

# THE EPOCH TIMES LIFE & TRADITION

Looking back at America's history, Medved finds an astounding pattern of miracles. They are indicative, he says, of our exceptional responsibilities.

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Radio talk show host and author Michael Medved.

# Michael Medved on America's Historic Role

CATHERINE YANG

Author and popular radio host Michael Medved's book "God's Hand on America" is his second book that presents the idea that not just Americans, but people around the world have for centuries marveled at America's bizarre fortune, and recognized it as a blessing. But his point is not that America is the lucky beneficiary of some cosmic lottery, but that the nation serves a purpose it should strive to live up to.

"We have not been chosen because we are so great, we are so great because we have been chosen, and chosen for special responsibility as much as for special blessing," Medved said in an interview late last month.

It's a belief held since the inception of the country, and one that waxes and wanes in popular perception in every age. Medved is a great lover of history, particularly American history, which is on the one hand large and improbable, and on the other hand intimately personal, with ties to his own family history. His four grandparents and his mother were immigrants, and from a young age, his father would take him to sites such as Independence Hall and Valley Forge to share stories about the founding of the country.

Subtitled "Divine Providence in the Modern Era," this book picks up where Medved's

“The American Miracle” left off and shows how American miracles continue even through times when we're too cynical to see it. For example, countless near-death experiences have consistently caused the right men to be at the right place at the right time, with effects so far-reaching we can't realize them until decades later, with results so illogical you'd be hard-pressed to call it anything but a miracle.

Medved reminds us that though Abraham Lincoln's legacy is great, his early political career was anything but, and he just might be the most unlikely ever winner of a presidential campaign.

Lincoln, who referred to himself as "a humble instrument" of divine will, along with several other leaders, all had bizarre brushes with death that led them to believe they had been saved for some planned reason—Theodore Roosevelt (several times), Winston Churchill (while on American soil), Franklin Roosevelt, and Martin Luther King Jr. (also multiple times). We are able to revisit their tales in vivid detail in the book, and come away with a soberly optimistic sense of gratitude.

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Theodore Roosevelt was a sickly, fragile child, and at age 12, his father told him, "You have the mind, but you have not the body, and without the help of the body the mind cannot go as far as it should. You must make your body... I know you will do it," encouraging him to take up boxing. Death continued to stalk him throughout his life, sometimes missing him by inches.

### Far-Reaching Impact

One of the lesser-known stories in the book features Lincoln's secretary of state, William Henry Seward, told in a way that most people



From age 5 to 6, Martin Luther King Jr. had three accidents that should have been fatal, and another one when he was 12. He would joke, "Well, I guess God was looking out for me even then. He must have given me a hard head just for that purpose."

have been put on a career path that led him to be part of Lincoln's cabinet.

Decades later, Seward was caught in a second carriage accident—as a result, doctors had to put a metal brace around his jaw and bandage his head—causing him to survive a third incident while recuperating, when an assassin broke into his home in the middle of the night as part of a three-pronged plot targeting the Lincoln administration. Lincoln died, but Seward survived, and yet a third assassin meant to target the vice president apparently lost his nerve.

This created such unique political circumstances that Seward was left with the means to pursue a stranger-than-fiction deal to purchase Alaska (involving a fake Russian baron and a midnight sale), which later influenced the outcome of the Cold War. Stranger yet, Seward decided almost flippantly that he should also purchase a cluster of tiny, seemingly insignificant islands midway between California and Asia.

This Midway Atoll ended up, 75 years later, as the site of a miraculous and decisive World War II battle between the United States and Japan.

### 2020 and 1968

The incredible tales bring us up to the tumultuous year of 1968. First, there was the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., then the assassination of Robert Kennedy (at which Medved had been on-site as a 19-year-old campaign volunteer).

"He's gone. Bobby's gone. Oh, my God. Our poor country," Medved remembers his father saying after seeing the death on the news.

"God might have withdrawn his blessing on America," Medved quotes novelist John Updike in his book.

"When I wrote 'God's Hand on America,' we hadn't yet begun all this analogizing of 1968 with 2020," Medved said. "But that whole reflection of 1968 was pertinent to me because as I describe in the book, I lived some of that history."

There are definite similarities. Medved cites a recent poll where 80 percent of Americans reported they felt things were out of control this year.

"That's certainly reflective of the way people felt in 1968 with the assassinations and violence," Medved said, adding that perspective is important here. "One thing that we have in 1968 that we do not have now is extremely violent eruptions in major cities. We've had some violence, but it's not comparable to the 150 riots that followed the death of Dr. King."



A ceremonial event to drive in the last spike, the golden spike, at Promontory Summit, Utah, on May 10, 1869, combining two railroads that would span the country.



A portrait photograph of Theodore Judah by Carleton Watkins. The civil engineer had a single-minded focus on building the First Transcontinental Railroad, and scouted out the majority of the route across the nation.

### With Purpose and Direction

American history has been more satisfying to study than any other history because of the sense of purpose and direction, Medved said.

The general role of the nation has been to lead and inspire the world, and it isn't a stretch to picture what happens in the world when America doesn't.

"The point over here is that if America continues to falter, if we deny what I believe to be our God-given role in leading and inspiring the world, then that doesn't mean the world is better, it means the world is infinitely worse," he said.

"Because I don't believe that the Chinese Communist regime or Russia or the European Union, Heaven help us, or any other combination of countries, can replicate the leadership role of the United States, I think you'd have increasing chaos and violence and instability, from which the United States has remarkably blessed the rest of world for a long time."

"One thing that most Americans are not conscious of is the literally hundreds of millions, and probably billions of lives that have been saved, literally saved, and redeemed in the last 50 years: The emergence from desperate poverty, the emergence from astonishingly brutal tyranny... Americans look at China today and they see a fairly grim and corrupt authoritarian regime, but they don't have any knowledge of what the Cultural Revolution was, and the vast slaughter of the Maoist era or the evil empire of the Soviets and the literally 100 million minimum documented deaths that the so-called communist experiment visited on the world; without the United States the rollback of that monstrous evil is inconceivable," Medved said.

He views the United States the way Lincoln wrote of himself, a "humble instrument" of divine will.

"It troubles me that people misinterpret the idea of American exceptionalism to mean we have exceptional privileges," he said. "We don't, but because history has thrust us into this position, we have exceptional responsibilities, and the best way to comprehend those responsibilities, I'll actually defer to a German: Otto von Bismarck, the so-called Iron Chancellor, once said it was the job of the statesman to listen for God's footsteps in history, and then to grab his coat tails and hang on."

There was also a tremendous feeling of collapse of the political system, Medved said, with the segregationist politician George Wallace winning 46 electoral votes and carrying five states as an independent. Out of the 71 million votes cast in that election, Richard Nixon won with 43.4 percent of the popular vote, compared to Hubert Humphrey's 42.7 percent—a difference of only 500,000 votes. Wallace ended up with just under 13 percent of the popular vote.

Yet, looking at the 52 years after 1968 up to the present, Medved reminds people of the tremendous gains the world has made. The lesson may not be that history repeats itself; men repeat themselves, in our criticisms and laments, but history, at least through America, is on an upward trend. And there is cause for optimism even regarding the criticism, a sign of a free society.

"Actually the first example of an American, most people are unaware of, was in the 1640s in Plymouth Colony, which was the Pilgrims, William Bradford wrote in his diary that he thought that God had removed his special blessing," Medved said. Then in the 1740s with the Great Awakening, people proclaimed America was an irreversible moral decline.

"It's in and out, people say that all the time, and then they come back and recognize, well, maybe not, maybe that special role for the United States is still there," Medved said. He discussed the history of that in detail in a previous book, "The 10 Big Lies About America."

"I think it's actually one of those aspects of America that is exceptional and that is admirable. There are very few societies that are constantly as self-reflective and self-critical as the United States."

# Meet the Teen With Autism Who Built the World's

DAKSHA DEVNANI

Brynjar Karl Birgisson, who is on the autism spectrum, made international headlines when he integrated his love for LEGO and his fascination for the most famed ship to build what's now known as the world's largest replica of the Titanic made out of LEGO.

