your children to discover the items themselves, without comment or instruction from you, and see what they do with it. Sometimes it will turn into a month-long project and sometimes they'll hardly react at all.

It's a practice that incorporates surprise and delight and can be done over and over. You'll be amazed at how effective this practice is at inducing learning.

Go Outside

What better time than now to get outside with your kids and into nature? Pack a lunch, bring along a nature journal and portable art supplies, binoculars, and a camera and let them freely explore.

At home, allow them to plant a garden, build a birdhouse, and explore the creatures and plant life that are found in their own backyard.

Read

Most importantly, fill your life and your home with books. Read aloud, set aside quiet reading time, listen to audiobooks, discuss stories, relish in a love of books.

Don't make a chore of reading like school often does. Pay zero attention to what level the books are at, and don't subject your kids to tedious-like comprehension questions when they're done. Just read for the love of reading. It may be the greatest gift you give your children at this time.

Choose high-quality literature, beautiful stories, and well-written works of nonfiction. If they want to relive their baby books, let them. If they're ready to tackle a challenging novel, support them and help them through.

Becoming competent and joyful readers will allow them to grow into self-learners for the rest of their lives. This is a priceless opportunity you have before you.

Reduce Screens

Finally, resist the temptation to pacify kids of all ages with screens. It may be a significant temptation under the unusual circumstances we find ourselves in. However, screen addiction is a problem I believe we haven't fully grasped the gravity of yet. Too much screen time has been shown to impede focus and learning capabilities.

Homeschooling allows for a free learning environment, where students can explore topics of interest to their heart's content. They can take as much time as they want to perfect an artistic or scientific creation, and they can become competent at the skill of learning itself.

You may not have ever imagined you'd do such a thing, but now that this opportunity is before you, you might as well give it a go.

those moments when you really just want all the cookies.

Clean Something

Choose a space, large or small, and take full control of it. Declutter, clean, and make it beautiful. It's almost comical how stress-relieving cleaning can be.

Sleep Well

This would be a great time to ensure you're getting a full night's sleep every night. Allow yourself plenty of time to wind down, disconnect from digital devices, and enjoy deep, restorative sleep.

Find Gratitude

Sit down with paper and pen and list as many things as you can that you're grateful for. Perspective is a beautiful thing.

Nurture Your Spirit

There's more to this life than appears on the surface. Reconnect with your spirit, consider your big questions, study a spiritual discipline, and rekindle or reinforce your spiritual practice.

Longevity and Vitality: Secrets and Advice for a Long and Happy Life

ANDREW THOMAS

In the golden age of technological and medical innovation, everyone is looking for that technique or that diet that will help them live to 100.

Whether it's a fiber optic method for treating an aneurysm or eating copious amounts of kale, there seems to be some "secret" to optimal longevity. However, it might be much simpler than we think to become that 80-year-old who is still hitting the ski slopes and crushing the crosswords.

I had an opportunity to speak with Judy Gaman about her most recent book, "Love, Life & Lucille: Lessons Learned from a Centenarian," and how we all can live longer, healthier, and happier lives. Gaman met centenarian Lucille Fleming while doing research for her previous book, "Age to Perfection: How to Thrive to 100, Happy, Healthy and Wise."

Gaman, 48, is the CEO of the preventative and proactive health care provider Executive Medicine of Texas, and the host of the daily 30-minute podcast, "Stay Young America," which is an offshoot of her original radio program, "The Staying Young Radio Show." She has been trying to help people live longer and healthier lives for the last 12 years.

The Epoch Times: What topics do you cover on "Stay x America" and what types of guests do you host?

Judy Gaman: We cover a gamut of things. We just actually did a show on the coronavirus and other public health issues. We cover hormones, heart disease, diabetes, obviously staying young, lots of topics around longevity, and how to stay healthier as we age.

The Epoch Times: What is some of the most important advice you and your guests have offered on the show?

Ms. Gaman: I would say that when it comes to longevity, some of the things are not rocket science. It's just that we've lost sight of what's important—especially in this day in age that we live in where we have to be "on" all the time. We don't allow ourselves downtime. Just basically teaching people it's OK to relax. You should be getting enough sleep. It's also all right to say "no" when somebody offers you dessert or another glass of wine. Essentially, we're giving them permission to say, "Yeah, I want to live healthier."

Really, what we do is we empower people. We empower them with the ability to make choices and stand by their choices.

Then it's also education. Having people understand the 'why.' If you can understand the 'why,' you're more likely to live a healthier lifestyle. You're more likely to listen to some of the advice your physician is giving you. You're more likely to watch the things that you put in your mouth, and I don't just mean food. We have an issue now where there's so much information but it's kind of half information, so they may go to the store and they may load up on a whole bunch of things and then they're also taking a cocktail of medications and now they've become a chemistry project. You have to really understand your body, and you have to understand that just because something says it's good for you doesn't always mean it is.

The Epoch Times: How did you meet Lucille, and what was that meeting like?

Ms. Gaman: I was working on a book called "Age to Perfection: How to Thrive to 100, Happy, Healthy and Wise," and I was in the thick of the research. I had this epiphany, and I turned to my writing assistant and I said, "Hey Emily, I just had this thought. Maybe we should interview people who have lived over 100. Maybe we should go straight to the source and say, 'What did you do? How did you do this?'"

I did not anticipate what I found, and I certainly didn't anticipate what I found in Lucille. Emily came back to me and



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF JUDY GAMAN

Lucille Fleming lived a happy and healthy life until age 104.



She embraced life. She loved life. She bought green bananas because she fully expected that she was going to be alive to eat them.

Judy Gaman



"Love, Life, & Lucille: Lessons Learned from a Centenarian" by Judy Gaman.

said, "I've got a handful of people for you to talk to, but there's this one person that you are just not going to believe. I couldn't get on her social calendar. She's so busy. I just have this feeling about her. Let's get this on the schedule and talk to her." The day I met Lucille, immediately I had this unbelievable connection with her. I cannot explain it. She said she experienced the exact same thing. Neither one of us had had that feeling before. What was a very long interview turned into this incredible friendship.

The Epoch Times: Lucille helped you break your workaholic cycle. How did she do that?

Ms. Gaman: I think part of it was just having someone that you could have conversations with that were deep and about real-life issues, not things that had to be done right then.

She taught me too that we always think everything is urgent, everything is an emergency, it's got to be done right now, so she helped me put things in perspective. There were times when things were going on in the world and she was just like, "We've been through this before. This isn't the first time." She lived through the Depression. She told these great stories about the Depression that made you kind of just go, "Wow, this little glitch we're having is just nothing in comparison." It was like a window to the reality of what life is really about. What it should be about. Her bright attitude changed mine.

The Epoch Times: Why did you decide



Judy Gaman with her close friend Lucille Fleming.

BLUDOOR STUDIOS

to write "Love, Life, and Lucille: Lessons Learned From a Centenarian?"

Ms. Gaman: It really boils down to the change as to why I decided to write it. In the beginning, when Lucille was alive I told her, "I think I'd like to write a book about you and about me and about our friendship." Of course, she was all about it. She knew there was going to be a book. I didn't realize how that book was going to end. I thought the book was done until the unfortunate events that led to her death, and then I realized, "Wow. This book is bigger than I thought."

It wasn't until that time after her death when I realized the most important thing she taught me was how to live longer and healthier. It really was all in there. It was no secret code.

The Epoch Times: What are some of Lucille's most important secrets to living a long and happy life?

Ms. Gaman: When you're tired you have to rest. We're kind of forgotten that. Listen to your body. Having faith. It doesn't matter what religion you are as much as it is about having faith, and keeping up with that faith in the sense of when things get tough it's OK to rely on it.

Her diet was very good in the sense that she loved her sweets, don't get me wrong, but she also knew that we need to get our nutrition from things like berries. She loved blueberries. Her whole life she loved blueberries.

When you think of someone over 100, you don't think of their exercise routine, but she had a regular exercise routine. She made sure that at the retirement home, she had the apartment that was the furthest away from the dining room so that she would be forced a couple of times a day to walk to corridors and go down to eat.

She was really good at being social, and this is something we tend to get away from. She embraced that fully. At her life celebration, the room was packed.

The Epoch Times: What important lessons do you think you learned from spending time with Lucille?

Ms. Gaman: I learned that true friendship knows no age. I learned that no matter what generation we grow up in, or where we grow up in, or what socioeconomic class we grow up in, the human experience is the same. We all have had that first kiss that we never forget. We all have been heartbroken by events in our life. We all been so over-the-moon excited about certain things in our life. There are certain things in that human experience that are just universal, and it was amazing to experience that with someone that old who still very much held onto those memories like they were yesterday. It was just fascinating to understand and see life through a whole different lens.

The Epoch Times: How did Lucille thrive at age 100 and live a happy life?

