

# THE EPOCH TIMES

# LIFE &

# TRADITION

ALENA OZEROVA/SHUTTERSTOCK

## How to Avoid the ‘Planned Mediocrity’ in Schools

No longer are parents clueless about what their children are learning, how they are learning it, or what approaches to learning work best for each child.



### ANNIE HOLMQUIST

It's been one short year since parents suddenly found themselves the chief overseers of their children's education due to the pandemic.

“Short” isn't the word to describe it, I can almost hear many parents retort, relief in their voices as they realize that soon they will be off the hook, for the responsibility of their child's education will be back in the hands of the experts at school.

But before you rejoice, let me suggest that things have changed in the past

year. No longer are parents clueless about what their children are learning, how they are learning it, or what approaches to learning work best for each child. Parents have seen it all, and therefore have little excuse to go back to the autopilot mode of pre-pandemic days. They are now the experts who have even more awareness of what's best for their children.

Despite this experience, many parents still feel inadequate in comparison to the official “experts” who fill the classrooms and administrative positions in today's schools. What right have parents to

speak up when the experts appear to be in error, or how do they even know what things to look for to evaluate the type of education their child is receiving?

It's into this arena that the advice of Mortimer Brewster Smith comes to our aid. In his 1954 book, “The Diminished Mind,” Smith expounds on the “planned mediocrity” present in public schools and coaches parents on how to counteract this trend for their children. He offers the following five bits of advice.

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▲ Parents shouldn't hesitate to pore over their children's texts, and be on the look out for dumbed down lessons or the author's own social convictions.

## ‘I’m Doing It’: Resilience and Faith in Our Daily Battles

### JEFF MINICK

A few weeks ago, one of my sisters told me that her best friend, whom she's known for over 50 years, had been diagnosed with breast cancer. This woman, a retired schoolteacher in her mid-60s, is now undergoing various surgeries and chemotherapy. To encourage her, my sister kept saying: “You're doing it. You're doing what you have to do.” Her friend adopted those words as her personal mantra—“I'm doing it”—and is fighting hard to get well.

Those who bravely face such a devastating illness rouse in me a tremendous

admiration. Over my lifetime, I've had a few health scares, but none of them lasted long, and I escaped unscathed. Some of my friends and family members have been less fortunate, and their courage and willpower in the face of these misfortunes are awe-inspiring.

Which brings me to Epoch Times reader Eva H. (whose name has been changed in this article to protect her privacy).

### Background

Eva was born in 1958 in Bay City, Michigan, and reports that her father “flew a pink diaper from the TV antenna” to honor the

event. In 1980, she graduated from college with a BA in English literature and teaching, and a minor in German. After two years of teaching high school, she earned an MBA and then worked for over 20 years in risk management for a Fortune 100 Company. During that time, she suffered several tragedies: the murder of a good friend and the friend's young daughter, the death of her husband, and the suicide of another friend.

Then came a catastrophe that would change her life forever.

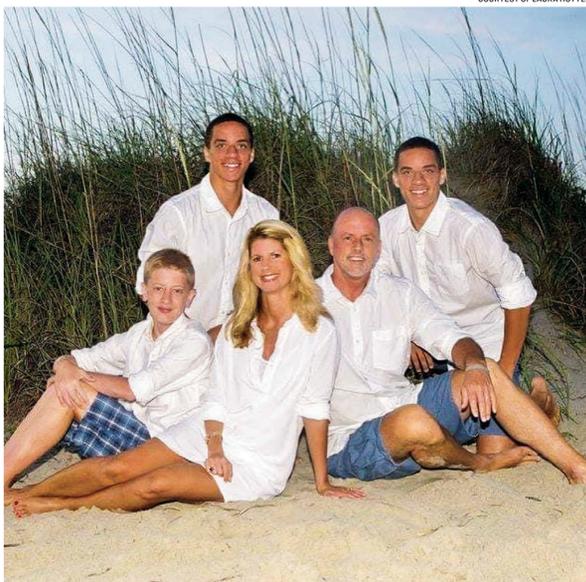
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AUTUMN/SHUTTERSTOCK

# A Family's Journey

As hard times struck, the Hottel family grew ever closer



A family portrait of the Hottels, with Victor and Martin in the back.

LOUISE BEVAN

Laura and Jay Hottel, a married couple from North Carolina, first met each other at church but had no intention of having more kids of their own. They had children from prior marriages and already “went through that stage of our life,” Laura said. But one day, their tune changed.

Over the course of volunteering at a church youth group, they got to know twin boys Martin and Victor.

The couple from Fayetteville were asked to collect Martin, then 15, and take him to church one Sunday.

“Martin walked out and he had this amazing smile, I’ll never forget that,” Laura, now 47, told *The Epoch Times*.

He began chatting away very excitedly, and having been a teacher for so long, Laura could tell he was seeking a little more stimulation.

**The twins were basically caring for themselves: getting up, getting on the bus to school, and then back again—no supervision at all.**

The couple quickly forged a friendship with the bright teen. Weeks later, they met Martin’s identical twin, Victor, who was clearly quieter than his brother.

The subject of pets came up, and Laura uncovered something concerning. Victor said his mother had “taken his dog.” The couple gleaned the teens were pretty much living alone. Their mother had left home months earlier, and their father worked two jobs, visiting his wife at night.

**Getting to Know the Boys**  
One ride to church turned into many, and Laura and Jay learned more.

The twins were basically caring for themselves: getting up, getting on the bus to school, and then back again—no supervision at all. “From what I gathered, sometimes the meals they would have at school would be their meal for the day,” Laura said.

As they were almost 16 and almost raising themselves, this was not considered abuse or neglect, according to state law. She would sometimes pick them up from school and treat them to a meal.

Both academically gifted, yet lacking resources, they would sometimes ask to use her computer or printer for assignments.

Months after meeting, Martin and Victor invited the couple to a service at their church, where they met the twins’ father for the first time. He exchanged numbers with Jay, who explained that he and Laura could be called upon any time.

The couple learned the teens were adopted. According to Martin, they had been hospitalized at age 2 for physical abuse from their birth parents, which led to the adoption. Sadly, mistreatment resurfaced in their new home.

On Thanksgiving 2012, while visiting family in Virginia, Laura and Jay learned



in a phone call that the twins had basically been abandoned. They were without food or anyone to look after them.

The breaking point came days later when their mother returned home. They were met with “a screaming session ... a lot of demands, a lot of cussing, a lot of degrading, a lot of threats,” Laura said.

Victor was so upset that he stormed out in the rain, appearing at Laura and Jay’s house soaking wet, feeling suicidal. Upon reluctantly returning home that night, the twins had their house keys seized and were kicked out by their father.