Hailing from Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, Brynjar, who is commonly known as the "Lego boy," was just 10 years old when he set his mind to build the 20.8-foot-long model, which took 56,000 LEGO bricks, more than 700 painstaking hours and 11 months to complete. However, the resulting masterpiece became his "lifeline to independence," creating a positive impact on him.

The now-17-year-old was inspired to build his own LEGO model when he visited Legoland Billund in Denmark with his mother and witnessed models of the

“I was totally unable to communicate when I started the project and now I'm standing on stage and giving interviews. It has given me confidence.”

Brynjar Karl Birgisson



Brynjar Karl Birgisson and the Titanic replica he built.

most famous houses, locations, and ships made out of LEGO.

"And when I walked out, I thought to myself, 'I want to make one real-life scale model myself,'" Brynjar told CBC.

Four years later, after a lot of research

on what to build, Brynjar decided to go ahead with the Titanic. However, the path to making his dream a reality didn't come without challenges. Brynjar admitted that he wanted to give up on the project three times.

# Largest LEGO Titanic Replica in 11 Months

"I became frustrated and wanted to quit. Especially when the stern collapsed not once, but twice, then I seriously made an attempt to just stop this crazy project," he said in a Q&A session with the Titanic Museum Attraction at Pigeon Forge in Tennessee.

However, he continued to forge ahead with his dream project by soliciting help from his grandfather and mother. Brynjar's grandfather, an engineer, helped him estimate the number of LEGO bricks that would be needed to create the model along with creating a blueprint. Meanwhile, his mother helped him with a variety of tasks, which included hosting crowdfunding online, ordering LEGO bricks from Denmark, finding the perfect location to build the massive masterpiece, and more.

Since the completion of his project, Brynjar's LEGO liner has docked in countries across the world, such as Norway, Sweden, Germany, and the United States.



Brynjar Karl Birgisson at a TEDx Talk.

Since October 2019, the ship has been on display at the Titanic Museum Attraction at Pigeon Forge in Tennessee and will stay until the end of 2020.

The treasured model, which has blown people's minds around the world, has also had an immensely positive impact on Brynjar and helped him to overcome his obstacles with autism.

"This whole journey has helped me out of my autistic fog. Although I'm still autistic and will always be, I have trained my self to be as normal as possible," said the teen, who has become an advocate for people with autism. "I was totally unable to communicate when I started the project and now I'm standing on stage and giving interviews. It has given me confidence."

A lot of people in the autism spectrum have garnered inspiration from Brynjar, who has even given a TEDx Talk.

Apart from creating hope among people, Brynjar has co-authored a book with his mother called "My Autistic X Factor," in which he defines an X factor to be a special trait in someone and believes that everyone possesses it and will discover it someday.

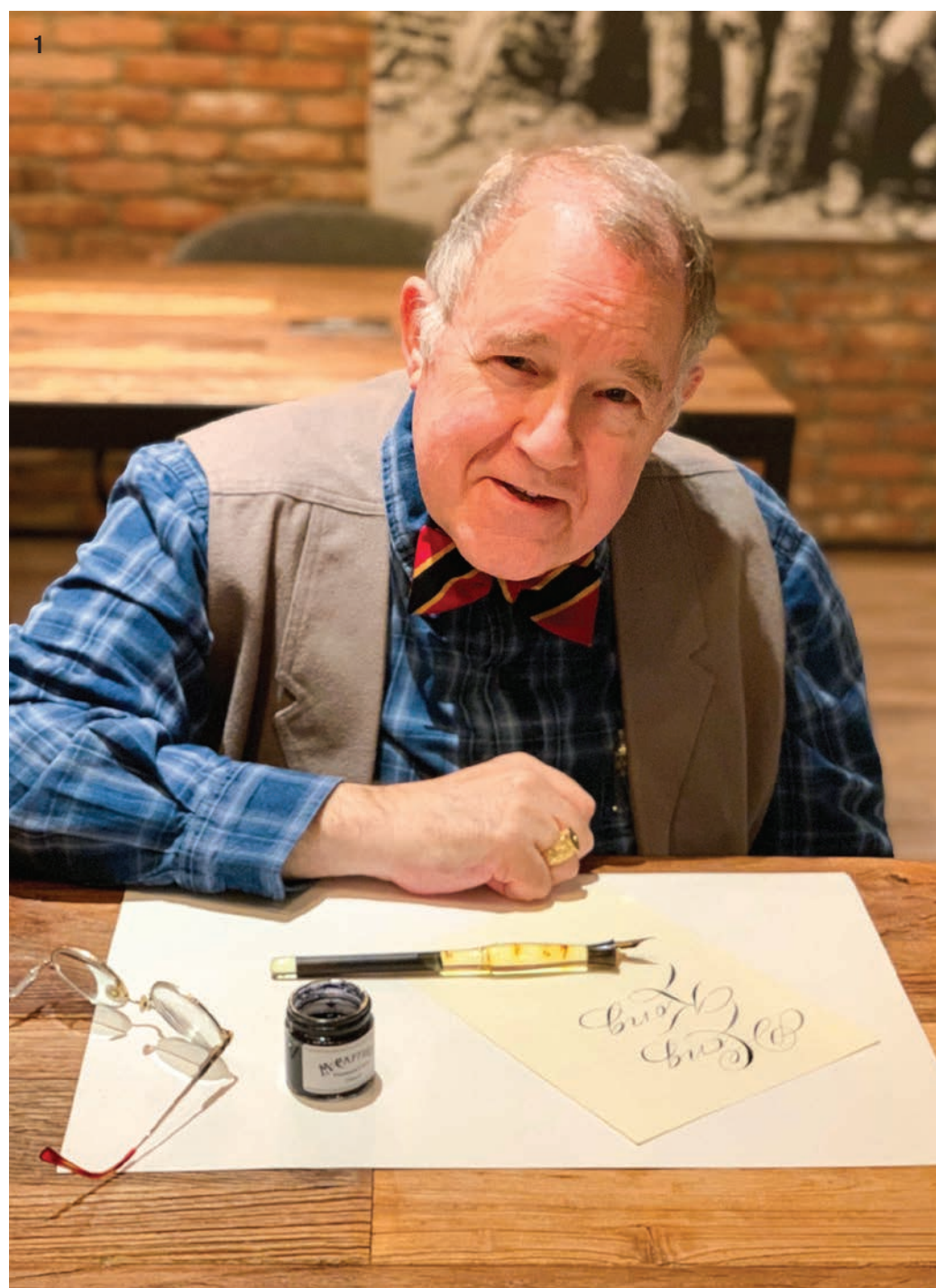
"I found my X factor when I was 10 years old," Brynjar said, according to CBS News. "And I really want to share

that story with you because that is the time when everything changed for me."

Meanwhile, Brynjar was recently featured in a documentary called "How the Titanic became my lifeboat." According to his website: "There is no cure for autism, there are ways to challenge it. The film explores those possibilities with Brynjar and other young people who share their experiences being on the autism spectrum and how their talent elevated them."

The film, which had a pre-premiere at the Forge Cinemas in March, received outstanding feedback from audiences and was scheduled to premiere in Iceland in April. However, due to the pandemic, Brynjar decided to delay it, according to a Facebook post.

We would love to hear your stories! You can share them with us at [emg-inspired@epochtimes.nyc](mailto:emg-inspired@epochtimes.nyc)



1. Master penman Michael Sull.

2. Sull, a Vietnam-era U.S. Navy veteran, served onboard the USS Pawcatuck from 1971–1973 as a quartermaster. He is the recipient of the American Spirit Honor Medal.