Ms. Gaman: She embraced life. She loved life. She bought green bananas because she fully expected that she was going to be alive to eat them. She laid out her clothes the night before. She always dressed to the nines, put her makeup on, and did her hair. I think there's a lot to be said for that because how we feel often is a direct reflection of the efforts we put into ourselves. She was very good at putting effort into herself so that she was projecting what she wanted to be. She wanted to be vibrant. She wanted people to want to be around her, and she put so much effort into making sure she was a good role model for everybody she came across.

The Epoch Times: What surprised you the most about Lucille?

Ms. Gaman: I think her ability, honestly, to go on a book tour. I was terrified. I was like, "What if I take her and she breaks?" When she first went out with me on the book tour, I just couldn't believe that she could keep the pace that she could keep. We often think the elderly as frail, as not having anything to say. We think that maybe they don't have any contributions to life, but she proved all of those myths wrong. Between 100 and 104, she told me that was the time of her life. There's always life inside of somebody, we just got to go in and find it.

10 Simple Ways to Curb Anxiety

FIZIKES/SHUTTERSTOCK

BARBARA DANZA

We are living through stressful times. As we all do our best to keep calm and carry on, it can help to have a few go-to tricks up our sleeves for when that's easier said than done.

Here are a few things you can try the next time you feel the anxiety rise.

Step Away From the News

It's great to be informed. However, unless you're making policy decisions on ever-changing world affairs, you probably don't need to be tuned in 24/7. If you find that keeping the news on in the background or constantly checking your favorites sources online is stressing you out, tune it out.

Trade the soundtrack of repetitive and alarming news reports for a calming music playlist. Replace online news sources with uplifting and inspiring content that has a positive impact on you. Better yet, enjoy some peaceful silence.

To stay informed, choose a few minutes each day that you'll get



Allow yourself plenty of time to wind down, disconnect from digital devices, and enjoy deep, restorative sleep.

up to date and let that be it.

Breathe

When we're stressed our breathing tends to become shallow and fast. Slow down and practice deep breathing to refresh and calm yourself.

Take a deep breath in your nose, filling your lungs. Hold it for a moment. Then slowly release your breath from your

mouth. Repeat this a number of times and allow yourself to relax.

Stretch

Those tense shoulders from the weight of your worries are a sign you need to stretch. Ensure you don't sit for very long periods of time. Get up and stretch your arms, legs, back, and hips as many times as you can throughout the day.

Go Outside

Step out into the sunshine (or even the rain) and take in your natural surroundings. Stay off of your phone, go for a walk, and let the peace and lovely slowness of nature remind you of life's beauty.

Hydrate

Water is so essential for our bodies to function at their greatest capacity. Stay hydrated and enjoy water, perhaps by adding cucumber or lemon slices. Sparkling water is great, too.

Eat Well

It can be tempting to eat our worries away or just give up and grab the entire bag of chips and head to the couch. Nutrition is even more important during stressful periods, however, to keep your body healthy and your immune system strong.

Stock your home with whole foods—fruits, vegetables, plenty of protein, and healthy fats. Ensure that your choices include easy-to-grab items such as nuts, apples, and cheese sticks for



HANNAH OUNGER/GLENN CARSTENS-PETERS/UNSPASH



HANANEXO_STUDIO/SHUTTERSTOCK

Tackle those household tasks you've avoided. Stop procrastinating, crank up some music, and deep clean that refrigerator.



HANNA TANUKEVICH/SHUTTERSTOCK

If family members or friends are a part of your confinement, you have a grand opportunity to deepen those relationships. Play some board games. Give charades a shot.

surrounded by miracles and mysteries in everything, from grass and trees to the thoughts and emotions of our fellow human beings, and you're bored? You can be bored—I can't prevent that—but you can't say it here. If you must express boredom, you can say "Mr. Minick, today I am filled with ennui." Just don't use the words bored, boring, or boredom."

Of course, banishing the word doesn't banish the sensation. Boredom is real, and most of us do everything possible to battle it. When a dog gets bored, he lies down and takes a nap; when we get bored, we flip through our electronic gadgets, call friends, or post messages on Facebook, all the while looking for external diversions.

In his online article "This column will change your life: just sit and think," Oliver Burkeman points out that most of us actually find it painful to sit for more than a few minutes without distraction and just think. We quickly become bored. He quotes a number of studies on this subject, including one in which 42 people had to choose between sitting and doing nothing or giving themselves mild electrical shocks. Two-thirds of the men and a quarter of the women chose the juice.

5 Tips for Fighting Ennui

But we don't need to stick our finger into a socket to fight off boredom. Here in no particular order are just a few ideas to try if you are confined to quarters:

- Make a to-do list. This will add structure to your day and brings the satisfaction of marking through a task when done. Many mornings when I draw up such a list I find my day becomes much more productive.
- Break up the time. If you're working at home, as I do, don't sit for eight hours at your desk banging away on a laptop or other device. Work an hour or two, take a break (see below), and then go back to work. Unless you have a project deadline, you're not on the clock anymore; you don't have to get the work done all at once or by a certain time.
- Tackle those household tasks you've avoided. Stop procrastinating, crank up some music, and deep clean that refrigerator. Go through that overstuffed closet and get rid of those

clothes and shoes you never wear.

Scrub down the bathroom.

- Write letters to friends and family members. Because of a New Year's resolution I made here in an Epoch Times article, I have for the last three months sent letters to two of my grandchildren every week. (I have lots of grandchildren.) Letters are rare these days, having been replaced by email and texts, but when they arrive, they can make the hearts of adults and children sing with pleasure.
- Exercise. If you're under quarantine and can't leave your home, Google "exercise videos" on YouTube, and you'll find dozens of choices. If you are permitted to go outside, enjoy a walk and some fresh air.

And 5 More

- If family members or friends are a part of your confinement, you have a grand opportunity to deepen those relationships. Play some board games. Give charades a shot. Pick a time in the evening, brew up some tea or hot chocolate, and enjoy some sessions reading books aloud to one another.
- Take a few minutes to step outside or open a window, and suck in a deep lungful of air. Look at the clouds, listen to the birds, or if you live in a city, just savor the sounds of the street. These outdoor visits provide a change of pace and relaxation, and are anything but boring.
- Embrace your condition. On YouTube, look for "The Omega Man My Favorite Scene," and you'll find Charlton Heston playing a man who knows how to fight loneliness and boredom. Believing himself to be the last human being alive after a global pandemic, in this scene Heston dresses like a French nobleman, pours himself a glass of wine, and plays chess while talking to a statue of Julius Caesar. (Talking to yourself is natural when you are alone for prolonged periods of time. Believe me, I know.)
- Try tackling some new venture. You'll find dozens of courses offered online in everything from photography to drawing, from learning Italian to exploring the ruins of Italy's Pompeii. By way of the internet, you can travel to unknown lands, gain instruction in 100 different fields, and have some fun on the way.
- Go easy on yourself. Most of us lead harried lives, working demanding jobs, running from one commitment to another, winding up exhausted by day's end. Look at your confinement as a time to pamper yourself a bit, to take stock as to who you are and what you do, to seek out simple pleasures.

A Hidden Treasure

Philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal famously wrote: "All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone." His dictum seems a bit broad—I can think of many other problems than that inability—but Pascal does make a point. If we can find a way to enjoy being alone, if we can subject ourselves to the rigors of solitude, away from the whirl and whirl of modern life, and find pleasure in our confinement, we may discover a buried treasure: A richer sense of ourselves.

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.

Make a to-do list. This will add structure to your day and brings the satisfaction of marking through a task when done.



Alone: Boredom and Solitude in a Time of Confinement

JEFF MINICK

Recently, a friend brought to my attention a remark from a young woman forced by the coronavirus outbreak to work at home: "I think I'm going to die of boredom more than anything else."

The woman added that she struggles with a lack of structure when removed from the workplace.

Boredom and solitude: here, I thought, is an ideal topic for me to address.

Days Alone

On any typical day, I spend about 14 of my 17 waking hours by myself at home. Once a day, I drive into town to write or read at the coffee shop or the public library, as much to hear the humming of voices as for the pleasure of working in a different place. Often,

too, on the way home I'll stop at the grocery store. On Sunday, I go to church for Mass.

Otherwise, I spend the great bulk of my time alone and at home. I don't own a television, and I rarely listen to music. Occasionally, I'll spend a little time on YouTube, watching clips from movies I love.

The rest is silence.

But I am rarely bored.

Before exploring some ways to fight boredom, let's look first at boredom itself.

Elements of Boredom

When I used to teach seminars of homeschoolers history, Latin, literature, and composition, I would tell my students that the phrase "I'm bored" was verboten in my classroom. They were to regard bored as an obscenity.

"Look, I'd tell them, "here we are on this tiny planet swirling through space and

YOUR MONEY

Furloughed College Students Struggle Financially

NEW YORK—George Curtis is facing a severe financial crisis.