On their behalf, Laura and Jay’s pastor reached out to the teens’ high school social worker. Laura recalled a pivotal moment in the social worker’s office where Martin pointed to her from across the room and said, “I want her to be my mother.” She was moved to tears.

Shortly after, the twins’ father asked for a private word with Jay, admitted he didn’t want the boys, and asked if he wanted them. Laura recalled, “The father had declined care for the boys, the mother and the father did not want them.”

Laura and Jay didn’t have to think twice. They said yes.

“They had been going through years of neglect and abuse,” Laura said. “They would have bleach put in their faces for punishment. They were stepped on. [Yet] despite everything that they were going through, they were seeking the right things, they were seeking a community that was loving, they wanted to go to church, they loved God.”



**(Above left)**  
Martin and Victor Hottel when they were young.

**(Above middle)**  
During Victor’s treatment.

**(Above right)**  
At Martin Hottel’s wedding last August.

**“Despite everything that they were going through, they were seeking the right things, they were seeking a community that was loving, they wanted to go to church, they loved God.”**

Laura Hottel



**(Left)**  
Victor, with Jay, at his high school graduation in 2015.



**A New Family**  
Ecstatic, the teens gathered their belongings and moved into Laura and Jay’s spare bedroom just weeks before Christmas 2012. Laura said they consider that day their “adoption day.”

The couple furnished the teens with all that they needed: new clothes, toiletries, and ample school supplies. They received donations from their church and work.

The couple got custody over the teens on their 16th birthday, thanks to an agreement between the parents and the Hottels, courtesy of the attorney they hired. “It felt like a birthday gift for all of us,” said Laura.

The couple took Martin and Victor fishing, camping, to the movies, to the beach, and hiking in the mountains. They took family photos along the way. Gradually, “Miss Laura” and “Mr. Jay” became “Mom and Dad.”

Laura added: “Martin and Victor were really good with Andrew. They were so excited to be big brothers, and Andrew had not really been a little brother.”

Counseling helped the twins work through their past trauma. Despite ongoing battles with depression, Victor became a star wrestler in his junior year.

But tragedy soon struck.

In December 2013, after winning a wrestling match, Victor came home complaining of a pain in his neck, Laura recalled. After a week, Victor had an MRI and was diagnosed with having a 3-centimeter brain tumor (slightly more than an inch) attached to his brain stem.

“He was literally dying, and it was very fast,” said Laura. He had a brain tumor resection two weeks after the symptoms appeared and had to spend a total of 16 months in the hospital, but a full recovery was an impossibility.

Eventually, Jay lost his job due to the lengthy hospitalizations, and Laura had to work three to four jobs at a time to keep their family afloat.

Victor lost his sight, movement, speech, and ability to swallow and breathe fully on his own. “The hospital wanted to send him to a long-term, acute care facility,” Laura said. “We refused that, because we had told him that we would never leave him, we would never abandon him.”

After 40 procedures, Victor still requires 24-hour care, but the family unit is closer than ever.

Using his left hand to spell out words, Victor managed to complete his senior year from bed, graduating with a 4.5 GPA. He graduated from high school with Martin by his side in 2015.

In August 2020, he also attended Martin’s wedding as his best man, and even took a few steps down the wedding aisle with the help of Jay and two friends.

“I don’t know why some things happen the way they do,” Laura reflected. “People will ask me, ‘Well, if you know God moved things for you to adopt Martin and Victor, then why is Victor so sick?’ And I can’t answer those questions.

“But you focus on the positivity and you focus on what you do have, and what we do have is we have love, and we have grace, and we have forgiveness.”

## How to Avoid the ‘Planned Mediocrity’ in Schools

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### Examine Textbooks

Many textbooks are poorly written, Smith notes, and in trying to make their content appeal to children, the authors discourage mastery, dumbing down the lessons, which in turn makes the material “distasteful” to the student. Parents should carefully observe the types of books their children are studying and not be afraid to complain when it becomes apparent that the content is sub-par, even if “the professionals” become furious at such a challenge.

### Watch for Propaganda

Parents should also be on high alert for “the textbook which propagandizes for the author’s own social convictions,” Smith writes, a practice which extends beyond mere schoolbooks in today’s “woke” culture. A primary way to recognize propaganda is to note whether a lesson presents facts or if it advocates

opinions. Children will be able to form their own viewpoints when they get to adulthood, explains Smith, but only if their minds have been first filled with facts rather than politically correct opinions.

### Don’t Be Fooled by Fluff

Many schools—particularly colleges—use superficial perks to attract attendance at their institution. Looking past the climbing wall, the trendy student center, or the eco-friendly cafeteria to the heart of what schools are actually teaching will go a long way in making sure your children don’t matriculate fully entertained, but with an empty head.

### Be Wary of Experts

The definition of a good school is often defined by educationists themselves, writes Smith, and “the educationist is almost never an authority in a particular subject, only an authority in how to teach it.” As such, Smith cautions



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**Many schools—particularly colleges—use superficial perks to attract attendance at their institution.**

parents to be wary of those in the ivory towers who simply pat themselves and their fellow educationists on the back, using their own standards to define what makes a good school. Know what the school teaches and draw on a number of sources before concluding that a certain school will give your child a high-quality education.

### Be Vocal

Lastly, Smith encourages parents to not simply sit on the sidelines, but get involved, not only in the child’s school, but also at the political level. “If these [education] committees were made aware of the fact that some reasonable people hold a viewpoint ... at variance with the official one,” Smith writes, “they might be less prone to recommend legislation that entrenches the power of the education lobby.”

All of these points, of course, add up to overall individual action and responsibility on the part of parents. This is the “last desperate remedy,” writes Smith. “Not until individual man rebels against mediocrity, spiritual illiteracy, and group subservience will our unique experiment of universal education become once again a bright hope and promise in American life.”

Parents may not feel like experts when it comes to their child’s education, but the love, care, and concern they have for their children make them much more of experts than they give themselves credit for. Do your research. Keep your eyes open. Go with your gut on what’s best for your children and they will be on the path to intelligent, but commonsensical, adulthood.

*Annie Holmquist is the editor of Intellectual Takeout and the online editor of Chronicles Magazine, both projects of Charlemagne Institute.*

## ‘I’m Doing It’: Resilience and Faith in Our Daily Battles

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### Lyme Disease

In 2013, Eva contracted Lyme disease. Unable to continue her corporate work and faced with the danger of death, she entered into 18 months of intense medical treatment.

“Though I knew a little about Lyme disease from the experiences of several acquaintances, Eva’s story has made me much more aware of the horrific effects a tick bite can bring to a human being.