3. Writing their names in such a beautiful way has sometimes brought people to tears.

4. Sull teaches Spencerian script at a fundraiser.

5. Sull's penmanship greets students at Platt R. Spencer elementary school in Geneva, Ohio.

## The Beauty and Personality of Handwriting

Master penman Michael Sull rescued an American handwriting style, Spencerian script, from near extinction

CATHERINE YANG

One of master penman Michael Sull's favorite things to write is people's names. "Because so many people can't write their names! They scribble their names. You scribble your name, you're showing a lot of disrespect for yourself. I mean, your name is your most personal form of identification. You've had it since you were born. And you should write it well," Sull said. "In the old days, if you wrote your name well, you were really admired; people could tell if you were a cultured person, that you cared about who you were, it showed about your education, there was a sense of identity. Today nobody thinks about that, and it's a shame." "So I love to show people how beautiful their names are," Sull said.

**The Spencerian script is distinct in its sense of movement, curvature, variety, and contrast—elements he gleaned from nature.**

Sull is credited with the revival of Spencerian script—cursive handwriting—rescuing the American style of writing from near extinction. "There have been hundreds of times—I've been doing this for over 40 years—when I write people's names and tears come out. And it's not me, it's just this style brings that out because it shows them how beautiful handwriting is, how beautiful their name can be, and nobody does it anymore," Sull said. When you converse in person, there are a million little visual cues to take in, Sull said. And you might think that's lost in text correspondence, but it's not if you know how to really write. The beauty of Spencerian script, with its nature-inspired curves and room for freedom and embellishment, is that it makes handwriting the act of translating your human thoughts and emotions into visible language.

Sull's own great passion for handwriting has inspired a movement, to his delight. "You've got to be a little crazy to do what I did, you know. I wrote a 600-page book, and when I was done, I was \$100,000 in debt and had to declare bankruptcy. And I didn't care, because that wasn't important to me. Money comes and money goes," he said. "And yet, that's the way your passion really drives you to do these things. And people see that, and it's catching. They become part of that with you, and then it enters their life." His one-man mission slowly bore fruit; Sull took on students, who then took on students, and now with social media, his work has spread all around the world in an instant, and the interest is only growing. People find so much beauty in this traditional handwriting style they are brought to tears, even in places where a different language is used. Sull's book has been translated into Chinese, for instance, which has nothing resembling Latin letters.

**A Forgotten Script** Few people spend time considering the history of the mechanics of handwriting. After all, it seems to come naturally to us. "Just like nobody writes a book about how to brush your teeth, it's such a commonplace activity," Sull said. Sull's mother had beautiful

handwriting, and as a secretary, she wrote everything by hand until the advent of the typewriter. But Sull himself didn't do much writing until after college and after the Navy. He couldn't find a single book that taught handwriting, but in the 1970s, calligraphy became popular, with guilds popping up all over the country. "I became involved in that, and I really enjoyed it a lot," he said. But at the time, calligraphers across America were writing in European styles, following in the styles of a few famous English and other European type creators. In grade school, students would learn Palmer-style cursive, which was adapted and simplified from Spencerian script. "Everybody forgot about American penmanship, and most of the old masters were gone, passed away," Sull said. He had a stroke of fortune—being in a calligraphy guild led to meeting one of the last living master penmen. "His name was Paul O'Hara, he was born in 1880. When I met him, he was 90," Sull said. O'Hara was a master from what is considered the Golden Age of penmanship and studied under the master penman Charles Paxton Zaner, who founded the Zanerian College of Penmanship (now the Zaner-Bloser Company). "And there was another gentleman, his name was David Fairbanks; he was born in 1913, and he

was a master at engraving, which is doing those big fancy certificates. "No one had talked to him about penmanship, when I met him, for 50 years. So I renewed his interest in it; it was something he loved very much." "He told me about the history and the story of American penmanship. ... He taught me this beautiful style of penmanship," Sull said. "American handwriting is really, really unique." **A Style Based on Nature** Platt Spencer was a Romantic. Born in 1800 in a small New York village, he spent his time surrounded by dense forests and by the water. Spencer developed a great love for the beauty of nature, to him a creation of God. The Spencerian script is distinct in its sense of movement, curvature, variety, and contrast—elements he gleaned from nature. The English scripts in use—what the Declaration of Independence

was written in—were uniform and by comparison rigid; in this style, everyone's handwriting is the same. Spencer's script allowed for individuality and personality to shine through. He began teaching handwriting while still a teenager, and the beauty and personality of this style made it a widespread and enduring one. "It allowed people to write individually yet have a reference for how to make it look nice," Sull said. From the Civil War up to the typewriter, our story is all handwritten, and primarily in Spencerian script. Over time, others would modify Spencerian script into more simplified versions of American cursive with different methodologies, such as the D'Nealian cursive style, Zaner-Bloser cursive, the Palmer method, and something between cursive and "print" with detached letters that still resemble the cursive style. Today, few schools teach cursive at all; we hunch over and

**“Everybody forgot about American penmanship, and most of the old masters were gone, passed away.”**

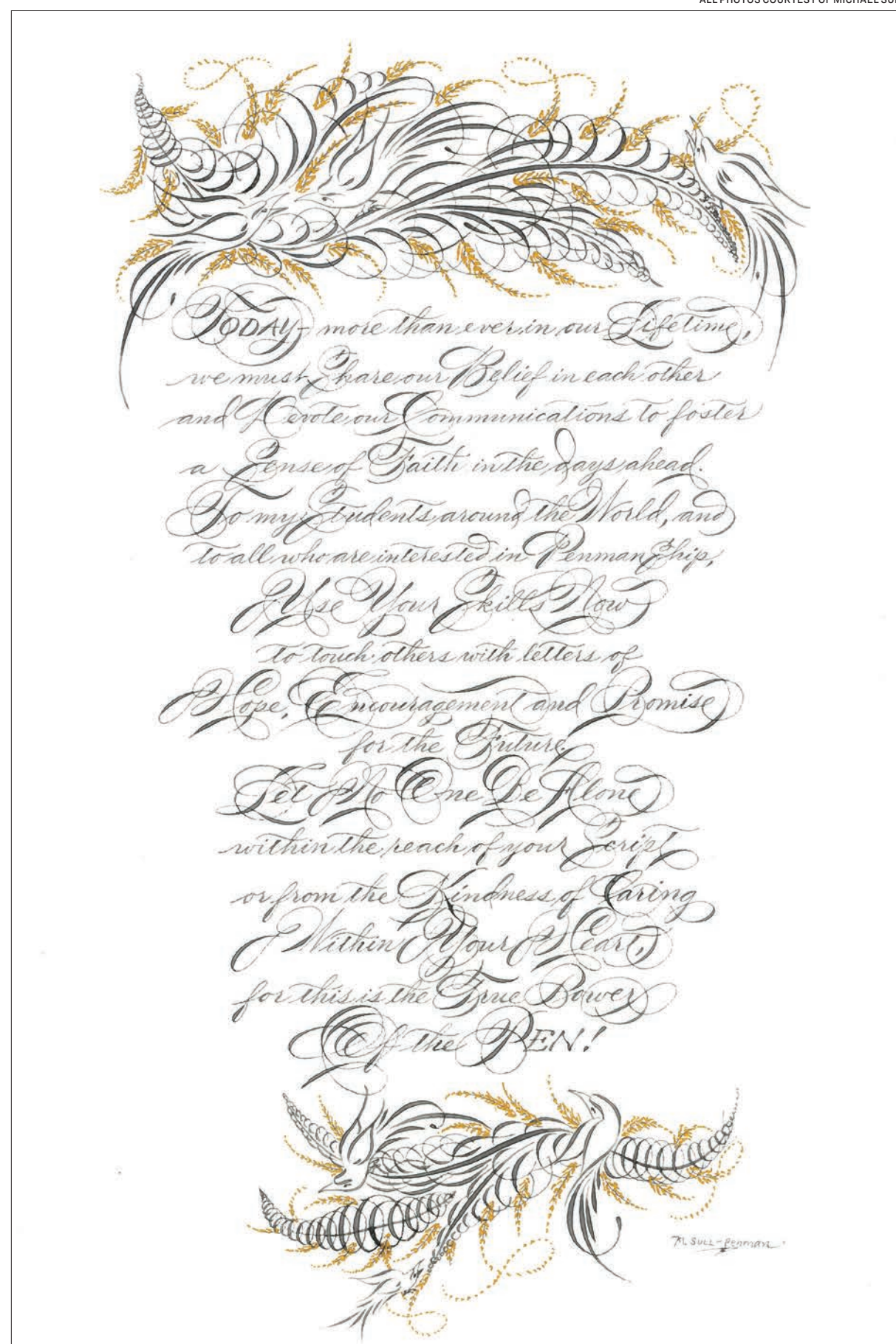
Michael Sull

scribble, and then dismiss handwriting as inferior. Ironically, the changes we have made for efficiency's sake come at the cost of aches and pains—not just writer's cramp in your hand, but the subsequent leaning over your work, and the arm and shoulder, and even back pains. Legibility then suffers too. Spencerian script, on the other hand, requires for many a change in grip, how you hold your arm, and your posture.