He had to be out of his Swarthmore College dorm room by March 15. He lost his campus job and can't travel home to Montana from the Philadelphia-area liberal arts college because he's not feeling well.

Nor does he want to endanger the health of his 71-year-old father.

There were about 20 million students attending U.S. colleges and universities as of last fall, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Now, like Curtis, a 20-year-old Classics junior, many of them are

in limbo because of coronavirus closures on campuses.

Swarthmore, like most every major institution of higher education, is moving to remote learning in the coming days and sending students packing, except a few who receive exemptions to stay on campus.

The competition for those spots is tough, and Curtis was denied.

College communities are responding in a variety of ways, some offering prorated refunds for room and board, covering travel for those on financial aid and offering stipends for moving and packing expenses. U-Haul is also offering free

storage for students across the country.

Harvard's Primus organization, for first-generation low-income students, reached out immediately to the school's vast alumni network with a set of Google spreadsheets to find out who could take in students, store boxes, and offer jobs.

At Berea College in Kentucky, a free-tuition institution that serves a low-income population, President Lyle Roelofs said he expects to house more than 200 students out of 1,660 because they have nowhere else to go. Remote instruction is being tailored to a population that does not have reli-

able internet at home, and deadlines to drop classes have been extended.

There are also crowd-sourcing appeals coming from all over to help American students. As these are not vetted or registered charities, potential donors should do their own research before sending funds.

To help students beyond just one's own school affiliation, there are national efforts that are official charities, like the Student Relief Fund.

For Sara Goldrick-Rab, the founding director of the Hope Center for College, Community and Justice and a professor at Temple

University in Philadelphia, the current situation highlights an ongoing crisis of income instability for many college students. She has a running hashtag on social media (#RealCollege) to help raise awareness.

One plea that Goldrick-Rab received was from a young woman who is being raised by her sister, who is also in college. With her school closing, she needed to get from Florida to Ohio, but she had no funds, so she was going to try to hitchhike.

"People think that these students will go home and party and chill and mom and dad will take care of them. Some of them will.

Some of them will.

Some of them will.



MADDIE MEYER/GETTY IMAGES

Sophomore Sophie Butte helps freshman Alex Petty move his rug across Harvard Yard on the campus of Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., on March 12, 2020.

Good for them. But a lot of them aren't in that situation," Goldrick-Rab said.

Continuing Ed Sustained online learning presents a few particular fi-

nancial issues for students: • Students using military

An Abundance of Pleasures: Growing Old

JEFF MINICK

Whenever my friend John and I get together, we spend a good chunk of time discussing the national news, complaining about the state of the culture, and laughing, sometimes incredulously, at political developments. John is 60, and I am soon to be 69, and I suppose we have officially joined the ranks of the Grumpy Old Men brigade. On the other hand, we are rarely grumpy about life itself; we find delight in the day at hand, and laughter punctuates our discussions much more than despair.

In the last several years—it was John who first noticed this addition to our conversation—we also spend a bit of time grousing about growing old: stiffening joints, various bumps and barnacles, as my doctor calls them, wrinkled flesh, sagging muscles, some need for medications and special vitamins, and other infirmities associated with climbing the ladder of years.

"Old age ain't for sissies"; that adage has a long shelf life, but the truth is, sissies or not, we who enter old age have no choice but to endure its travails.

Some Good News

But old age means more than an increase in aches and pains. It brings an abundance of pleasures as well, for those of us in reasonable health who can appreciate them.

Let's take a look at some of the gifts you who are young may anticipate in those years Robert Browning described as "the best is yet to be, the last of life."

A Different Pair of Glasses

As we age, many troubles that once seemed important now seem mundane or trivial.

In our 30s and 40s, we chased after money, promotions, and status. When disaster struck—or what we perceived as disaster—we raged at the back of the hand the universe had offered us as we pondered that ancient question, "Why me, O Lord?"

Growing older brings to the eyes a different pair of binoculars. Love and death still sit enthroned in the heart—the loss of a spouse, the adoration of children and grandchildren—but many trials we once considered calamitous are reduced to small arms fire on the battlefield of life.

Here's a personal example: A year ago, while I was driving at 74 miles per hour on I-81 North in Virginia, a deer ran into the passenger side of my car and totaled it. My 30-year-old self might have stepped from his vehicle cursing his bad luck. My 67-year-old self left his car thanking the heavens he had survived the accident. Had the doe arrived a split second earlier, she would have come through the windshield and probably killed me.

Finding Treasure

Some things that once seemed trivial are now treasures.

Let's start with a cup of coffee. At age 40, I gulped down my morning java while preparing breakfast for guests at our bed-and-breakfast, and I sipped it throughout the day from a Styrofoam cup teaching Latin, history, and English literature to students.

Coffee was fuel at that point in my life. Not today. No—today coffee is nectar from



AARON ANDREW ANG/UNSPASH

▲ The beauty of the stars on a clear winter night, an encounter with a good book: these are just some of the many delights delivered daily by the universe in my old age.

the gods. After the first sip in the morning, I often let out a big "Ahhhhh" of pleasure. The bird calls I hear in the morning from the back deck of the house, the laughter and talk found in the coffee house I visit, the beauty of the stars on a clear winter night, an encounter with a good book: These are just some of the many delights delivered daily by the universe in my old age.

In "30 Lessons for Living: Tried and True Advice from the Wisest Americans," researcher Karl Pillemer and others interviewed more than 1,200 older people. Of those subjects, Pillemer remarks, "Many people said something along these lines: 'I wish I'd learned to enjoy life on a daily basis and enjoy the moment when I was in my 30s instead of my 60s.'" He and his colleagues found that many of those interviewed "describe the last five or ten years as the happiest years of their lives."

Passing the Torch

Responsibility for certain tasks passes to others.

Age has taken me back to the self I knew in my 20s, that time before marriage, before raising children, before struggling to earn money to put food on the table. My children are all grown with families of their own, and though I worry about the difficulties they face and try as best I can to help them, I also recognize that at this point they must stand on their own two feet and face the battles of life.

This change in responsibility can bring an increased independence. An example: Many grandparents love watching their grandchildren, playing with them, reading or telling them stories, and taking them out for a treat at an ice cream parlor or restaurant. They also relish that moment when they return the kids to the parents and go back to their own lives.

It's All in the Mind

Perhaps because of the above circumstances, many older people feel increas-

ingly young at heart. They look in the mirror and see the wrinkles and age spots, and they wake with stiffened joints, but inside the mind and soul stands a gatekeeper who preserves a sense of youth.

Ask that 70-year-old not how old she is, but how old she feels, and you may find a 17-year-old girl still eager to embrace the world.

When I look at my five siblings, all of whom are now in their 60s, some of them retired or about to retire, others working without hope of retirement any time soon, I see this gatekeeper.

In his retirement, Doug now has more time for his sailing and recently bought a motorcycle. Penelope works as a nurse, and is head-over-heels in love with the man she married six years ago. Becky will soon retire from banking, and so have even more time to devote herself to her beloved gardening. Jenny remarried at 63 and is helping her husband build their dream home. Chris still writes songs and takes pleasure in performing his music.

Oh, the Places You'll Go!

Aging is no paradise. Many older people must work into their 70s and even 80s, many face physical infirmities, and all by then have suffered the deaths of friends and family.

But as I say, often undetected behind that hobbled gait or time-beaten face is a zest for living—a growing ease amid the hectic pace of modern life, an interior contentment, an increased talent for finding happiness in the moment.

To my readers ages 50 and under, particularly to those who dread growing old, take heart: You may be in for one of the best surprises of your life.

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.

loan interest would be waived until further notice.

- Students who are no longer have income from their student jobs. This is still a developing situation, so most schools have not announced how they will help. At Berea College, though, Roelofs said students would continue to be paid.

For now, Curtis has planned to couch-surf somewhere in the Northeast and get by as best he can. He and his friends still on campus are using up as many of their meal credits as possible.

*By Beth Pinsker
From Reuters*

STYLE

How to Look Luxe on a Budget

MANY NGOM

Elegance on a budget—is it feasible? Trendsetters will tell you to just wait for the sales, track that designer bag on Ebay, or sell a luxury item so you can buy another one. That’s all well and good ... except that those tactics are still too expensive. But you can get dressed beautifully and elegantly without breaking the bank, by shopping smart and playing with what you already have. Here are some tips.



The Monochrome Look



Elegant Color Combinations



Elegant Color Combinations



Don't Be Afraid of Colors

Have you ever noticed the color of the clothing in discount stores? Black, brown, navy, and gray. Why is that? It's because when the buyer places an order for pants for the next season, for instance, she has to order huge quantities from the factory, for her to make a good profit and for you to get a good deal. These basic colors are usually safe, and the fabrics are pre-colored in these shades for the masses.

Now, let's do some window shopping. Have you noticed that upscale stores always display outfits in unexpected colors? It's a psychological trick. We are attracted to these color combinations, so we're drawn into the store ... only to end up buying their latest black pants or a black blouse! And we might tell ourselves, "Next time, I will try that orange top."