For 18 months, Eva underwent an ordeal that I can only imagine. Fatigued and often feverish, she began seeing a specialist in Raleigh, North Carolina, and was at one point taking up to 120 pills of various sorts every day to combat the ravages done by the disease. Though her illness brought not only physical hardships but enormous emotional distress as well, she declined to join a support group for Lyme disease mental therapy, unwilling, she said, to center her existence on her sickness. Even when she collapsed on a sidewalk while walking her dog Murphy, having as she put it “a boohoo moment,” she fought back against despair or surrender.

And eventually Eva won out. She beat her Lyme disease. In 2016, she earned a master’s in clinical psychology. Today she lives in a small town on Florida’s Gulf Coast, where she operates a private counseling service and is studying for her doctorate.

### Looking for Secret Weapons

During our email exchanges and telephone calls, Eva told me she had once compiled a list of 12 tragedies that had befallen her over her lifetime. Lyme disease ranked only No. 9 on that list in importance.

Given her ferocious battle with this illness, that ranking speaks volumes both about the difficulties Eva has faced and her abilities to cope with hardship.

So what, I wondered, helped her through this ordeal? What sword and shield did she bring to this fight?

### Resilience

In our email exchanges, Eva wrote the following:

“First, I think we missed a key word that is very important in surviving tough times, resilience. Resilience is a major topic in psy-

chological study these days, and I have been blessed with a huge amount of it. Yet desirable and helpful as this nebulous quality is, it is difficult to know how resilience is formed or strengthened. The article from *Psychology Today* titled “Resilience” [bit.ly/3t2k8K] is one I share with clients and reveals some recent thoughts on the topic. Especially important is the concept of post-traumatic growth, which I believe is critical to instilling hope in clients who are going through tough times.”

In her own case, Eva clearly practices resilience, finding a new pathway in life as she became well again.

### Faith

Eva also stresses the importance of her faith in her various struggles, and marvels at the absence of faith in the realm of psychology and counseling. She writes: “It is strange and disappointing to me that most studies of resilience do not mention faith. Faith can provide the strongest foundation for both resilience and hope. Yet in most academic or scientific writing these days, faith plays no part and is considered inappropriate for intellectual discussion.”

In her work as a therapist, Eva sees firsthand the effects when the foundation of faith has crumbled or gone missing altogether, especially in our young people. In the same email, she wrote:

“A tangent, but a topic that bothers me about our current pop culture (pop culture, my favorite oxymoron): there is a void in many peoples’ lives where faith used to live. I find this especially in the young, my under-40 clients. Many have been raised outside of any kind of faith tradition. Many have never even seen a Bible. What do they lean on? My youngest clients 18 to 30 are incredibly worldly, having grown up with the Internet and access to information that we could not even imagine at that age.

“And yet they are completely foundationless. Many are like seven-year-olds driving Maseratis, and they swerve and crash all over the place. I talk with my younger clients about finding their purpose in life, and I do talk about a ‘greater power’ and exploring their faith. But most clinicians do not have faith conversations with their clients, unless they are operating strictly in a religious organization.”



Basketball coach Jim Valvano (1946–1993), here celebrating a North Carolina State Wolfpack victory in 1983, urged people to keep their dreams alive no matter what problems they may face.

### Blessings and Lemons

Though her Lyme disease brought months of suffering, Eva credits it with a tremendous positive change in her career and life. Forced to leave the corporate world, she told me: “Lyme facilitated me into getting into a profession of loving and giving. So in one sense, it was kind of lucky or a blessing. It took me to a place that’s much more aligned to my purpose in life.”

True enough. But when we find ourselves at such a crossroads, some of us would be tempted to sit down on that gray pavement and give way to despair. Not Eva. To employ an old aphorism, she took the lemons of life and squeezed out some lemonade.

As we exchanged emails and spoke together by phone, I realized once again how much of our ability to make that lemonade stems from a positive attitude. In Eva I found a woman of high character and a zest for life who has overcome many challenges, who has in spite of everything kept a lively sense of humor (we spent a good part of our conversation laughing together), who listens well, and who is a fighter.

To illustrate these points and to catch a glimpse of her personality, look at what she wrote in one of her emails when I asked if all was well in her life:

“On a brighter note, I am quite well for a feisty, moderately old gal fighting time and gravity as best she can. I had an assignment the other week that started, ‘Read the Book of Luke ...’ My first reaction was that I usually only delve into major sections of the Book of Luke at Christmas and Easter. My second reaction was that perhaps it was time for a new Bible, as I discovered something called ‘Comfort Print.’ I thought that was a hilarious euphemism. But, my oh my, that large font is a delight to the eyes!”

### Takeaways

At one point during our phone conversation, Eva mentioned the impact of a speech given by basketball coach Jim Valvano when he was dying from cancer. Like my sister’s friend, who describes her “I’m doing it” as her daily mantra, Eva told me that Valvano’s speech had become her mantra during her illness. I looked this speech up online, listened to part of it, and then read the full transcript posted on Sports Illustrated. Near the end, Valvano has these words for his listeners:

“I just got one last thing; I urge all of you, all of you, to enjoy your life, the precious moments you have. To spend each day with some laughter and some thought, to get your emotions going. To be enthusiastic every day ... to keep your dreams alive in spite of problems whatever you have. The ability to be able to work hard for your dreams to come true, to become a reality.”

Enthusiasm, laughter, thoughtfulness, dreams, and hard work all describe Eva H., a woman whose courage and love for life are worthy of admiration and emulation.

*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. He is the author of two novels, “Amanda Bell” and “Dust on Their Wings,” and two works of non-fiction, “Learning as I Go” and “Movies Make the Man.” Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.*



Parents may not feel that they are education experts, but they know their children best. This, along with their concern and care, is invaluable.

## TIMELESS WISDOM

# The Tocquevillian Descent Into Tyranny

JOSHUA CHARLES

At the end of his seminal work, “Democracy in America,” Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville offered a stunningly prescient “prophecy” of how democratic institutions could easily fall into a tyranny unlike anything the world had ever seen before. Nearly two centuries later, his “prophecy” seems to draw closer and closer to fulfillment every day, if it hasn’t been fulfilled already.

He opens his “prophecy” with this bracing assertion:

“I had noted in my state in the United States that a democratic state of society similar to the American model could lay itself open to the establishment of despotism with unusual ease ... If despotism were to be established in present-day democracies, it would probably assume a different character. It would be more widespread and kinder. It would debase men without tormenting them.”

Freedom is such a normal concept in American thought and rhetoric that the idea that our system could become tyrannical “with unusual ease” makes us incredulous. How could that be? Tocqueville explains how.