**The Storyteller** In the mid-1980s, Sull applied several times to the International Calligraphy Convention to teach Spencerian script, and got rejection after rejection. "It's part of our history, so I became a one-man mission to write the biggest, most comprehensive book on American penmanship that has ever been done, so that it would bring it back," Sull said. There were three books Sull could find that mentioned Spencer, and one of them said Spencer was English. Sull was determined to bring the script back, because if people only knew about it, he was sure they would love it. "They said, 'That's just cowboy lettering,'" he said. "Cowboy in that term means a sense of individual freedom, cowboys are known to do what needed to be done, they don't stand on ceremony, so it was thought that this kind of writing was a free form that just anybody did, there was no discipline to it. But they were wrong. There is quite a bit to it."

Sull decided to start his own program, a week-long course on the shores of Lake Erie, where Spencer lived. He directed it for 26 years, later handing it on to co-director and protegee Harvest Crittenden who still conducts his week-long course Spencerian Saga today. Sull finished his 600-page, two-volume book in 1989 and went back to give the first copy to his teacher, who was then 101 years old. "It was very emotional. He certified me as a master penman and passed away six months after that," he said. "So ever since then, it's been my goal to bring back our heritage of American penmanship." Part of being a master penman is making a commitment to teach, and Sull has been to nearly 40 states and 20 countries where people continue to be awed by this beautiful style of writing. "It's not me, I'm just the storyteller," he said. "That's how much people really admire this American penmanship that everybody had just forgotten about." **The Human Touch** Spencerian script can be used for everything from note-taking to thoughtful thank you cards; it isn't always "fancy," but it's easy to see why people so love the embellishments. Along with teaching, many master penmen take on some work for graphic designers (the Coca Cola logo is Spencerian) and take commissions—typically fancy certificates (called "engrossing"). Perhaps it says something about us, that when we want to celebrate human achievement like

a graduation, a victory, a wedding, we prefer something done by hand, imbued with human emotion. "It is a unique, human endeavor," Sull said. Aside from writing names, he enjoys being commissioned to write quotes and poems that hold a lot of meaning for the gift recipient, which he says is a beautiful expression of human emotion. "By not teaching handwriting, children, adults in their 20s, there's a lot of people who can't read handwriting. So they can't read the documents that founded our country. They can't read the Declaration, the Constitution, the Articles of Confederation, they can't read letters that their grandparents wrote," he said. "They're missing out on a huge part of the actual communication that established our country, what we call social correspondence of people who came before us, in our family, or the people who were instrumental in our country. "I mean, what would it be like if we just learned all about the Civil War by emails?" he said. "There is a certain amount of your physical being revealed when you write, and that is part of your expression to do it, and it's part of what is received by the reader to know what you were like when you wrote it." "Your work, your lettering, your handwriting, won't look like anyone else's," he said. "It's you, and there is nothing else that's like you." People light up when they realize this, and find a unique way to express themselves. "Nobody else's handwriting will look like yours. When it comes out of your pen, it comes out of your pen because it came from your thoughts," he said. Even though everyone has a computer in their pocket and the world is on a digital path, we still have human thoughts and emotions and a wish to express them. ... And the most personal way to do that that's visible is handwriting. "It is a very animated form of expression," he said. "You can put inflection in your lettering just like you do with your voice, with fancy letters, or more shade, or bigger letters. It changes text to visible language, and there's nothing else that does that. It's unique human activity, and American penmanship does it to a greater extent than any other language that uses the Roman alphabet. "The first time I taught in St. Petersburg, Russia, Russian uses a calligraphy form called Cyrillic alphabet, it's a heavy broadpen hand, heavy letters. It's very beautiful, but very rigid. When I wrote the names of my students, a number of them had tears in their eyes and cried, because they didn't realize they could have such freedom and such beauty in writing their names." Spencer wrote his students' names too, Sull said. He would do it beautifully and give it to them as an example, and say, "Copy that!" It would inspire them to improve their own work. "It's a very long tradition," Sull said.



Sull wrote this message for his students and friends this past spring, adding on social media, "As we shoulder the corona virus pandemic in our own way, I constantly have warm thoughts for each of you—your kindness to me, your enthusiasm for penmanship and the joy I get from teaching you. During this time, I wish you the best of health for you and your loved ones, and offer the following to you."

## ESPN Founder Bill Rasmussen Takes On Parkinson's Disease

ANDREW THOMAS

When Bill Rasmussen began his career as a sportscaster for a local radio station in Massachusetts, little did he know he would one day found the world's first 24-hour, seven days a week sports television network—ESPN. In April 1963, Rasmussen started off covering football and basketball for a station in Amherst. In the years to come, he would also work at ABC and NBC affiliates in Springfield. On Aug. 16, 1978, Rasmussen was driving with his son Scott on Interstate-84 to attend his daughter Lynn's 16th birthday party in Ocean Grove, New Jersey, when they hit a traffic jam. Rasmussen

had just purchased a satellite package that would give him the right to transmit live programs on the RCA satellite 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and he and his son were discussing how to make the most of it. It was a hot summer day, and a frustrated Scott blurted out, "Play football all day for all I care." That statement triggered a discussion between father and son on covering a variety of sports, and by the time they had returned from Lynn's birthday, they had conceived a plan for a 24-hour sports network called ESPN that would feature a half-hour show called "Sports Central," which would ultimately become the network's flagship program "SportsCenter."

On Sept. 7, 1979, ESPN launched its first broadcast, debuting with SportsCenter. Over time, the network would feature the NCAA Men's College Basketball tournament, the College World Series, and the NFL Draft. By April 1980, ESPN was broadcasting 24/7, forever changing the world of sports media.

### Parkinson's Disease

These days, Rasmussen is trying to change the world in a different way. In 2014, at age 81, Rasmussen was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. At the time he felt healthy and strong, but he had experienced twitching in his left hand from time to time for a few years before. Rasmussen's daughter



Bill Rasmussen and his son Scott conceived the idea for ESPN while stuck in a traffic jam in August 1978.

was a nurse, and the day they returned home from the doctor visit, they started to learn more about the disease. After his diagnosis, Rasmussen underwent physical, occupational, and speech therapy to set a baseline to determine the progress or decline of his condition. Rasmussen has maintained a positive attitude throughout the years. "I don't like to waste a lot of time feeling sorry for myself or saying,

"You can't do this or you can't do that," he said. On July 15, 2019, he shared his diagnosis with the world, conveying a positive message about his condition. "First and foremost—I'm doing well," Rasmussen wrote in ESPN's Front Row. "For a guy pushing 87, and with the help of medicine that helps treat my symptoms, I still get around quite well and continue to travel the country telling the ESPN/life lessons stories as I have for decades. "Things are changing for me: The shaking hands have arrived along with walking a little slower. Unexpected balance issues in crowds have led me to alter my airport routine. Per doctor's orders, I now ride a wheelchair from check-in to aircraft. You might think that's embarrassing, but not me—no long TSA lines anymore!