Wearing colors can be tricky, especially if you are used to wearing those blacks, browns, and grays. Those are elegant and classic colors, don't get

me wrong, but other colors possess an elegance that you can slowly learn to adapt to your style. It's just that deep inside, we are too intimidated by that purple pair of pants or orange top. Try to think differently when purchasing your next piece of clothing.

Start With the Monochrome Look

Basic colors are safe and easy to match—black goes with everything. You are an expert in choosing black shoes, black dresses, black pants, and black bags. Now, let's apply that thinking to a different color.

The easiest color to switch to is beige. For spring, try a monochrome look. Don't worry about this fancy word—you were already doing it in black, now do it in beige.

Let's make camel the darkest color of your outfit. That could be your trench coat, or a heavier winter

coat if it's still chilly out. Every item of clothing underneath should be one, two, or three shades lighter. Pants, dresses, blouses, and shoes should be in secondary tones, such as intermediate shades of beige, and the lightest tone can be off-white or cream.

How chic and refreshing! Add some gold jewelry and you'll look sharp, elegant, and timeless. Victoria Beckham did a good job with the monochrome look when presenting her spring-summer collection. Try it—it's easier than you might think.

Try Other Elegant Color Combinations

Now that you've mastered the monochrome look, how about trying other elegant color combinations? Take baby steps, as matching contrasting colors can be tricky.

For your first attempt, let's play it safe. We know that primary colors have complementary colors:

red has green as a complementary companion; the complement to blue is orange; and for yellow, it's purple.

Let's take blue and orange, a complementary combination. Your eyes are already used to seeing it all the time in nature—autumn leaves and a blue sky, a blue and orange flower, the blue ocean and an orange sunset. How beautiful!

Now that you have those visuals in mind, think of an outfit with these contrasts. You can mimic the exact tones of nature like the designer Delozo did, or you can play with stronger shades of blues and lighter shades of orange or vice versa, for instance. If orange is still too strong for you, pair your blue top with a camel or beige bottom to soften your look. Voilà! You just created your first elegant, luxurious color combo.

Another strategy is to wear warm tones together (orange pants with a coral top) and cool tones together (royal blue skirt with a turquoise top).

Choose Natural Fabrics

Natural fabrics can elevate your style instantly. Silk, cotton, cashmere, and linen are staples when it comes to good fabrics. Choose them wisely to get the chic look you want.

Silk is woven in many different fabrics, such as taffeta, twill, charmeuse, etc. Today the yarn is relatively affordable, so you can afford a silk blouse or scarf, or even a silk dress.

Cotton needs to be chosen carefully. La crème de la crème of cotton is supima cotton. Grown in the United States, its fiber is extra-long, giving the fabric excellent properties of strength, color retention, and softness. The good news is that supima cotton is affordable, so please splurge on some basic tees and long sleeves; these can be worn under a suit or with a pair of chinos for a clean casual look.

Cashmere too has become more and more affordable. It's best to buy it mixed with cotton

or wool, as it will be stronger and last longer.

Finally, linen, which is derived from flax, is also a luxurious fabric, and chic when well-ironed (and good luck with the ironing!).

Embroidery, Patterns, Appliqués, Prints

These add-ons can look tacky or luxurious, depending on how they're used.

Embroidery always evokes a sense of luxury, adorning emperors' and queens' clothes in the past, and to this day adding value to a garment or an accessory. So how do you wear embroidery and look sharp? Opt for embroideries that are in unusual places, such as on the top back of your jacket, on the back of your sleeves, or on a collar. It's more difficult to execute embroidery well in these spots. It means it'll be more expensive, yes, but one unique piece is all you need to change your whole look.

More affordable than embroideries are prints. For a luxurious look, opt for large prints, again featured in unusual places, like on your shoulder or on the back of your garment. Another way to look elegant when wearing prints is to wear the same print pattern in different colors or different sizes. Basically, your goal is to look different from everyone else wearing the same clothing.

Follow the Codes

They are certain clothing codes to follow if you want to look luxe and elegant.

First, buy clothes that fit you. The wealthy get tailor-made clothes, and they usually have a tailor or a seamstress to adjust whatever doesn't fit. For those of us who can't afford that luxury, make sure the piece of clothing you're buying fits you like a glove.

The clothes sold in department stores are made in series and by machines, so the garment measurements are standards and won't necessarily fit you. It makes sense, because the price is affordable. Take your time to shop, try the clothes you really want, and try different brands to see which one will fit you better. Size 4 Gap pants might not fit like Ann Taylor pants in the same size. There are so many variables.

For jackets, make sure the sleeves are tight and narrow around your arms, not loose. Same for pants: don't buy pants with an inseam (pant length) of 32 inches when your height is 5'2"; it won't fit even if you take them to a seamstress. That is why many affordable brands created petite, tall, or plus departments.

Even if you are in the right department, make sure the pants fit. Check these key points: hips, inseam, and waist. The right pants should not have excess fabric in the hip area. The worst is excess fabric in the crotch area—avoid that at all costs.

Another code that's easy to follow is to wear your skirt below the knees. A pencil skirt looks more luxe when it's longer. Why? More fabric means more money, and more money means you can afford luxury. The same goes for a circular skirt, which requires a lot of fabric. It's so elegant and chic.

Overall, the key is to not be flamboyant. Luxury is simple. It's about the right fit and the right detail.



Embroidery, Patterns, Appliqués, Prints

AL PHOTOGRAPHY IMAGES

Keep Your Accessories Classic

As for accessories, it's OK to splurge on a good pair of shoes, in nude or unusual colors. It's important to keep them clean and store them in their shoeboxes so they can always look new.

A good pair of sunglasses will add to your style as well. You don't have to splurge on them, but make sure they have good UV protection.

Jewelry is a bit difficult to tackle, but just remember this: If you can't afford real jewelry, keep it minimalistic and simple. Usually it is hard to detect real pearls, so opt for fake pearls rather than fake diamonds.

Same for the bags: keep it classic without big logos. Your bag can be from a lesser-known brand, but if it has the right hardware, you will look like a million bucks!

Finally, to look luxe, use minimal or natural look makeup. A natural look will give you a better appearance.

The Last Drink: A Police Officer's Struggle to Achieve Sobriety

Erika Rose Unberhagen now helps first responders overcome their addictions

ANDREW THOMAS

On March 10, 2013, Erika Rose Unberhagen had her last drink. She was on the porch of the house where she had been attending a meeting and was drinking straight out of the bottle. She called 911 on herself and told the operator that she was going to drink herself to death. A few days later, after she was released from the hospital, the former police officer entered a treatment program for the fourth time. She didn't know at the time, but she would end up as a professional on the other side of the addiction—helping others.

Unberhagen, 49, lives in Bandera, Texas. She grew up under difficult circumstances and pursued a career in law enforcement to show others that they could overcome the circumstances they came from.

She started working at the Bell County jail at 18 and became a police officer when she turned 21. Shortly after working as a reserve officer, she began serving as a full-time officer for the Harker Heights Police Department in 1990.

The Job

Unberhagen's first call as a police officer would leave an indelible mark on her psyche. It would be the beginning of a series of traumatic experiences on the job. She responded to a disturbance call, which turned out to be an officer-involved shooting in which the suspect was fatally shot.

"That's how I started my career, and I actually had a female officer say, 'This is do or die. You're going to stay in this job or this is going to cause you to leave,' and I chose to stay," Unberhagen recalled.

During the course of her career, she worked in the juvenile division, and covered everything from stolen bicycles to homicides. One of the more traumatic experiences occurred toward the end of



Erika Rose Unberhagen is a former police officer and recovering alcoholic. Now, she's a counselor for first responders struggling with post-traumatic stress and substance abuse.

her law enforcement career. As she was called to the scene, she knew exactly who the family was as soon as the address came out over the radio. A father had shot and killed his son and daughter, and then taken his own life.

Unberhagen's son was about the same age as the deceased boy, which was particularly hard on her. To make matters worse, she was tasked with notifying the mother that her two children had been killed.

Coping With Alcohol

At the time, mental health and post-traumatic stress weren't topics that were discussed, particularly in law enforcement. She began to drink to cope with the stress

and the trauma from the job, and her sergeant actually owned a local bar where she and her colleagues would drink and talk about the previous shift.

"The message that was given to me very early on was you work hard you play hard," Unberhagen said. "That was really the only coping skill I had at the time was drinking."

At first Unberhagen was drinking heavily to cope, but by the time she was promoted to sergeant she had become a full-blown alcoholic. The trauma she experienced on the job ultimately manifested as post-traumatic stress. She noticed she was suffering from symptoms of insomnia, hypervigilance, and anger. She would drink all night to attempt to fall asleep. She couldn't tell

anyone she was struggling, and to make matters worse she didn't have any support from her department. Her alcoholism ultimately reached the point where she was often forced to call in sick after drinking all night.