He describes a society awash in prosperity and luxury unseen since the beginning of the world. But at the same time, a mass of citizens “turned in upon themselves in a restless search for those petty, vulgar pleasures with which they fill their souls.” Each is almost totally atomized from the rest. “He exists only in himself and for himself,” Tocqueville predicts.

Social atomization: check. Above this mass of the atomized stands “an immense and protective power which alone is responsible for looking after their enjoyments and watching over the destiny.” Tocqueville describes this power (the government) as a sort of reverse-patriarchy. Fathers, after all, seek to “prepare men for manhood.” But this government “seeks only to keep them [the citizens] in perpetual childhood.”

Lack of maturity and increased childishness: check.

You see, this is a society of amusement. Its spiritual core is gone. “It prefers its citizens to enjoy themselves provided they have only enjoyment in mind,” Tocqueville declares. But there’s a catch: “It works readily for their happiness, but wishes to be the only provider and judge of it.” This government provides and even anticipates their needs, secures their pleasures, and directs their industry. In spine-tingling words, Tocqueville said it ultimately aims to “remove from them entirely the bother

of thinking and the troubles of life.” Intellectually debased and superficial: check.

The end result is that freedom in day-to-day choices is restricted more and more, day after day, as the state “gradually removes autonomy itself from each citizen.”

Society is inundated with laws, rules, and regulations managing every detail of life. Even the ambitious and entrepreneurial struggle to break through them, Tocqueville foresaw. This web of regulations “does not break men’s wills but it does soften, bend, and control them...It does not tyrannize but it inhibits, represses, drains, snuffs out, dulls out so much effort that finally it reduces each nation to nothing more than a flock of timid and hardworking animals with the government as shepherd.”

Stifling economic regulations: check. Such a system seems to be the opposite of democratic. But ironically, it is the democratic principle itself that leads to it. “They derived consolation,” Tocqueville observes of these future citizens, “from being supervised by thinking that they have chosen their supervisors.” In other words, because they ostensibly chose their government through their vote, they do not fear its encroachments on liberty. It’s a creature of their own making after all.

But Tocqueville believed the opposite. Rather than being a creature of the people, such a government gradually makes the people into its creature. Its regulation of every aspect of life “gradually blots out their mind and enfeebles their spirit.” As a result, the people delegate more and more of their ability to choose how they live their lives to the state, whose decision and provision they begin to rely upon even more than they rely upon themselves.

Yes, they retain the right to vote. But, in arguably the most penetrating statement of his entire career, Tocqueville observed: “It is, indeed, difficult to imagine how men who have completely given up the habit of self-government could successfully choose those who should do it for them, and no one will be convinced that a liberal, energetic, and prudent government can ever emerge from the voting of a nation of servants.”

In other words, a nation of individuals who no longer govern themselves can’t be expected to wisely choose those who will govern them. They no longer know what free, virtuous, and wise decision-making is. Therefore, retaining the vote doesn’t achieve them much, since slowly but surely the government they mold begins to mold them.

Unprecedented dependence on government for day-to-day life: check. Eerily enough, Tocqueville predicted the rise of demagogues who would claim “the



PUBLIC DOMAIN

**Freedom is such a normal concept in American thought and rhetoric that the idea that our system could become tyrannical ‘with unusual ease’ makes us incredulous.**

defects they see had far more to do with the country’s Constitution than with ... the electorate.” Is this not precisely what we have seen in our own day? The people are endlessly flattered, and the Constitution is constantly trashed.

The terminus point described by Tocqueville is chilling:

“The vices of those who govern, and the ineptitude of those governed, would soon bring it to ruin, and the people, tired of its representatives and of itself, would create free institutions or would soon revert to its abasement to one single master.”

This is the unavoidable end for any people who have lost their virtue, their vigilant watch over their institutions, and accepted the erroneous idea that they control a government they’ve become dependent upon. When such a point is reached, there are only two options left: revert to freedom, or the further consolidation of power into fewer and fewer hands—even, perhaps, a single person’s hands.

I pray we are not there yet. But I fear we are much closer than we ever dared to think.

*Joshua Charles is a former White House speechwriter for Vice President Mike Pence, No. 1 New York Times bestselling author, historian, columnist, writer/ghostwriter, and public speaker. Follow him on Twitter @JoshuaTCharles or see JoshuaTCharles.com*

A portrait of Alexis de Tocqueville by Théodore Chassériau, 1850.

## World War II Veteran, 96, Knits 400 Hats for the Salvation Army During Pandemic

LOUISE BEVAN

A 96-year-old World War II veteran from Minnesota has found a crafty antidote to the isolation owing to the pandemic: knitting hundreds of hats for The Salvation Army.

To date, Tom Cornish has knit more than 500 woolen hats of various color combinations with his hook and loom from his apartment at Champlin Shores, a senior living complex. Originally aiming to finish one hat every day, Cornish often exceeded his target.

“Volunteering does something to a person. You’re working for others,” he explained to KARE 11. “There’s people here that want me to sell them, but I won’t.” Cornish sometimes stitches messages from the Bible into the wool. “I feel I’m working for the Lord,” he explained, “and that’s a good feeling.”

Taking almost four hours to knit one hat, Cornish managed to donate 400 hats to The Salvation Army in 2020 alone.

The veteran’s son, Jerry Cornish, says his father has always lent support to others.

“This is how he got to be 96 years old,



World War II veteran Tom Cornish.

because he’s helping everybody else,” said Jerry. “Everybody’s more important than he is, in his mind.”

Cornish’s service to others began when he volunteered to join the World War II effort fresh out of high school. After serving in the Pacific, the Navy man continued to volunteer back home in Minnesota while helping raise five children with his late first wife, Lorraine.

The volunteering tradition also contin-

ued with his second wife, Marvel.

According to The Salvation Army, Cornish has been knitting “off and on” for around 20 years and took up the hobby more seriously when Marvel passed away. Each hat costs the veteran about \$6 to make, but he jokes that each would cost \$3 more if he didn’t buy his yarn on sale.

Salvation Army warehouse manager Beth Koski praised Cornish for being a remarkable man, adding that he is al-



Tom Cornish as a U.S. Navy volunteer during World War II.

COURTESY OF JERRY CORNISH AND MARILYN CORNISH

ways so pleased to give his handiwork to people in need.

The veteran has also taught others at Champlin Shores how to knit hats.

“Other people are getting something out of my labor,” he told CNN. “It’s better than playing cards or looking out the window.”

While the winter season has come to an end, for Cornish there is no stopping. He is already planning to knit baby hats that he also plans to donate to the Salvation Army.

He said he intends to continue his newfound hobby “until I take my last breath.”