"I'm a positive guy. ... I always look at the positive side of people, projects, ideas, etc. For some reason, Parkinson's is kind of an orphaned malady—people don't like to talk about it, as if it were taboo. Well, 40 years ago, people didn't want to talk about a 24-hour sports network either as if competing with 'The Big Three'

OMAR RAWLINGS/GETTY IMAGES

ESPN Founder Bill Rasmussen embraces ESPN president Jimmy Pitaro after throwing out the first pitch before the game between the Boston Red Sox and the New York Yankees at Fenway Park in Boston on Sept. 8, 2019.

broadcast networks was taboo. We never stopped asking questions, solving problems, and selling the dream. A lot of really good people did believe and we see the results of that effort today. "Let's tackle Parkinson's with the same enthusiastic effort." His message drew the attention of patients around the world, as

well as from various Parkinson's research and advocacy organizations. The Michael J. Fox Foundation was just one of these organizations; it reached out to ESPN's community outreach division to help raise awareness about the disease. Now, Rasmussen is on the foundation's patient council and an awareness ambassador for the organization. Rasmussen serves on the council with 34 other Parkinson's patients to guide and advise the foundation on strategy and programs to find a cure for the disease. As an ambassador, Rasmussen tells his story and speaks about the foundation's work, raises awareness, combats the stigma of the disease, and maintains a positive message. He also encourages his fellow patients to face Parkinson's head-on and to

participate in research studies in the early stages of the disease. "I think it's absolutely incredible that the most effective medication that we're using here in 2020 was invented in the 1960s, and there has not been another one as effective as that one to this day," he said. "If we can get more people involved in research, there will be a quicker path to a newer and better pharmaceutical solution." Rasmussen hopes his work as a member of the council and ambassador will raise awareness, inspire other patients, help discover new treatments, and ultimately find a cure for the disease. Today, he is in excellent shape. Even though his left hand is shaking more since his diagnosis, he walks every day, can jog if he wants, and exercises twice a day. "I just keep on keeping on," he said.

# How to Make Superman Relevant

Why I don't buy the story that Superman isn't connecting with audiences because he's 'too perfect'

DAN SANCHEZ

"Oh, Superman, where are you now? When everything's gone wrong somehow?"

That lyric from the 1986 Genesis song "Land of Confusion" suits our current predicament. Many things seem to be going wrong all at once, with the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdowns, economic devastation, political polarization, civil unrest, violence in the streets. Anxiety levels rise as these crises collide and combine into a perfect storm of social distress.

If only Superman could save the day.

Of course, as a fictional character, Superman can't physically save us. But he can provide us desperately needed inspiration, as he has done many times before. Indeed, Superman was created in times much like these.

The Man of Steel made his sensational debut in 1938, nearly a decade into the Great Depression, inspiring millions of kids as they and their parents struggled through the last of these grueling years.

During World War II, Superman's popularity soared even higher. He was immensely popular among young troops, lifting the spirits of thousands as they faced the deadly perils of war.

Fast-forward to 1978, when Superman's blockbuster movie inspired yet another generation of Americans as they emerged from the doldrums of the past decade.

We could surely use that kind of inspiration today.

Sadly, Superman won't be saving our spirits at the cinema anytime soon. Movie theaters remain shuttered due to COVID-19. But even before the pandemic, Dani Di Placido of Forbes wrote that "with no script or director attached, insiders believe that a new Superman film is unlikely to appear before 2023."

With superhero movies having made billions of dollars at the box office, you'd think Warner Bros.' DC Films studio would be eager to capitalize on their monopoly over the most iconic superhero of them all.

But the studio has been disappointed with Superman's audience reception in recent years. His last big-screen appearance was in "Justice League," which was considered a failure. And his depictions in "Man of Steel" and "Batman V. Superman" were met with decidedly mixed reactions.

"DC Films still doesn't know what to do with Superman, the studio reportedly is unsure how to make the character 'relevant to modern audiences,'" said Forbes's tweet of Di Placido's article.

Why is Superman failing to connect? Di Placido posited that Superman's "godlike powers and righteous attitude" are "too alienating for modern audiences."

That has long been the prevailing theory: that Superman is a problematic character because he is too powerful and too good. This charge has been made on multiple grounds.

One common claim is that it leads to boring stories. Good stories, it is said, need challenges and perils for the hero to overcome. A hero who is unstoppable and invulnerable to harm therefore is boring. And morally righteous heroes are also boring, because they have no internal demons to overcome, and thus no room for growth.

But Di Placido didn't say "boring." He said "alienating." Why would power and goodness serve to alienate?

Maybe it's because mere mortal readers have trouble identifying with such a perfect character.

But I think it's more than that. After all, audiences in 1938 and 1978 were just as mortal as audiences today. Why would "modern audiences" be "alienated" by power and goodness when past audiences were not?

Maybe it's the way we have been taught to regard "being super."

According to a common worldview, many forms of "being super" are often considered not admirable, but suspect. Not worthy of emulation, but of resentment. Not a source of inspiration, but of envy.

Entrepreneurs who achieve super-



Twenty-four-year-old film actor Christopher Reeve stands before the Manhattan skyline dressed as the comic-book hero of the film "Superman."

cess in business are regarded as villains, even by those who benefit greatly from their products and services.

People with high-functioning virtues like industry and frugality who dare to encourage others to work and save are denounced for "poverty shaming."

Even fit people who promote healthy habits in others are bashed for "fat shaming."

With such an attitude, it's no surprise that some might find Superman alienating. Superman, as traditionally conceived, is a Platonic ideal of human excellence: of health, vitality, self-discipline, and heroism.

If you look at excellence in others as something to envy, resent, and attack, then a symbolic figure like Superman will be a standing insult that only makes you feel worse about yourself.

But if you look at human excellence in others as something to admire, celebrate, emulate, and aspire to, then you will more likely see Superman as inspiring and uplifting. You know you can never achieve his superhuman perfection, but you embrace the

fantasy as a symbolic ideal, a guiding star.

That being said, I think it's the filmmakers, not the audiences, who are to blame for not appreciating what Superman has to offer.

Superman's copyright-holding custodians have long bought into the theory that classic Superman is too powerful and good, and so they've tried to remedy that by giving "modern" Superman feet of clay. They have powered him down and made him vulnerable to getting knocked around, even beaten to death.

But more perniciously, they have weakened him morally. Over and over again, they have depicted Superman as a morally compromised government stooge or a power-mad would-be dictator. Zack Snyder's Superman is a mopey, tormented figure whose inner conflict and hesitancy lead to catastrophic failure and mass casualties.

The more pertinent question is, why is that version of Superman failing to inspire audiences? My guess is that they are not intimidated by his strength, but bored

and even disgusted by his weakness.

A testament to that interpretation is the enormous and enthusiastic popularity of Captain America in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU).

Captain America, as depicted in the MCU, is every bit the "boy scout" that Superman used to be. Throughout every film, he is firm and resolute in his ideals, even when they are tested by his closest friends and allies, and outlawed by the government he once served. He does evolve and learn, and is even disillusioned at times. But he never truly falters in his core inner convictions. Unlike Snyder's "Hamlet" version of Superman, you'll never see this Captain America bellowing in self-recrimination.

Did audiences find this "morally righteous," almost pure version of Captain America "alienating?"

Nope. In movie after movie, they found him thrilling. Every time his stalwart, even stubborn devotion to moral principles were validated, audiences cheered. And when, in "Avengers: Endgame," he proved to be worthy enough to wield the enchanted

hammer Mjolnir, Thor spoke for many of us when he exclaimed, "I knew it!"

Captain America's popularity is a hopeful sign that, in spite of envy and cynicism toward virtue being drilled into us by media, academia, politicians, and activists, a core part of the human spirit will always be drawn to, and be able to learn from, stories that inspire us to become better versions of ourselves. And this inner core is as impervious to deconstruction as Superman is to bullets.

So, DC, if you want to make Superman relevant to "modern audiences" (and make a lot of money in the process), reconnect him to what has always made him relevant to the human heart that beats in all audiences. Make him virtuous, resolute, and strong, and in and out.