"It had gotten to the point where I couldn't not drink," Unberhagen said.

After 15 years, Unberhagen retired from law enforcement. Her alcoholism at the time realized her drinking was getting out of control, and her marriage was suffering as a result. She checked herself into a treatment center, and while she was there she learned her husband had filed for divorce.

After she completed the program, she returned home. Her husband left for a conference the next day, and she got drunk the same night. Both of her children had moved away to live with relatives, she had no job, and was forced to sell her home. She checked herself into a second in-patient treatment center, but the day she got out she was drinking again. She ultimately lost her job and her new home. After a third stint in another treatment center, she continued to drink.

"I was an alcoholic, and I knew it. I had no control over my life. I had no control over my drinking," Unberhagen said.

Achieving Sobriety

By this time she had been arrested several times for driving while intoxicated, and the first two arrests were by her own department. In fact, the first arrest was made by the officer who she had trained when she was on the job.

"I was that officer that had done really well and had become police officer of the year, and now I couldn't stay sober. I couldn't obey the laws that I used to swear to uphold," Unberhagen said.

Unberhagen continued to drink more

and more. At the height of the alcohol abuse, drinking was the first thing she did when she woke up and the last thing she did before she went to sleep.

By now she was homeless and living out of her car. She fled to Louisiana for a year before a man she had a relationship with convinced her to move in with him back in Texas. Once he realized how bad the alcoholism had become, he offered her an ultimatum. She could either get treatment or he would end the relationship. Unberhagen moved into a women's shelter which had an alcohol treatment program. She finally realized she needed to follow the steps that would lead to her sobriety.

"It was while I was there that I realized I needed to learn how to live again. I had forgotten how to do that," Unberhagen said.

After she left the shelter she went to a meeting, and her sponsor told her that she had to attend 90 meetings in 90 days to show that she was serious about achieving sobriety. She ultimately ended up going to 127 meetings over three months.

First Responders

After a year and a half of sobriety, Unberhagen decided to go back to school. She earned her master's degree in social work, specializing in mental health and substance abuse. During her own struggle, she had not been able to find a meeting or treatment program that specialized in helping first responders like her. When she learned about Warriors Heart, she had found her calling. The organization treats veterans and first responders contending with post-traumatic stress and substance abuse.

"Warriors Heart was everything that I went back to school to do. I knew what my mission was," Unberhagen said.

When she interviewed for a counseling position at the organization, she was very open about her experience as a police officer and her own struggle with alcoholism. A few days later, she was hired. In the course of her work, she's been able to connect with first responders who are struggling and works with them to determine the root causes of their addictions. The most rewarding part of her work is seeing a first responder find the will to achieve sobriety.

"That's what I get from working at Warriors Heart. To see that light come on in their eyes. To see that desire to live again. That's what will keep me here," Unberhagen said.



"Little Women." An illustration from the book "Boys and Girls of Bookland," from 1923.

The Secret of Home

Children's stories reveal the place of home in our lives

SUSAN PEATFIELD

I wonder if you have ever thought about the homes portrayed in children's stories? This thought came to me while watching the recently released film version of Louisa May Alcott's "Little Women."

Amid the warm and rich evocation of the Marches, a family of young women finding themselves and their future paths against the backdrop of America's civil war, there was another star of the film—the March home itself.

Going back to the book this is even more evident. A picture is painted of a home created and tended by a remarkable wife and mother. "Marmee" or Mrs. March is shown managing the demands

of four young daughters, one of whom is very ill, a household where money is tight, and in the absence of a much-loved husband and father. Not only does Mrs. March manage this, she also creates an oasis of love and care in her humbler home that the rich young neighbor Laurie needs but does not find in his own cold, marble halls. On the other side, Marmee finds time and precious goods to share with those in even poorer circumstances. The Little Women of the title have this priceless treasure to guide them—an ordinary yet extraordinary mother and the wonderful home she has both modeled and made.

Other stories echo this creating of a home from few materials but

with great love and faith. Laura Ingalls Wilder's tales of pioneer life in the Little House on the Prairie series also emphasizes the importance of the relationships and wider cooperation needed to make a place of comfort and safety in a challenging world.

Many stories for children, though, play upon the theme of unhappy homes and lost relationships. There are good literary reasons for this; it is hard to have a daring adventure with your concerned mother in tow. These kinds of stories allow children to discover for themselves places to call home.

"The Secret Garden" by Frances Hodgson Burnett is a very good example of this. Mary Lennox, a wealthy young girl ignored by her parents while they were alive, moves from India after their deaths to live with an equally distant and cold uncle in a rambling house in Yorkshire. One secret held by this home is Mary's sickly cousin Colin, living apart from his father, Mary's uncle, who is still mourning the death of his young wife. Another secret is the healing power of nature that the new friends Mary and Colin find in the closed-up garden that they bring back to life, and ultimately draws the bereaved father home to a restored relationship with his young son.

There is a further secret though and a deep one at that. For along with Mary and Colin in the garden is Dickon. Dickon is the brother of Martha, a servant at the house. Their home is described as one of great love and bustling life despite very poor means. It is their mother who talks to Mary's uncle about the needs of children and whose guidance in the end he trusts.

The secret of home might be deep but it is also simple. It is the place of love and trust and care. It is no surprise that so many happy endings in children's stories are the finding of such a place for themselves.

This article was originally published on the Home Renaissance Foundation blog, "BeHome."



REACHING WITHIN:
WHAT TRADITIONAL ART OFFERS THE HEART

The Fearless Compassion of St. Roch

ERIC BESS

Recently, there's been quite a bit of fear in relation to the coronavirus. The media reports on it constantly. States are declaring states of emergency, and store shelves are emptying as people are buying supplies to prepare for the virus. The World Health Organization has declared the coronavirus a pandemic.

This isn't the first time that Western civilization has confronted the fears of a pandemic. The Black Death, a pandemic of the bubonic plague, terrorized Europe between the 14th and 17th centuries. Within five years of its arrival in Europe, it is estimated to have killed 20 million people—a third of the entire population of Europe. It then disappeared and returned repeatedly for the next 300-plus years.

How did Europeans between the 14th and 17th centuries deal with their fears of the Black Death? Many of them turned to their faith for comfort. Some, unfortunately, used the supernatural negatively as a way to legitimize the persecution of Jews. Others, however, used their beliefs in the supernatural as

"Christ Appointing Saint Roch as Patron Saint of Plague Victims," circa 1623-1626, by Peter Paul Rubens. Oil on canvas. St. Martin's Church in Aalst, Belgium.

St. Roch did not fear illness or prison because his faith in God was deep and powerful.

a positive response to the epidemic.

In the Catholic tradition, art became a way of not only learning religious lessons and stories but also giving solace to believers in distress. According to art historian Dr. Louise Marshall, "In setting up hierarchical relationships of mutual obligation between worshiper and image, those who lived during the pandemic were not neurotic and helpless, but were taking positive—and in their eyes effective—steps to regain control over their environment..."

She also writes: "Throughout the pandemic, for many towns the first line of supernatural defense remained the local patron saint. At the heavenly court, the local saint could be relied upon to plead the community's cause with all the vigor and passion of a citizen on an urgent embassy to a foreign dignitary."

In other words, during the Black Death, people used imagery to pray to a patron saint who would serve as an intermediary between the sick and heaven. These patron saints included St. Sebastian and St. Rosalia. St. Roch, however, became a saint specially invoked against the plague.

Saint Roch's Story

According to "The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints," Roch was born in Montpellier, on the border between France and Italy, to a noblewoman who was barren until she prayed to the Virgin Mary. Roch was born with a birthmark of a red cross and was a very devout Christian from an early age.

Roch's wealthy parents died when he was 20. Upon their death, Roch gave away all of his riches and went to Italy to help those sick with the pestilence. He went from town to town, clearing away the pestilence with miracles: through prayer, making the sign of the cross, and by the touch of his hand.

After visiting a number of towns, an angel told Roch that he would get the plague himself. The townsfolk of Piacenza, Italy, where he was, expelled him; he then lived in a nearby wood, where he fashioned a hut out of branches and leaves.

Despite his condition, Roch spent his time in cheerful prayer. A spring miraculously appeared and supplied him with water, which tempered his fever. A dog belonging to a count living nearby brought him food and licked his wounds, which healed him. Later, during a hunting excursion, the dog led Count Gothard to Roch, and the count became Roch's follower.

Despite still being ill himself, Roch continued his mission. He entered the nearby town to heal plague victims. Soon, however, Roch asked God to be healed and was granted recovery.

After recovering, Roch returned to the province where he grew up, now at war. He was imprisoned by his uncle, who did not recognize him and believed him to be a spy. Roch, refusing worldly glory, did not reveal who he truly was. Instead, he welcomed prison and spent the next few years in prayer.