*Share your stories with us at emg.inspired@epochtimes.com, and get your daily dose of inspiration by signing up for The Epoch Inspired newsletter at TheEpochTimes.com/newsletter*

## Artist Crafts Homage to 2020 Tornado Victims, Heroic First Responders

LOUISE BEVAN

An artist has donated a lovingly crafted American flag sculpture in memory of the 2020 Easter tornado in Jones County, Mississippi.

The tribute pays homage to the lives lost and the heroes who stepped up to help during the crisis.

Artist Jason Saulpaw presented his handiwork in an April 3 ceremony at the Laurel Veterans Memorial Museum. Local residents and representatives attended, honoring efforts to restore their town after the April 12, 2020, storms.

The 49-year-old works in retail management, but runs his passion project, The Patriot Art Company, sculpting flags off hours.

Recalling the storms looming near his neighborhood and calls to evacuate, he told The Epoch Times: “I got out of my place ... I thought I was going to a safer area.” But he would have been safer if he had stayed home.

**The finished work, which took three months to complete, displays stars and stripes in rustic style with relief carvings of various patriotic designs.**

Jason Saulpaw made the flag from wooden planks, with smaller elements from debris from the April 2020 storm that hit Jones County, Miss.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF JASON SAULPAW

PARENTING

## Adjusting Your Outlook With Landmarks

TRICIA FOWLER

For many years, curious drivers on the rural route noticed three symbols on a telephone pole just south of my hometown. They were spray-painted bright white and reflected in the headlights of my dad’s Silverado as I drove home. Back in 1989, the message was a reminder to me and helped shape future events in my life. The message was a landmark made by my best friend.

We usually think of landmarks as prominent identifying features of landscapes, boundary markers, or historical events, but I want to use the word in a more personal way. Anyone can make a landmark as an outward indication of a significant life-altering moment. I am speaking of landmarks as something spontaneous and purposeful.

In Scripture, many times Old Testament characters had encounters with God and immediately set up rocks to enshrine the moment, reminding them of the message that had been given. These rock mounds were a visible testimony not so much to others who passed by, but to the person who set up the stones. Their path in life had been transformed so much by a particular event that it needed to be preserved.

**Unfocused Parenting**

The way we parent is like a path, sometimes well-worn because it’s the same way our parents, for better or for worse, raised us. The daily grind of raising children also causes some to abandon their good intentions. We may notice things aren’t going the way we intended, but don’t know how to change. When I became a mother, I was often unfocused. Good thoughts that gave perspective would occur to me but be quickly forgotten. One day, however, I decided to make a landmark and harness the clarity before it escaped my clutches.

My life was very different then. I was nursing a baby and had toddlers and preschoolers in tow. One of the children was

ALENA OZEROVA/SHUTTERSTOCK



Remembering your intentions and goals—through “landmarks” along the parenting journey—offers encouragement.

**The way we parent is like a path, sometimes well-worn because it’s the same way our parents, for better or for worse, raised us.**

always on my lap, chubby hands were reaching in my plate at mealtime, and I never went to the bathroom alone. I began to resent the constant touch of those precious babies. My selfishness loomed and threatened the contentment I had with my littles. I was particularly irked with my circumstances, and I longed to not be touched anymore by anyone.

What would that really be like, though? Answering that question wasn’t hard because I often visited the nursing home in town. Walking down the hall to see a particular resident, my kids would stiffen as they heard elderly ladies call to



(Left and below) Details of Saulpaw’s flag.

The artist watched the storm unfold from a friend’s house. Leaving the area to check on his home, he witnessed a second tornado pass through the town, hitting two homes.

Saulpaw described it as “another close call for the day.” He recalls chaos, but also people coming together in the aftermath: to share food, water, and supplies; to restore power and clear properties; and to transport injured people to the hospital.

Facebook was lit up with messages from locals checking in on neighbors. Helpers loaded up gear such as chainsaws and tractors and headed to the worst-hit areas to help.

Saulpaw recalls one man from Alabama who died during the cleanup and three other locals who died.

Despite division often portrayed in the media, Saulpaw saw only unity during the crisis. “It didn’t matter who you were, what you had, what color you were,” he said. “Everybody was helping everybody.”

He also joined in the efforts while maintaining his full-time job. He is proud of the selflessness demonstrated by local first responders, the fire department, EMTs, and law enforcement officers, he said.

During those few days, that feeling turned into a desire to create.

“It hit me that I needed to try to collect some of the debris and memorialize the situation [and] all the good people that came together to help each other,” he said.

“I didn’t want anything for it; I just wanted to give the community something back.” Saulpaw crafted the American flag from a

base of wooden planks, which he supplied, and added smaller elements from donated debris.

The finished work, which took three months to complete, displays stars and stripes in rustic style with relief carvings of various patriotic designs.

The hardest part, said Saulpaw, was the carving. “Your hands cramp up pretty good after [you’ve] been doing it for a few hours.” Saulpaw reached out to Laurel city officials, locals, and the Laurel Veterans Memorial Museum. Law enforcement and local biker clubs even escorted the artwork to the museum where it was presented.

“Obviously, we saw the loss of life and destruction,” PJ Weeks, pastor of First Baptist Church of Soso, said during the presentation.

“But God’s grace [was] through it all in bringing so many people, so many heroes, from our next-door neighbors to people down the road in other countries and other states.”

Saulpaw said he felt he had to contribute to the work, adding that one of his simple rules to live by is to wake up every day and try to do the right thing.

“When times get easy, people forget. They go right back to their old ways,” he reflected.

“I think [we] would be light years ahead if everybody would remember disaster times like that, when everybody came together like brothers and sisters and helped each other.

“It was basically all for one and one for all.”

cial media encourage us to strive for many selfish endeavors, but what in mainstream media encourages mothers to embrace the childrearing years? Going out with my children brought outrageous reactions from well-meaning and some not-so-well-meaning folks. It’s funny that when we struggle and sacrifice for politically correct goals in America, it’s praiseworthy, but not so much for the simple day-to-day victories of being a selfless mom or dad.

**Erecting Landmarks**

The more landmarks I set up, the steadier I felt, and I didn’t have to work hard at creating the reminders. After a miscarriage, a simple stone in the landscaping reminded me of the gift of life. Journaling, and reviewing those passages, helped me remember the ways to keep to the path and avoid laziness and impatience. When the kids were older, they painted a picture to remind the family of our life goals. Even the mistakes my kids made began to remind me of my own shortcomings and the power of coming alongside them in humility during discipline.