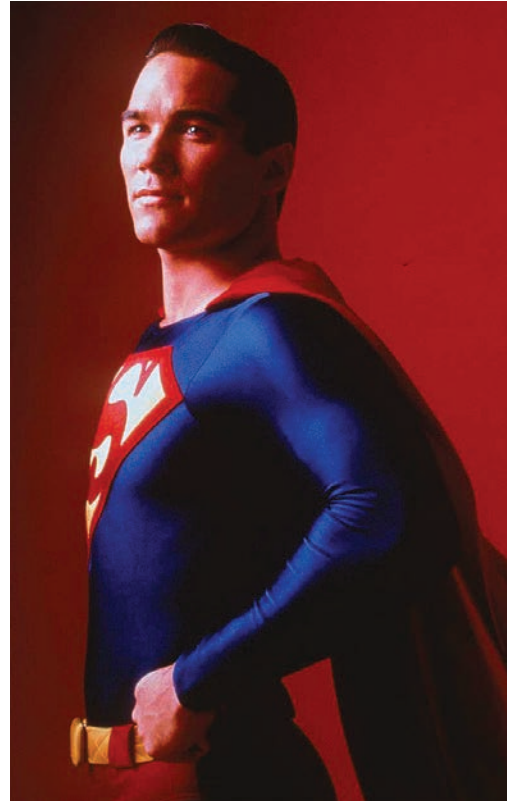
These are times that call for heroism. To rise to that challenge, we need stories of heroes who act like heroes to inspire us.

*Dan Sanchez is the director of content at the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE) and the editor of FEE.org. This article was originally published on FEE.org*



Actor George Reeves (1914–1959), as Superman, stands in front of actress Phyllis Coates, as Lois Lane, in a still from the television series "Adventures of Superman," circa 1952.

GETTY IMAGES/HANDOUT



Dean Cain as Superman in "Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman," in 1996.



Actor Henry Cavill attends the "Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice" premiere at Radio City Music Hall in New York on March 20, 2016.

IAN WALTON/GETTY IMAGES



Christopher Reeve's costume from "Superman," displayed at Christie's auction house in London on Dec. 16, 2003.

## Wedding Bells: Reflections on Love and Marriage

JEFF MINICK

*Note: Several years ago, I created the characters of Uncle Samuel, a childless widower and an attorney, and his nephew Hobson, a bumbling man in his mid-20s often baffled by life. In 2013, some of Uncle Samuel's letters appeared in my book "Learning As I Go." Even then, Hobson was courting Abigail and receiving sound advice on that relationship from Uncle Samuel, who is my fictional self, if I were a wiser and more honorable man. Below is the latest chapter in this story of Abigail and Hobson.*

Dear Uncle Samuel,

Though I know you as Sam from church, Hobson has used "Uncle Samuel" so many times that I now think of you that way. And when Hobson and I are married next spring, I suppose you will become my Un-

cle Samuel for real.

I'm writing you this note because I can better order my thoughts in print. Unlike conversation, I can edit myself, and add or delete words so as to be as clear as possible. Besides, I might begin weeping if we were face to face. The computer keyboard will hide my tears.

As you know, I love your nephew, and though you are always teasing and correcting him, he has far fewer flaws than you imagine. He is wonderful to me, and has shown fire and enthusiasm about sharing our lives together. He has found the key to my heart, unlocked the door, and has captured me, all of me, so much so that life without him is now unimaginable.

And yet I am frightened, Uncle Samuel—no, terrified—when I look around and see so many broken marriages and relationships. Let me explain. Last Sunday over lunch,

my parents told me and my three siblings—you will likely remember our ages range from my own 24 to my sister aged 12—that they were separating from each other and were considering divorce. Even though I had detected fissures in their marriage, the news shocked me, and it absolutely devastated my brothers and sister. Did you ever cry as a child while at the dinner table so that the food and the salt of tears mingled in your mouth? That sums up our meal together.

And it's not just my parents. A close friend from college, two years older than me, married right after graduation and is now recently divorced, fortunately without children, but she has become bitter about love and marriage. Then, I learned from my mother after the luncheon debacle that several couples she has known for years are either struggling in their marriages or are getting a divorce.

It's not just marriage, either. Many of my friends, male and female, have suffered battered hearts or found themselves in relationships that left them muddled and twisted. One young man my age, a landscaper, fell in love with a girl whom he adored, yet after she dumped him, he vowed never to love so wholeheartedly again. Another example: a cousin fell in love and gave herself to a man whom she later caught in a compromising situation with her best friend.

Uncle Samuel, Hobson tells me you have helped him several times with counsel and advice, especially after the death of his parents, so I'm hoping you can help me, too. How do you make a perfect marriage? How

do two people in love stay in love? How did you and Alison love each other for so many years before her death? How can Hobson and I avoid becoming like my parents?

Love, Abigail

\*\*\*

Dear Abigail,

You pay me a great compliment by making me your uncle. As you know, I am delighted you and Hobson have plans to become husband and wife. Heaven knows you'll have your hands full with that boy, but you are a capable young woman who should be able to keep him grounded. (I do wonder: Are you as fanatical a Carolina Panthers supporter as he? I hope so. Otherwise, your Sunday afternoons from late August through December promise solitude, while gatherings of beery fans bay at that immense television Hobson purchased last year.)

I am sorry to hear about your parents. Your pain is familiar to me. My mother and father divorced when I was exactly your age; my brother, Hobson's father, was 16 years old. That divorce destroyed a part of each of us. Some once wrote that the end of a marriage is the death of a little civilization. I don't think anyone ever put it better.

As to your future with Hobson, I will begin with some bleak truths and then address the hope and beauty of marriage.

You should first know the perfect marriage doesn't exist. Each marriage is different in its own way, but I've never known

anyone who had a perfect marriage. How would one even define "a perfect marriage?" There are happy marriages and unhappy marriages, but no perfect ones.

Love, relationships, and marriage are fundamentally mysteries, sometimes delightful, sometimes horrible, but always, at bottom, conundrums. A man of uncommonly good common sense, G.K. Chesterton, once wrote: "The fairy tales said that the prince and princess lived happily ever afterwards: and so they did. They lived happily, although it is very likely that from time to time they threw the furniture at one another."

Alison never threw furniture or anything else at me, but I am certain there were times she wished to do so.

You speak of infidelities, betrayals, and bitter recriminations. Unfortunately, these disasters are part of being human. And while sexual infidelities are awful, other betrayals also produce gaping wounds and enormous pain. As an attorney, I have dealt with men and women who cheated on their spouse financially, who regarded their spouse with utter contempt (sometimes rightly so), and who felt so dominated by their partner that they had lost their sense of self.

The church to which you and I belong rightly labels some of these transgressions "sins," but few people aspire to sin. Most people tumble into sin the way they tumble into the kitchen for breakfast. They make mistakes; they follow bad advice, often their own; they wreak terrible destruction without intending to do so.

I want you to remember something you may already know. Love is a sloppy business, sometimes hard and cruel, and everyone who loves at some point suffers.

Everyone. Most of the adults and even some of the children you pass on the street are heart-scalded, bearing the hidden wounds and scars that life and love bring to all human beings. Some of them, like your college friend or the landscaper, may never recover from these blows, but the good ones, the people like you, Abigail, get to their feet and move forward.

So that's the bad news about love and marriage: no guarantees, no perfection, and no fairy tales without some thrown furniture.

Here's the good news. All people are gems in the rough, my dear, and marriage is one tumbler made for polishing up those stones. Some couples find this process unbearable, and so separate or divorce, but others discover they shine brighter because of the adversity and trials they have shared together.

When I see you in my mind's eye, I think of a stanza from Stephen Vincent Benet's "The Ballad of William Sycamore": "Till I lost my boyhood and found my wife, A girl like a Salem clipper! A woman as straight as a hunting-knife With eyes as bright as the Dipper!"

That woman, sweet Abigail, is you. You will be all right. With love and prayers, Uncle Samuel

*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.*

## 6 Everyday Ways to Raise Intellectually Curious Children

ANNIE HOLMQUIST

Homeschooling is now mainstream. If recent reports are any indication, it isn't going to fade into the background anytime soon. Having homeschooling forced upon them for several months, many parents have found they love it, while others find they can't wait for schools to relieve them in caring for their children for six or more hours each day.