After Roch spent five years in prison and was close to death, a light shone forth from inside the prison. His last prayer was that anyone who prayed to him in the name of Jesus would be delivered from pestilence. Upon his death, an angel placed a golden tablet under his head. The golden tablet granted Roch's dying prayer and included his name so that all came to know his true identity.

Roch as Patron Saint of Plague Victims

The plague had not entirely disappeared from Europe when Peter Paul Rubens, a devout Roman Catholic and a leading painter for the Catholic Counter-Reformation, painted his "Christ Appointing Saint Roch as Patron Saint of Plague Victims." It is part of a larger altarpiece, in Belgium, which was completed for the Aalst guild of hops and grain merchants in 1626, whose patron saint was St. Roch.

Rubens composed the scene in an upper and lower half. The upper half depicts four figures: Jesus, an angel, St. Roch, and a dog. Jesus descends into darkness, dressed in a red robe, with a light around his head that illuminates the darkness.

Jesus points to a sign held by the angel that reads, "Eris In Peste Patronus." This roughly translates as "You are the patron during pestilence."

St. Roch is shown kneeling on one knee and looking at Jesus. He holds a staff and bag in his right hand and points to himself with his left, as if to acknowledge Jesus's sign.

In the lower half of the painting, Rubens depicted multiple figures infected with the plague. They look up at the scene above, with their arms outstretched as they ask for relief from their sufferings.

Only one figure in the lower half of the picture plane stands. It appears that Rubens expertly placed this figure to stop our eyes from leaving the picture plane and to lead our eyes back to the upper half of the composition. It is also the only figure that occupies both the upper and lower halves of the composition.

Fearless Compassion

During the height of the Black Death, the fear it inspired sometimes resulted in people abandoning their own infected families.

How might St. Roch's story and Rubens's depiction inform us today? During a time of fear, it is easy to think only about our own well-being. Of course, we should consider our well-being, and we should definitely make sure that our families are safe. But we should also, I think, remember to not let our fear prevent us from caring for others.

Faith and compassion is what I take away from St. Roch's story. One thing the Europeans' response to the Black Death incorporated was faith in a benevolent power greater than themselves. St. Roch did not fear illness or prison because his faith in God was deep and powerful. His goal was to compassionately help the suffering, and he succeeded—which is why, despite his refusal of worldly renown, we are still discussing him almost 700 years later.

Though Rubens depicted a clear separation between the upper half and lower half of his painting, we

needn't interpret that literally. In other words, it is not that heavenly matters are absolutely separate from worldly concerns. The most significant figures in the composition are Jesus, the angel, and St. Roch, but also significant to the composition is the sign at which Jesus points (and our eyes necessarily follow): the sign that signifies St. Roch is patron saint of pestilence. The angel holding the sign looks out at us as if to suggest, "Heaven has not forgotten you."

Stories like St. Roch's, in which a human being requests to serve the afflicted, even after his own death, offer a compelling message. St. Roch refused material gain, but he did not deny the material world, nor did he separate himself from it. The refusal of material gain for oneself is different from the refusal of the material world altogether. With the help of his faith and the resulting compassion, he fearlessly traveled to help as many people in this world as he could, despite his own sufferings, and his compassion extended even beyond death.

I'm guilty of being as fearful as the next person. But St. Roch's story and Rubens's depiction remind me to strengthen my faith and my compassion and to be a source of comfort for others—for anyone—during these trying times as the world confronts a new viral threat. If our faith and compassion are strong, maybe the miraculous will happen for us too.

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 we explore in our 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 (IDSVA).

BEHOLD THE BEAUTY

Staring Down the Beauty of a London Gun

LORRAINE FERRIER

Cast in silver, Medusa screams out on the pistol butt of a beautiful, 19th-century, walnut and rosewood flintlock pistol. Hercules's victory over an Amazon makes an appearance on an oval medallion on the trigger guard, and a sea nymph feeding a sea leopard is featured on the engraved sheet-silver inlay that runs along the stock.

The lock and barrel are made of blued steel. In bluing, the gunmaker puts the steel through a chemical process that turns it blue-black and protects the gun from wear and rust; it also reduces glare from the steel when the pistol is shot.

The blued steel's gold inlay depicts foliage and trophies of arms. Depicting trophies of arms, symbolizing military prowess and victory, is a tradition that dates back to ancient Greece and Rome when warriors honored the gods by piling up the arms and armor of those they'd just conquered.

The neoclassical pistol is one of a pair considered to be the most highly decorated of any known English pistols, according to The Metropolitan Museum of Art website. The Prince of Wales reputedly commissioned Samuel Brunn, a London gunmaker and sword cutler, to make the pistols. A sword cutler is the craftsman who assembles all the parts of a sword.

The pistols combine French and British design elements. The mount designs, made by London sword-hilt maker and silversmith Michael Barnett, were inspired by British firearms, and the stock decoration was influenced by French Empire firearms.

London Gunmaking

Brunn's business card shows the Prince of Wales's crest, which is inscribed on the bottom with "Ich Dien"—German for "I



serve." And serve Brunn did: Brunn received commissions from the prince and his friends. And even after the prince became King George IV, Brunn continued to make guns for him.

Brunn's clients included those in the navy and army, and his central workshop location at Charing Cross in London would have been ideal for serving these customers, being so close to Buckingham Palace and the government departments at Whitehall.

Brunn was one of a small group of London gunmakers who set up workshops in London around 1780. These gunmakers mainly focused on enhancing "accuracy, handling and speed," according to "The

Met. The results were exquisite, elegant pistols with pared-down decorations that are simply British by design.

'The Art of London Firearms'

John Byck, assistant curator in the department of arms and armor at The Met, brings the work of these gunmakers to the fore in the exhibition "The Art of London Firearms," the first American exhibition on the subject.

The exhibition tells the story of London pistols and the London gunmakers who made almost unparalleled contributions to firearm manufacturing. Of the 14 mid-18th and early-19th-century pistols on display, some are being exhibited for the first time, and others are rarely shown.

The exhibition "The Art of London Firearms" runs until May 17. To find out more about the exhibition and to check on temporary closures due to the coronavirus, please visit MetMuseum.org



1. A pair of flintlock pistols, 1800-1801, by gunmaker Samuel Brunn and silversmith Michael Barnett. Purchased through the Harris Brisbane Dick Fund and gift of George D. Pratt, by exchange, 1992.

2. Detail of the flintlock pistol's blued steel barrel with gold inlay, 1800-1801, by gunmaker Samuel Brunn and silversmith Michael Barnett. Purchased through the Harris Brisbane Dick Fund and gift of George D. Pratt, by exchange, 1992.

3. Many of the ornamental motifs on this flintlock pistol are taken from ancient Rome. Here, a nereid (sea nymph) feeds a sea leopard; 1800-1801, by gunmaker Samuel Brunn and silversmith Michael Barnett. British, London. Purchased through the Harris Brisbane Dick Fund and gift of George D. Pratt, by exchange, 1992.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The Surprising Source of Ansel Adams's Signature Style

REBECCA SENF

Ansel Adams's bold, black-and-white landscapes of the American wilderness are so iconic that most people know an Adams photograph when they see it.

You might be surprised to learn that Adams didn't learn his craft by attending an elite art institution or by apprenticing with a master photographer.

My new book, "Making a Photographer: The Early Work of Ansel Adams," charts Adams's early years, demonstrating how this self-taught expert learned from experience to identify his audience, hone his message, and imbue his photographs with drama and emotion. I discovered that the eight years he spent working for the marketing department of the Yosemite Park and Curry Company—the sole provider of lodging, dining, and entertainment services for Yosemite National Park—had a particularly profound influence on his later work.

Although Ansel Adams is a well-known artist, almost nothing has been written about his work with the Yosemite Park and Curry Company, or how it influenced his career.

Developing Twin Passions

A San Francisco native, Ansel Adams first visited Yosemite Valley in 1916 as a 14-year-old boy on summer vacation with his parents. Armed with his Kodak Box Brownie camera, he snapped photographs of the waterfalls and rock formations.

Though he experimented with light and composition, his initial efforts were clearly that of an amateur. Even though he continued to refine his photographic technique, he dreamed of one day becoming a concert pianist. Every year for the next 10

years, he returned to Yosemite National Park to hike, camp, and take photos, and his passion for photography and the outdoors only grew.

Piano eventually fell by the wayside. By 28, he'd decided he wanted to become a photographer. At the time, however, there were few professional opportunities for photographers. Photographs weren't widely collected or exhibited, and popular pictorial magazines like *Life* and *Look* hadn't launched yet.

So Adams sought out commercial jobs that would give him an opportunity to work as a photographer. They included taking portraits, photographing homes and buildings for architects and interior designers, and taking promotional photographs for businesses like wineries and banks.

Then, in 1929, Adams took a job that would prove to have an unexpected and meaningful impact on his life as an artist: He was hired to be a photographer for the Yosemite Park and Curry Company.