The message on the telephone pole back in ‘89, my first personal landmark, was a reminder to me from the love of my life that

even though he was off at college, he loved me. Every time I passed the landmark, I was reminded of his love, which eventually led to our marriage. Without that aptly placed message, my thoughts may have taken my life in a completely different direction.

Mom, the path you are traveling with your kids is of your own making. Know your struggles, reflect on good viewpoints, use a landmark to remind yourself, and rejoice at feeling restored.

*Tricia Fowler is a Christian homeschooling momma in the Midwest. She currently spends much of her time teaching math, feeding sourdough, and helping with whatever is in season on the hobby farm she shares with her husband and seven children.*



Journaling can help remind us of our intentions.

EVERETT COLLECTION/SHUTTERSTOCK

DEAR NEXT GENERATION:

# A Person of Excellence

→ Advice from our readers to our young people

Dear Next Generation:

Our home recently went through some remodeling. We have had quite a few workmen in and out of the house over the past few months. There were painters, plumbers, roofers, carpenters, carpet layers, electricians, etc. It was interesting to watch the transformation that came over our home as each of these tradesmen completed their work.

As our family inspected the improvements at the end of each job, we appreciated the fine craftsmanship and attention to detail that most of the workers displayed. It was apparent that they carefully finished their work to leave a good impression of their skills. Because of the fine reputations they establish, I am sure they enjoy continued success. And we continue to enjoy their beautiful handiwork as we live amidst the “finished product”—with one exception.

One of the groups of tradesmen has long since left our home, but the handiwork they left behind is careless, hurried, and messy. We live with it every day. Every day we admire the mark of excellence of the careful craftsmen and every day we lament the labors of those who didn't care.

I am sure at the time, the careless workers were more concerned with what they had done the night before and what they were going to do that night. They did not worry about a little misstep here or a slight mistake there. Shortcuts in their quality were not considered. They just seemed to want to get in and out fast and get paid for the job. Well, obviously, the last group of tradesmen has left a lasting impression on me. Although they were nice people, I doubt I would recommend their work to anyone else.

**The world needs those who are willing to work a little harder, be a little better, and set a standard of excellence and goodness for others to follow.**

The attention and care—or lack thereof—that a tradesman puts into his work are seen and felt for many years to follow.

GURUXD/SHUTTERSTOCK



This led me to consider myself. I put myself in the place of these sloppy workers and realized that there have been times in my life when I have been just like them. I have hurriedly finished (or even half-finished) a job just to be rid of it. I have not lived up to my best ability, so the impression that some people have of me is inaccurate. They will think my lackluster work was all that I was capable of doing. They will know me for a different person than I really am. It is disappointing to me that I have fallen short at times, but I have tried to be more careful as I have grown older. I know that the work I do and the image I portray leave a lasting impression on those around me.

An author named Katherine Porter said, “All our lives we are preparing to be something or someone, even if we don't know it.” I would ask the youth of today: “Who are you becoming? Will you be the respected craftsman or the careless worker?” It is really up to you to decide. But the world needs those who are willing to work a little harder, be a little better, and set a standard of excellence and goodness for others to follow.

I have learned it is not in one grandiose attempt that we become a craftsman, it is in our day-to-day efforts to learn and improve. For example, to achieve higher school grades, never miss a class, schedule time to study, invest special attention to assignments, and prepare for tests. When you do the daily tasks, the big end goals are accomplished. Work on the small things and great things come to pass.

Do your best in your classes, in your kindness, in your honest walk with others, in carrying out the responsibilities of your job, and in the things you enjoy—music, sports, art, science, dance, etc.

Strive to be excellent (see “The Quest for Excellence” by Gordon B. Hinckley). It will require some extra work and it will engage your mind. It will take persistence and a can-do attitude, and it will even require patience with yourself as you occasionally stumble. But, through these efforts, you will realize you have become someone—a person of quality and great worth, a craftsman to whom people will look as an example of goodness, excellence, and honor. Who do you choose to become?

—Deanne Kuhn, Utah

Dear Next Generation:

Born in 1939, I was never taught right from wrong as a scholarly topic. I was taught it as the way to live my life by everyday examples from my middle-class parents, and I had one of each for over 50 years (mother and father).

My mother was the eldest of nine children and she was educated to the 10th grade in

a tiny town in Utah, having to leave school early to help raise her siblings when her father died from the flu.

My father did not complete 6th grade, because he was forced to work for his father's small company that built concrete bridges on roads over little creeks in the Texas county in which he was born. At 16, my father left Texas, and everything he knew, for the land of opportunity in California.

Both my parents learned, and taught me, that working for what we wanted was the surest way to reach our objectives and to treasure what we got.

Mom did menial jobs for a hat maker and she became a milliner making very decorative hats for wealthier women.

Dad learned carpentry on the job at various construction sites. He slept in fields surrounded by orange trees where he found his morning breakfast. He quickly figured out that the more he learned, the more valuable he became to future employers, and he always looked for additional things to do on the job site. Often, when a new job was available to more than one man, he was selected because the bosses knew his value.

Mom and Dad met and married in Los Angeles. Two years after I was born, my father was hired for a contract in Pearl Harbor. We got to Hawaii in time to be bombed by the Japanese! Dad was quickly hired by the Navy Civil Service to help rebuild the demolished Navy base. In spite of his lack of education, his practical knowledge and experience moved him up the ladder to supervisor.

My parents agreed on one thing about education: I would go to college! After spending five years in college with no real objective, I was drafted by the Army but quickly joined the Navy before I had to start digging foxholes in some foreign land.

The lessons I learned from my parents served me well in the Navy. Be honest, work for what I wanted, look for ways to be valuable, volunteer for things I wanted to do, make friends and be a friend. After 20 years in the Navy, I retired as a U.S. Navy chief photographer's mate, a fantastic career as well as a life-long hobby.

For the past seven years, I have volunteered as a docent and ship's photographer aboard the USS Midway Museum in San Diego.

—David Harper, California

**What advice would you like to give to the younger generations?**

We call on all of our readers to share the timeless values that define right and wrong, and pass the torch, if you will, through your wisdom and hard-earned experience. We feel that the passing down of this wisdom has diminished over time, and that only with a strong moral foundation can future generations thrive.

Send your advice, along with your full name, state, and contact information to NextGeneration@epochtimes.com or mail it to:

Next Generation, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY 10001



(Above) The pond and garden in front of the Byodo-in Temple represents the Pure Land, the paradise of Buddha Amitabha. (Top right) Ujigami Shrine, with its distinctive asymmetrical gabled roof, is the oldest example of nagare-zukuri architecture in Japan. The shrine was built as a guardian shrine for the Byodo-in Temple at the end of the Heian period (749–1185). (Above right) A woman in a traditional kimono admires the Kinkaku Temple (the Golden Pavilion) in Kyoto, Japan.