But in the midst of news reports and debates about homeschooling and whether or not parents should continue the practice, many Americans are missing an

important point: Every parent is a homeschool parent.

It doesn't matter if schooling is left entirely up to you or entirely up to the school. You are still a homeschool parent responsible for creating a learning environment and helping your children to grow intellectually.

But how does one do that? Many of us feel inadequate in our own academic prowess, so how could we ever raise intellectually curious children?

The late author and speaker Elisabeth Elliot offers several simple tips for doing just that in her book "Keep a Quiet Heart."

### 1. 'Teach your children to memorize'

Memorization, a chore to many adults, is effortless for children. Repeat something a few times in a child's presence, and they'll have it solidly memorized before you even have time to fully process the concept. Elliot taught her grandchildren the Greek alphabet this way, casually repeating it now and then while babysitting them for a few days. Making memorization seem like a fun activity is likely one reason why children internalize information so quickly, Elliot implies.

### 2. 'Ask questions at the table which will make children think'

Don't just stick to "How was your day?" Ask deep questions. Questions that maybe you don't even know the answer to. Causing children to ponder deep thoughts will challenge their minds and introduce them to being independent thinkers, something often squelched by today's institutional schools.

### 3. 'Read aloud to children'

"My father did this for us as long as we lived at home," writes Elliot. "He would bring a book to the table and read a paragraph, or share something in the evening as we all sat in the living room reading our own books."

Reading aloud is not only enjoyable for the whole family, it also builds vocabulary and comprehension for those listening.

### 4. 'Buy a microscope or a magnifying glass'

When children have the opportunity to explore the world through these unique lenses, everything is open for exploration, building children's curiosity. Generating interest and looking for answers to life's questions are always great ways to foster thinking and knowledge in a young mind.

### 5. 'Have a globe on which they can find any country they hear named in the news or in conversation'

Giving children a visual and spatial introduction to other parts of the world will not only give them a leg up in geography, but it will also generate awareness of other nationalities and ideologies. In the process, they may learn just how blessed they are to live in a free country.

### 6. 'Teach them to see illustrations of abstract truth in concrete objects'

We all know that truth is in short supply these days, so teaching children to grasp difficult truths at a young age is essential. Elliot points to Christ and his parables as an example of someone who used stories to teach difficult subject matter in an easy-to-grasp format. What better way than to do the same by using stories or everyday objects to illustrate the truths children will need to hold on to as they grow older and are besieged by relativistic ideas?



Get a globe or microscope to awaken children's curiosity.

Are these steps difficult? No, not really. Can the average parent—even the one that feels inadequate—utilize them regularly? I think it's quite possible.

If you're a parent who looks at this simple list and realizes, "That doesn't look hard, I should be able to do that!" In fact, I already do some of those things!" then congratulations. You, my dear friend, are a homeschooling parent. Who

knows to what intellectual heights your child will rise because you took the time and care to give him everyday tools to stretch and train his little mind?

*Annie Holmquist is the editor of Intellectual Takeout, an online magazine and sister publication of Chronicles. This article was originally published on Intellectual Takeout.*



All people are gems in the rough, and marriage is one tumbler made for polishing up those stones.



By spending the summer slowing down and listening to your kids, you can learn about their current interests.

HOMESCHOOL 101

# What Is Deschooling?

BARBARA DANZA

If you're one of the many parents digging into the idea of homeschooling your children this coming school year, you may encounter some terms you're unfamiliar with. One question presently flooding every online homeschool group's feed is "How do I begin homeschooling?" A common response to this question is "Begin by deschooling."

**What Is Deschooling?**

Deschooling is the process of giving yourself and your children the time and space necessary to let go of the ideas you've been programmed to accept about what school is for and the basic nature of education and learning. It's a process of shedding deeply ingrained notions in order to experience a paradigm shift in your understanding that will allow your family to fully enjoy the many benefits of homeschooling.

We've all been taught, for example, that in order to learn and become educated, you have to go to school. A cursory glance at many great scholars and achievers throughout history proves otherwise—as does any time you or your children ever learned anything independently.

Some argue that our modern-day public school system actually impedes learning and is, in reality, detrimental to education. (To learn more, look up the work of John Taylor Gatto, a New York City and state teacher of the year who shared his eye-opening experiences; or simply consult the alarming data measuring literacy rates in the United States.)

Many budding homeschoolers think of homeschooling as schooling at home, but rarely (if ever) does it work when one attempts to duplicate the constructs of school at home. Homeschooling is not school at home—it's learning at home—education at home—which is rather different.

Most of the strategies employed at school are unnecessary at home—not to mention, unpleasant. They are for maintaining order, managing behavior, and engendering the compliance and obedience of a collective.

What's more, the approach to education is fundamentally different in school and in homeschool. While school says learning is hard, homeschool says learning is natural. While school says learning must be forced, homeschool says learning is craved. While school says learning is a chore, homeschool says learning is a pleasure.

**Homeschool Environment**

Additionally, the learning atmospheres are starkly distinct at home and at school. The environment at school is sterile and one of control and confinement. The home environment, in contrast, is cozy and warm, loving and supportive, individualized and customized, and acts as a base from which the outside world can be explored in full. You may also be surprised at how much homeschooling happens outside the home. The world is your classroom, as they say.

For some people, education is not the primary benefit of school; socialization is. (If you're thinking of homeschooling, be ready to hear the question, "But what about socialization?")

The social environment at school is a curious one. Its influence can easily overshadow the values imparted by parents. At school, kids are divided by age, forced to sit in confined spaces, set up in competition with one another, and stripped of personal privacy and agency. Of course, it's common to make friends at school, but it's just as possible for homeschooled kids to make friends in their homeschool groups, extracurricular activities, outside classes they choose to take, and their community at large.

The aim of deschooling is to let go of the idea that school is the only path to education and the only road everyone must travel to live a good life. It means to let go of the idea that kids just naturally lose that spark of curiosity, that light within them, that wondrous imagination when they reach school age. It's to free yourself of the notion that you are not capable of providing your child with an excellent education that allows them to explore all of their interests and reach their greatest potential. It's to stop answering to bells, wasting precious time, asking permission to go to the bathroom, and forgetting the facts as soon as the test is done. It's to unpack your own baggage after years of compulsory schooling.

Often, it's the parents who need deschooling the most.

## The social environment at school is a curious one. Its influence can easily overshadow the values imparted by parents.

**How to Deschool**

So, how does a family deschool? It's rather simple—do nothing. Well, not exactly nothing. Intentionally refrain from diving headfirst into collecting copious amounts of curricula, bombarding your kids with worksheets, devising charts and checklists, and obsessing over a daily routine.

Instead, become one with the slow vibes

of summer and reconnect with your kids. Spend time with them, listen to them, play with them, and get to know what their current interests are and what lights them up inside.

If you are just coming off of a season of "distance learning," think about the lessons you learned. Did you notice that your child was struggling with math because he or she hasn't memorized multiplication tables, and the class has moved on? Did you notice that your child wished to read more advanced books, but the teacher insisted he or she stick to a reading level? Did you notice your child became a bit enthusiastic during one lesson when the topic was space, dinosaurs, art, music, engineering, etc.?

That's valuable information. Put it in your pocket and keep on noticing. Visit the library and bookstores, and stock up on a feast of delightful reading. Enjoy an audiobook here and there. Maintain a careful relationship with screens. Play music. Watch documentaries. Go to the park. Swim in the ocean. Start a project just for fun.

Amidst it all, your child is going to learn things. And so are you.

Homeschooling is a lifestyle shift like no other. When you can free your mind from the tyranny of what school is supposed to look like, you can embrace what learning actually looks like for each of your individual children. Then, slowly, begin to add in some structure.

Have patience with yourself and your kids. Have gratitude for the glorious freedom you're about to embrace. Prepare yourself to learn more than you ever learned in school yourself. Cherish this precious time with your family. Enjoy the adventure.

Deschooling, simply put, is letting go. Take as long as you need.