Selling Yosemite

The company wanted Adams to publish bold, captivating photographs to lure more tourists to Yosemite, and its marketing department coached Adams about the most effective approach to making photographs.

For instance, in a letter, the head of the Yosemite Park and Curry Company instructed Adams that, when taking a winter photograph, he should only shoot trees and houses "heavily laden with freshly fallen snow." Likewise, Adams was told to take photographs of only the best-dressed ice skaters using the valley's ice rink.

Adams ended up photographing a wide range of vacation pastimes, including sleigh riding, dog sledding, horseback riding, fishing, golfing,



Photographic portrait of nature photographer Ansel Adams, which first appeared in the 1950 Yosemite Field School yearbook.

You might be surprised to learn that Adams didn't learn his craft by attending an elite art institution or by apprenticing with a master photographer.

and back-country camping. He also photographed the park's distinctive vistas. These pictures appeared in brochures and newspaper articles, on postcards and menus, and in a deluxe souvenir book called "The Four Seasons in Yosemite National Park." The job had many benefits for the photographer: a good income, the challenge of attracting more visitors to his beloved Yosemite, and the opportunity to practice making pictures.

As with all forms of advertising, the goal was persuasion. In Adams's photographs, the action taking place is easy to understand, the setting spectacular, and the composition simple and focused, with few distractions. The resulting images could also be easily reproduced in a newspaper, magazine, or glossy brochure. Particularly effective ones showed people participating in the Yosemite Park and Curry Company's tourist activities with the park's dazzling scenery as a backdrop.

During his time with the Yosemite Park and Curry Company, Adams was also involved in the marketing process beyond just making



The Tetons and the Snake River, 1942, by Ansel Adams. Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming.

photographs. He wrote captions to accompany his images, worked on store window displays that promoted Yosemite, and consulted on the design of souvenirs that featured his pictures.

From Marketer to Artist

At the end of 1937, Adams left the Yosemite Park and Curry Company to focus on his fine art photography. As a passionate environmentalist, Adams hoped viewers of his photographs would be so impressed by the magnificence of nature that they would be compelled to explore and preserve it. The lessons he learned promoting the park's activities had clearly been of value: In his famous landscapes of America's wilderness, you can see the same bold, emotional, and emphatic style.

Like his marketing work, Adams's fine art photographs feature dazzling views and simple, bold compositions. Adams once said, "A great photograph is one that fully expresses what one feels, in the deepest sense, about what is being photographed and is, thereby, a true manifestation of what one feels about life in its entirety."

Previously, he had supported his employer's aim to compel people to visit Yosemite. Now he had his own goals to pursue. And thanks to his ability to harness the communicative power of photography, Adams would go on to convince millions of the grandeur and value of nature.

Rebecca Senf is the chief curator for the Center for Creative Photography at The University of Arizona. This article was originally published on The Conversation.

When Blended Family Relationships Compete and Conflict

GARY CHAPMAN & RON L. DEAL

Blended family relationships naturally create loyalty conflicts—or maybe we could call them love conflicts. “Am I still loved? Who do you love more—your spouse/ kids or me? Your old life or our new one?” What results is a household of competing relationships where everyone is fighting to matter... to someone, but not necessarily everyone.

Angela’s primary love language is quality time (learn all about the 5 Love Languages and stepfamilies in our book “Building Love Together in Blended Families”). Two of her three children also have quality time as their love language. So, she naturally invested a lot of time and attention in her children, especially after the divorce. A simple nighttime ritual, lying in bed at night and talking about the day, took on great significance when she became a single parent. It served as a point of connection, grieving, and care for one another. Multiple nights a week she and her kids would spend at least 30 minutes, and often an hour and a half, talking about their feelings, telling stories, and comforting one another.

What was a source of comfort for her and the children became a source of competition and conflict when she married Anthony.

A single father of a girl and boy, Anthony’s former wife abandoned him and their children with little notice. One day, she just up and left. For four years Anthony took care of everything, as his kids rarely saw their mother.

Finding each other was a dream come true for Anthony and Angela. They had many similar interests and shared values, and both saw in each other what they thought their children needed in a stepparent. While dating, Angela got lots of Quality Time from Anthony, especially when visitation took her kids to their dad’s house for a few days. And Anthony, whose primary love language is Words of Affirmation, got lots of positive messages from Angela who respected him as a father, provider, and business manager.

Once marriage moved the two families in together, Anthony appreciated the nightly ritual between Angela and her kids initially. He kissed his kids goodnight and settled in to a TV show to relax while Angela spent quality time with her kids. He knew the ritual was important for her kids—and as an outsider, he knew not to infringe on their time—but soon he grew weary of the length of time Angela spent with them. At the end of the day he wanted a little of her, too, and frankly was offended she didn’t save some of her time for him. Frequently, by the time she left the kids’ bedrooms, she was tired and just wanted to go to bed herself. Anthony felt cheated and unimportant. (Feelings that because of his ex-wife were all too familiar to him.)

He tried to help her be more efficient with her time distribution. At work he was a quality control efficiency expert so he began coaching her with ways she could spend less time with them and more with him. “I’m not saying you can’t spend any time with them, I’m just hoping you could cut it down to forty-five minutes.”

But Angela believed the bedtime ritual provided stability for her children who needed it “more than ever”

given the stress of their new family. Plus, their kids’ visitation schedule meant she spent more time with his kids during most weeks than hers which added guilt to her reasons for not shortening the time.

Anthony, also, tried getting the kids to give their mom “permission” to be with him. He would stand outside their bedroom and make vague remarks implying “it was his time” to be with her. Her kids got the message, all right, but looked to their mom to protect their time and asked why he would try to change it. “Mom, why is he rushing you? Doesn’t he care about us?” This, in turn, deepened Angela’s commitment to protecting her kids. It also frustrated her because she could see how Anthony was inadvertently causing her children not to trust him or want to be near him. At this rate, their families would never fully blend. Every time she tried to explain this to him and ask him to back off, he accused her of loving her kids more than she loves him. Consequently, Angela had fewer respectful words for him.

What is happening here? Everyone is fighting to be loved and feel safe.

There is a triangle of emotional attachments in this story that is typical of blended families. Each side is competing for love (and in this case, time) with at least one other side of the triangle. Angela’s relationship with her children is competing with Angela’s marriage to Anthony and vice versa. In addition, the conflict between those two sides is sabotaging the third side, that is, the relationship between Anthony and her children. There are trust issues between the insiders and the new outsider stepparent. Between children and adults, there are different motivations to love. And even though Anthony knows that Quality Time is the best language for his wife, for him to speak it to her is to pull her away from her children and cause her guilt (a classic loyalty or love conflict for biological parents).

Before Quality Time can be shared, each side of the attachment triangle must make adjustments to their expectations of one another and be willing to change how they distribute time. And most importantly, Angela and Anthony must protect their marriage from the conflict and stress or none of the triangle sides will improve.

And that’s where they started.

Guard Your Marriage. Angela and Anthony spent hours talking around and through this situation. They read books about stepfamily living and came to understand the many emotional dynamics involved for both them and their children. Being dedicated to this process and to listening openly to one another served a protective function for their marriage. It took months to see things improve, but their marital commitment and willingness to learn helped them endure the stress.

Consider Others: Empathy and Compassion. Eventually, both Angela and Anthony developed empathy and compassion for everyone involved. Angela understood how not making time for her husband tapped into his pain of not being important to his first wife and Anthony came



There is a triangle of emotional attachments in this story that is typical of blended families. Each side is competing for love (and in this case, time) with at least one other side of the triangle.

to appreciate her parental guilt and need to protect her kids. And both of them developed shared compassion for the kids’ need for consistency.

Setting Boundaries and Blessing Connection. Anthony started valuing Angela’s time with her kids and gave his blessing to their connection rather than resenting it. And, Angela proactively began setting time limits on the nighttime ritual so she could save some of her Quality Time for her husband and offer more Words of Affirmation.

To make this happen, Angela first had to push through her own guilt. Even before entering a stepfamily, kids have been through a lot. No parent ever wants their children to feel insecure or feel more pain. But the relational changes of blended families almost ensures they will. Angela recognized that she was often paralyzed by her guilt, but found enough emotional resolve to push through and set appropriate boundaries anyway. We tell parents, in the short-term, doing this often results in more whining from children, but eventually provides the stable environment they need. What your kids need in these moments is your strong comforting leadership, not your pity. They need you to remain connected and close even as you disappoint them.

Find Balance in Moving Toward Others. Initially, the best way to help a child move toward a stepparent is for the biological parent to first move toward the child. A child who has already lost a parent to death or divorce does not want to now lose connection with their biological parent who has fallen in love with another person. If your child feels you slipping away they want more of you, not less. For you to demand indis-

Once marriage moved the two families in together, Anthony appreciated the nightly ritual between Angela and her kids initially.

criminally that they move toward their stepparent (or future stepparent) is to ask them to “sleep with the enemy.” Much better for you to first move toward them by speaking their primary love language so they feel your continued presence while you also invest yourself in the new love relationship. Eventually, this makes loving a stepparent not a threat to the child’s relationship with you.