**LARGER THAN LIFE:**  
ART THAT INSPIRES US THROUGH THE AGES

## The Enduring Architecture of Kyoto, Japan's Ancient Capital

Between the 8th and 19th centuries, Kyoto, in western Japan, was the country's capital. Built in 794, Kyoto was modeled on Chang'an, China's Tang Dynasty capital, now known as Xi'an.

China also influenced Japan's art and architecture. UNESCO has listed no less than 17 of Kyoto's monuments that together express the general historical development of Japanese wooden architecture and garden design. UNESCO notes that many of the structures have been authentically preserved due to the Japanese tradition of respecting the buildings. If any of the monuments needed to be repaired or rebuilt, then Japanese craftsmen kept true to the original style and decorations.



(Top left) Built in 1489, the Zen temple of Ginkaku-ji (Temple of the Silver Pavilion) demonstrates two distinctive styles of architecture. (Top right) The garden at the Zen temple of Ryōan-ji (Temple of the Dragon at Peace) is considered one of the best examples of its kind. The garden style is kare-sansui, or dry landscape, and consists of large rocks and polished river stones carefully arranged and raked to facilitate meditation. (Above left) The five-story pagoda of the Shingon Buddhist Temple, To-ji, founded in 796, was one of only three Buddhist temples in Kyoto at the time. Kūkai, a Japanese Buddhist monk, founded Shingon Buddhism when he returned from China, where he had learned Buddhism. (Above middle) Built in 951, the majestic five-story pagoda of Daigo Temple is believed to be the oldest in Kyoto. Buddhist mandala paintings are on the walls of the ground floor. (Above right) The Zen garden of the Koke-dera Temple (Moss Temple) dates from 1339 and significantly influenced Japanese garden design.



(Left) Nijo Castle was built in 1603 to protect the Imperial Palace, in Kyoto, Japan. (Middle) The golden hall of Ninna Temple. According to ancient tradition, a member of the imperial family always served as the head Shingon Buddhist monk of Ninna Temple. (Right) Nestled among the trees, the Sekisui-in (pictured) is the only surviving 13th-century building from the original temple.



(Left) Founded in 788, the Enryaku Buddhist Temple is situated on Mount Hiei and overlooks Kyoto. The temple is the headquarters of Tendai Buddhism. In 806, monk Saicho introduced Tendai Buddhism to Japan from China. (Middle) The main hall of the Kiyomizu-dera Buddhist Temple. (Right) Shimogamo-jinja is a Shinto shrine that dates from the sixth century.



(Left) Kamigamo Shrine (Kamigamo-jinja) is a Shinto shrine first founded in 678 to protect Kyoto from malignant forces. (Middle) Higashi Hongan Temple displays the splendor of the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1574–1600) when the 13th-century temple was restored. During the Azuchi-Momoyama period, grand castles and mansions replaced temple architecture. (Right) The 14th-century Zen garden of Tenryu Temple is built around a pond. Waterfalls, stone bridges, and groups of rocks are carefully arranged to aid contemplation.



(From left to right) 1. Khobe Tyre and his mom Shalayna Tyre. 2. Thomas trains Khobe at Old West Homebrew Saloon. 3. Khobe with Amy Kennett. 4. Khobe at his second job greeting visitors at Schnepf Farms.

## When a Job Becomes a Lifeline

LOUISE BEVAN

A cry for help on social media from a mom with a 20-year-old autistic son resulted in a lifeline being thrown to him. Not only did he find two job offers, but also warmth amid the crushing loneliness of lockdown.

Khobe Tyre loves movie parodies, hugs, and telling jokes. He worked as an usher at Harkins movie theater in Queen Creek, Arizona, after high school. When the theater closed during the pandemic, Khobe struggled.

The isolation even caused him to contemplate suicide.

That's when his mom, Shalayna Tyre, reached out on Instagram, hoping to meet up with other parents of special-needs adults.

Within hours, hundreds of messages piled in.

One stood out.

Mom of four Amy Kennett owns Old West Homebrew Saloon, having started the venture out of a trailer. It became a store on Florence's Main Street in December 2020, serving teas, sodas, and ice cream.

Her daughter Abigail has cerebral palsy, and her son Thomas, Abigail's twin brother, is autistic.

“We started the business [our kids] and for our family, and also in the hopes for it to build so that we can hire other individuals with special needs,” Kennett told The Epoch Times.

Amy knew immediately she wanted to contact Khobe. They and his mom met for the first time in March and announced a collaboration on Facebook.

“This is the young man whose story touched my heart on social media and I had to reach out,” Amy posted. “We are excited to have him join the Old West family.”

Old West teaches job and life skills to special-needs hires on-site, including customer interaction, taking orders, and working the till. Amy's son Thomas was tasked with training Khobe.

After a day on the job, he was “doing amazing. He's funny,” Amy said. “He tells all the customers jokes. He immediately fit in very well with my family and my kids.”

“It's really cool,” Khobe told ABC. “I got to see some people that I could relate to, they were like me.”

Besides working at Old West, Khobe was offered a second, weekend job as a greeter at Schnepf Farms, where he distributes site maps and gets to chat with visitors.

Shalayna said that not working for almost a year was really hard on her son.

“Now having two places to work at has

been so, so good for him,” she said. “He's getting to interact with people and tell his jokes, which is his favorite thing in the world!”

Since hiring Khobe, Amy was approached by more parents with special-needs kids, leading her to float an idea to the Florence Chamber of Commerce for a yearly hiring event.

Her next goal is to make Florence an Autism Certified City, ensuring health care, education, local government, and the hospitality industry are equipped to serve those with cognitive disorders.

“I think kindness goes a long way,” Amy said.

“My children, other people on the spectrum, or any other disability, they're just like you and I, and they want to be given opportunities and a chance to thrive, to be successful.”

PARENTING

# How to Help Our Kids Thrive

A conversation with 'Thrivers' author Michele Borba

BARBARA DANZA

The alarm bells around childhood anxiety and depression had already been sounding when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and struck a new blow upon the well-being of many of today's kids. Michele Borba's latest book, "Thrivers: The Surprising Reasons Why Some Kids Struggle and Others Shine," might be just the helping hand so many parents need in these times.

I asked Borba for her advice and encouragement for parents. Here's what she said.

**The Epoch Times:** Your new book, "Thrivers," begins: "Our kids are in trouble." What do you believe is causing such high rates of stress, anxiety, and depression in today's kids?