You'll know you're getting there when you witness your child's true self shining through brightly once again. You'll know you're getting there when you stop worrying about your child's reading level or what the other kids are learning in their grade. You'll know you're getting there when you begin to ask yourself how you were ever convinced that conventional schooling was the best you could do for your kids.

explore new ideas. You'll know it when you see it, and it'll be magical.

**You Realize You Never Needed School**

You'll know homeschool is working when you look back at the experience your children had in school and you wonder why you ever thought it was necessary to begin with.

**You Enjoy Newfound Freedom**

There's something about taking responsibility and living life on your own terms that allows you to appreciate new levels of freedom with your family. You may have started along this journey because you didn't want your children stuck in a mask all day or you were disappointed with what you witnessed in their school's academics, but the real benefits of homeschool may just surprise you.

## 6 Surprising Things About Homeschooling

BARBARA DANZA

If you're taking that giant leap of faith to pull your children out of school and homeschool them this year, you're not alone. Between the eye-opening experience of distance learning, to the measures being considered to combat virus spread in schools next year, many parents are taking the leap to homeschool.

As you plan and prepare for this significant lifestyle change, you may have a picture in your mind of what homeschool will look like for your family. Some aspects of homeschooling, however, may surprise you.

**You Have More Time**

You'd think that when you send your children elsewhere for schooling, you'd feel like you have more time. Somehow, though, and I can't exactly put my finger on why, it's homeschooling—even the most



As a homeschooling family, you'll learn right alongside your children.

ambitious sort—that seems to harmonize better with the other aspects of life. Perhaps it's simply that you're spending more of your time in alignment with your highest priorities. Your days may be full of lessons, read-alouds, field trips, and extracurriculars, but they feel less like obligations imposed upon you and more like the good stuff of life.

**You Learn So Much**

You might refer to the kids as students, but you'll be learning right alongside them. Approaching each subject and each endeavor with a curious mind and the heart of an explorer will allow you to appreciate the wonders of nature, science, the arts, and even math and grammar. Homeschooling is an educational adventure for all.

**You Find It Easy**

OK, easy may be overstating it,

MARIALATONINA412/SHUTTERSTOCK

MONKEY BUSINESS IMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK

# FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

Week 30, 2020

**Twinkle, Twinkle**  
Anonyms

Twinkle, twinkle, little star;  
How I wonder what you are!  
Up above the world so high,  
Like a diamond in the sky.  
When the glorious sun is set,  
When the grass with dew is wet,  
Then you show your little light,  
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.  
When the blazing sun is gone,  
When he nothing shines upon,  
Then you show your little light,  
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.  
In the dark-blue sky you keep,  
And often through my curtains peep;  
For you never shut your eye  
Till the sun is in the sky.  
As your bright and tiny spark  
Lights the traveler in the dark,  
Though I know not what you are,  
Twinkle, twinkle, little star!

KHANEROS/SHUTTERSTOCK

**HOW DO YOU GET A SQUIRREL TO LIKE YOU?**

ACT LIKE A NUT

EVELANA TURCHENICK/SHUTTERSTOCK

**Nature is pleased with simplicity. And nature is no dummy.**

SIR ISAAC NEWTON, SCIENTIST AND PHILOSOPHER (1643-1727)

KITSUNE05/SHUTTERSTOCK

## This Week in History

### MACHU PICCHU DISCOVERED

On July 24, 1911, American explorer Hiram Bingham discovered a city of the Inca Empire almost 8,000 feet above sea level in the Andes Mountains of Peru. "The Lost City," as it was called, is surrounded on three sides by very steep cliffs. It is believed to have been built between 1450 and 1550.



Hiram Bingham III near Machu Picchu in 1912.

Machu Picchu is considered one of the new seven wonders of the world.



IRYNA SAVINA/SHUTTERSTOCK

By Aidan Danza, age 14

## RAIN

**R**ain is one of the best things that happens on earth. It waters crops and other plants, nurturing food for animals and people, and is one of the many things that makes life possible on Earth. Rain is caused by a complex and intriguing process called the water cycle.

Rain starts with a body of water (be it ocean, lake, river, or puddle) and the sun. The sun heats the oceans, causing water molecules (tiny particles) to release their grip on each other and become a gas called water vapor. Water vapor must rise to become clouds, and it does so in a few different ways. The first is called orographic lifting. Orographic lifting occurs when a mass of water vapor, propelled by the wind, hits a mountain range and is propelled up its slope high into the sky. Frontal wedging, the second way, happens when two air masses, one warm and one cold, collide. Several different results can occur. When the warm air mass rides over the cold air mass, it is called a warm front. A cold front is the opposite of a warm front, where the cold air mass rides over the warm air mass. A stationary front is when neither front rises, much like two goats butting heads. Finally, an occluded front occurs when a cold front overtakes the warm front, and they merge into one entity.

The third way air can rise is called convergence, which is when two air masses of the same temperature collide, and force each other upward.

The fourth way water rises is called localized convective lifting. This happens in a place that is warmer than its surroundings, such as an asphalt road in the country, or an isolated rocky outcropping. This warm place causes the hot air around it to rise, taking water vapor with it.

When water vapor reaches a cold place in the sky, it condenses (collects) into clouds. When the water inside the clouds becomes too heavy for the clouds to support, it falls as rain. In colder temperatures, rain becomes snow or sleet.

However, the water cycle isn't done yet. When rain falls, sometimes it seeps underground to become groundwater. Other times it flows down the ground into rivers, which fall into oceans, where the water cycle begins again.

DLESIA BILKEI/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**  
3 9  
15  
1 5  
+ - x ÷  
Solution For Easy 1: 6 + (9 - 1) = 6

**Medium puzzle 1**  
7 15  
49  
2 12  
+ - x ÷  
Solution for Medium 1: 2 + 21 + 2 = 51

**Hard puzzle 1**  
3 25  
53  
3 5  
+ - x ÷  
Solution for Hard 1: 6 + 92 + (6 - 9)

**Across**

- It attracts animals (4)
- They're fast hoppers (7)
- Red birds (9)
- Summertime bugs (5)
- They grow antlers (4)
- First signs of spring (6)
- Western rodents (6,4)
- Group that's called a dray (9)
- Red or gray, they are smart animals (5)
- They sting but don't make honey (5)
- They shed their skin (6)
- Mountain activity (6)

- Down**
- Tiny creatures (4)
  - Place with lots of trees (5)
  - You must do this to make jam (5,7)
  - Little furry creatures that live everywhere (4)
  - Hiker's path (5)
  - They croak until they croak (5)
  - Mosquito eaters (8)
  - "Bald" birds (6)
  - Common backyard birds (8)
  - School group? (4)



THE  
EPOCH  
TIMES

\$1,000  
GRAND PRIZE

THE

# ‘Why I Love America’

ESSAY CONTEST

**O**ur country is in crisis. As statues of great Americans such as George Washington are pulled down, the very idea of the United States, and the value and dignity of the American way of life, are being called into question.

Responding to this challenge begins with each of us being clear about what makes the United States good and beautiful and worth defending. We need to be clear about why we love America.

To this end, The Epoch Times invites you to take part in our “Why I Love America” essay contest.

In an essay of 500 to 800 words, explain what moves you most about the United States—why you think it is worth defending. You may do so in the manner that suits you. For instance, you could

focus on one aspect of the United States; take a big picture, comprehensive approach; or simply tell an illustrative anecdote from your own life. Make the judges feel that America is worth celebrating.

The grand prize will be \$1,000. A year’s subscription to The Epoch Times will be awarded to several, select runners-up. Any entries may be published online and in print at the discretion of The Epoch Times.

**The deadline is 11:59 p.m. EDT on Aug. 14, 2020.**

Entries can be submitted in the following ways:

**Website:** [EpochContest.com](http://EpochContest.com)

**Email:** [americanessays@epochtimes.com](mailto:americanessays@epochtimes.com)

**Mail:** Essay Contest/The Epoch Times  
229 W. 28th St./7th Floor/New York, NY 10001

By entering this contest, the entrant indicates that he or she has read and agrees to the terms and conditions, which may be read online at [ept.ms/essayterms](http://ept.ms/essayterms)

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