This is easier for biological parents to manage if the stepparent is patient with them. Stepparents need to acknowledge that they are, to a degree, taking the parent away from the children. Have compassion for this, and trust that blessing your spouse’s time with their kids apart from you will eventually bless your marriage.

Adapted from “Building Love Together in Blended Families: The 5 Love Languages and Becoming Stepfamily Smart” by Gary Chapman and Ron L. Deal, Northfield Publishers (2020). Used with permission. All rights to this material are reserved.

Gary Chapman, Ph.D., is the best-selling author of “The 5 Love Languages” series and director of Marriage and Family Life Consultants, Inc. He travels the world presenting seminars, and his radio program airs on more than 400 stations. For more information, visit his website at 5LoveLanguages.com

Ron Deal is the founder of Smart Stepfamilies, the author of stepfamily living videos and books, and the consulting editor for “The Smart Stepfamily” book series. He is a licensed marriage and family therapist, speaker, and host of the “FamilyLife Blended” podcast. Find events and resources at RonDeal.org

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK



FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

Week 12, 2020



The Rainy Day

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The day is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
The vine still clings to the mouldering wall,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
And the day is dark and dreary.

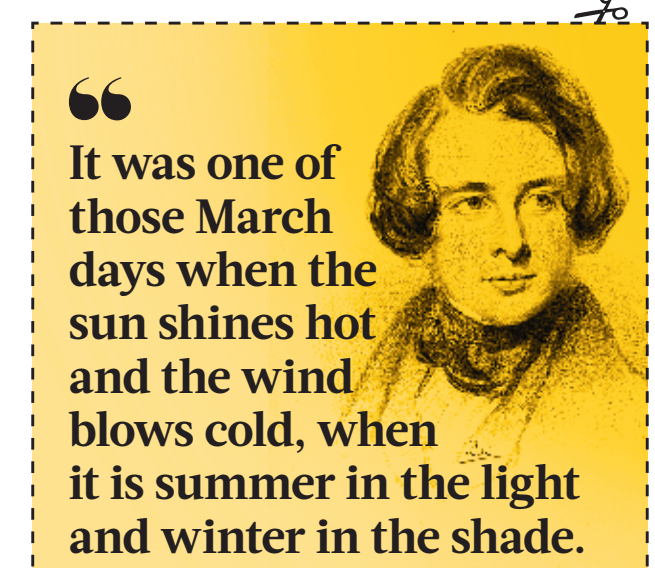
My life is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
My thoughts still cling to the mouldering Past,
But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
And the days are dark and dreary.

Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary.



DOES FEBRUARY LIKE MARCH?

NO, BUT APRIL MAY.



“It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold, when it is summer in the light and winter in the shade.”

CHARLES DICKENS (1812-1870)

A MONUMENTAL PROJECT BEGINS



On March 19, 1882, the first stone of one of the world’s most famous architectural landmarks was laid. The Sagrada Família, a Roman Catholic basilica in Barcelona, Spain, has been under construction ever since. Though he didn’t originally conceive of the extraordinary church, Antoni Gaudí took over the design work in 1883, changing it significantly and offering his engineering ideas as well. He devoted the rest of his life to the project. When he passed away in 1926, less than a quarter of the building was complete. It is estimated that the basilica will be finished in 2026.

By Aidan Danza, age 13

PLANT LIFE OF ANTARCTICA

Antarctica must be the most desolate environment in the world.

In summer, which is actually November to February, the very warmest it gets is around 25 degrees F. In the brutal winter, which is completely dark for months because of Antarctica’s position on the globe, temperatures can reach -81 degrees F in Antarctica’s center.

Needless to say, these extremely cold temperatures make it almost impossible for anything to live there. Most of the animals that do make it, including penguins and seals, survive from the bounty of the seas that surround Antarctica. You’d think it would be impossible for plants to survive here—they barely survive in temperate winters, let alone an Antarctic one! However, there is even plant life there.

Ninety-eight percent of Antarctica is covered by sheets of ice and snow, some of them miles thick, leaving only 2 percent of the land—mostly near the coasts and on the Antarctic Peninsula—suitable for plant-life. Most of the plants of Antarctica are mosses and lichens, but there are a few hardy, complex plants that live here.



ANTARCTIC HAIR GRASS

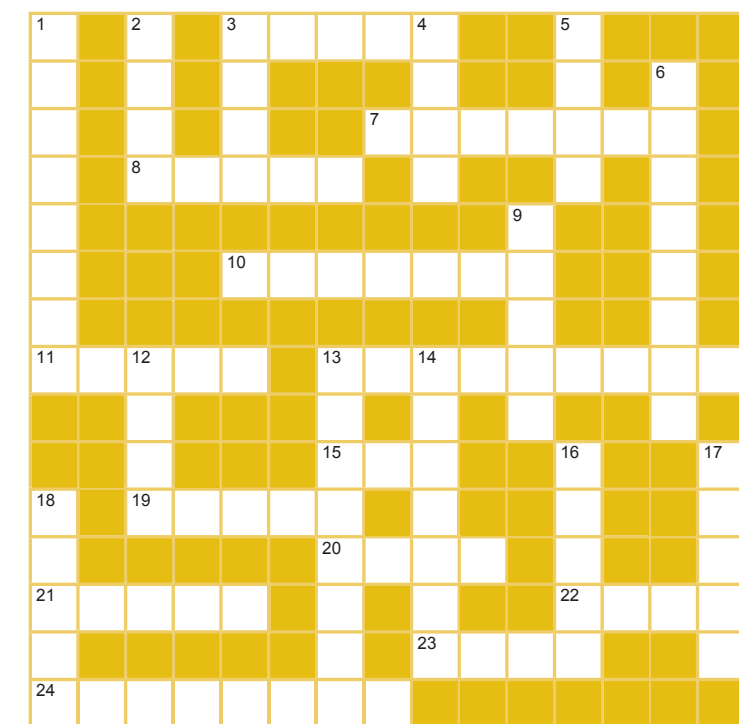
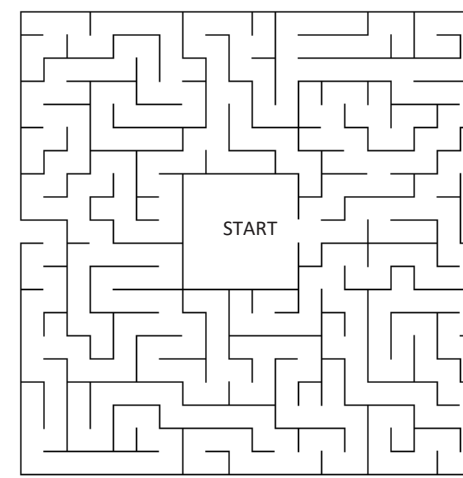
The Antarctic hair grass grows from one to two inches tall. It has many stems of grass shooting up from one plant. Its primary habitat is among the rocks on the coasts, nestled in between mosses or in rock crevices. Antarctic hair grass is perennial, but will only live for two years. When the plants start to die, they turn a yellowish-white color. The plant’s seeds develop inside closed flowers.



ANTARCTIC PEARLWORT

Antarctic pearlwort is the only flowering plant that lives in Antarctica. It can grow up to about two inches tall and develops yellow flowers. It grows wherever it can find a spot—between rocks and in soil on the Antarctic Peninsula. While it lives on Antarctica and its islands, it also exists, becoming increasingly rare the further north one goes, in much of South America. It also has a small population as far north as Mexico!

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

5	7		
46			
4	7		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Easy 1
7 + 2 + 5 = 2

Medium puzzle 1

3	16		
96			
1	3		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Medium 1
3 + 91 = (1 - 2)
1 + 91 = (6 + 6)

Hard puzzle 1

13	24		
40			
9	14		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Hard 1
(6 - 6) x (91 - 92)

Across

3	Flower (5)
7	Develop flowers (7)
8	Kite flying day (5)
10	Spring shower attire (7)
11	One of the first signs of Spring (5)
13	Spring pollinator (9)
15	Not yet leaves (3)

- Down
- Spring shower protector (8)
 - March weather phenomena (4)
 - Came into the world in Spring (4)
Frosty’s fate (4)
 - What birds do in spring (4)
 - Best to carry with you in spring (8)
 - Forests become this in Spring (5)
 - A ewe may have one in Spring (4)
 - We call this a “kid” tool! (8)
 - Amphibian with gills (7)
 - Buds of onions, lilies, etc. (5)
 - Needs mowing in Spring! (5)
 - Spring is the season of re-_____ (5)



What your kids need in these moments is your strong comforting leadership, not your pity.

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