**Michele Borba:** Over the past decade, reports show teens and young adults to be more depressed and suffering higher levels of psychological distress than their predecessors. Teens tell me one of the biggest reasons is an uber-focus on GPA, rank, and scores. (Sixteen-year-old Jack explained: "School is non-stop studying, test-taking, filling out applications, and worrying. I never could come up for air.") The college admissions process has become all-consuming and frantic. Parenting has become an all-consuming effort to fine-tune children's intellectual growth.

Our kids are great at achieving, studying, and working hard. But they're also full of anxiety and putting enormous pressure on themselves. No matter what they do and how hard they push they never feel "good enough." And when challenges arise, they often quit because they lack the inner reserve and preparedness that provide inner strength to endure. We've failed to help our kids learn the other side of the report card: the human skills that help them thrive. And in today's uncertain, anxious, tech-driven world, teaching those skills is an absolute must.

**The Epoch Times:** What mindset shift might parents make to steer their children away from relentless "striving," as you describe in your book, and toward more thriving?

**Ms. Borba:** The first step to change is recognizing that there is a problem. Every study shares one commonality: We are raising a stressed, anxious generation of children.

“Our kids are great at achieving, studying, and working hard. But they're also full of anxiety and putting enormous pressure on themselves.”

Michele Borba

“We are living textbooks to our kids. Model what you hope your child catches.”

Michele Borba



Educational psychologist and bestselling author Michele Borba.

Provide opportunities for your children to help family members or neighbors to inspire them to practice caring, advises Borba.



Anxiety and depression among children have been on the rise during the last few years, and were exacerbated during the past year of pandemic.

Helping our children become successful, healthier, and happier just requires a simple mindset shift. We must realize our first step is recognizing that resilience is not locked into kids' DNA but comprised of seven teachable character strengths. Once we update our child-rearing with strategies that are based on science, we will be able to pivot our parenting so our kids can thrive in school and in life. It all starts with awareness that resilience is teachable and crucial to learn for our pandemic generation.

**The Epoch Times:** You outline seven character strengths that help kids thrive. What can parents do to foster these character strengths in their kids?

**Ms. Borba:** Resilience is comprised of seven teachable character strengths. And the good news is there are dozens of simple ways to boost our children's thriving potential in our everyday family moments. Here are the seven strengths and practical ways to increase them.

**Strength 1: Self-confidence.** Thrivers know who they are. Self-confidence, that quiet understanding of "who I am," nurtures an appreciation of one's unique qualities and helps kids navigate life, rebound from setbacks, and provides inner resources to manage adversity.

Identify a few legitimate strengths that you want your child to recognize about himself then acknowledge them so your child knows exactly what he did to deserve recognition. Carve time for your child to develop those strengths. They become a refuge when things fall apart.

Stress their strengths, not their weaknesses. You can help your child recognize what they do well by asking: "What subject/activity did you like most?" "What did you look forward to doing?" "What was your proudest (easiest, hardest) moment?" "What did you learn about yourself?" "What did you improve?" "What activity do you hope to do again?"

Watch your footwork. Kids are more likely to thrive when they are in control. Start slowly stepping back so your child pulls you in the direction he wants to go.

**Strength 2: Empathy:** Thrivers think "we," not "me." Thrivers require social competence and healthy relationships to overcome setbacks and forge ahead.

Help them label emotions. Kids need a feeling vocabulary to feel with others so name emotions in context: "You're happy ... frustrated ... upset." Ask: "How does she/he/they feel?"

Provide caring opportunities to inspire your child to practice caring (like helping a sibling or raking leaves for a home-bound neighbor). Praise caring acts with the same gusto that you have for academics and sports so your kids know you value prosocial behaviors.

Widen their circles of concern. It's easier to empathize with those "like us": our gender, race, culture, education, age, and income, so widen your child's social networks.

**Strength 3: Self-control:** Thrivers have coping skills to put the brakes on impulses. The ability to control your attention, emotions, thoughts, and actions is one of the most highly correlated strengths to success, and an untapped secret to helping kids bounce back and thrive.

Check your behavior. How do you act in front of your kids when your self-control is lacking? We are living textbooks to our kids. Model what you hope your child catches.

Help kids recognize stress warnings. "Your hands are in a fist." "You're grinding your teeth." "Your feet are bouncing." Teach 1-2 breathing: "The second you

feel stress, take a slow, deep breath and then exhale twice as long as the inhale. This gets oxygen to the brain and helps you stay in control."

Teach phrases like "I've got this!" "Breathe!" and "Stay calm" to override fear signals in our brains and reduce stress. Encourage your child to choose one and practice until automatic.

**Strength 4: Integrity:** Thrivers have strong moral codes and know what they stand for. Integrity sets boundaries, provides inner power to resist temptations, and offers kids guidance on how to act the right way even when we're not there.

Praise integrity when your child displays it. Describe the action so your child knows what he did that deserves recognition, so he will be more likely to repeat the behavior.

Use virtue mantras. Find one that fits your family's values like "Honesty is the best policy." "Always be kind." "Tell the truth." Keep repeating and explaining the one phrase in context until your kids can use it without you.

Find a "kid-concern" cause. Contribution can develop integrity if the experience is developmentally appropriate and meaningful. Find a project that matches your child's passion like volunteering at a soup kitchen or playing games with kids at a shelter.

**The Epoch Times:** For the mom or dad reading this, concerned for their anxious or depressed child, what are the first steps you'd recommend they take to help him or her?

**Ms. Borba:** No one knows their child better than their parents. While most parents may not be trained in mental health, they can use their instincts to apply what I call the "TOO Index." Watch closely and notice if the behavior you're observing is too different from the child's natural nature, is too concerning, occurs too frequently, spills over into too many others, and lasts longer than two weeks. Also, ask others who know and care about your child for their input.

If you see a disturbing new trend in your child's behavior, find out what is causing the change by seeking help from a trained mental health professional, counselor, pediatrician, psychiatrist, or psychologist. And remember that safety is always your top concern, so take immediate action if your child discusses plans of self-harm or your instincts tell you that something is wrong. Contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 for support and assistance from a trained counselor.

**The Epoch Times:** As a society, what do you think we need to do to reduce these high rates of anxiety and depression in kids?

**Ms. Borba:** The simple answer is to prioritize children's mental health. Rates of anxiety and depression have been steadily increasing over the last years but we've failed to take those warnings seriously. And then came a pandemic, which only amplifies a pre-existing crisis. Now may be the time when we finally recognize that our children need more than grades and test scores to succeed. In these uncertain times, they must learn skills to handle whatever comes their way.

**The Epoch Times:** What makes you optimistic about the future?  
**Ms. Borba:** The vast majority of people are caring and concerned—they realize that we are living in a new normal and are finding creative ways to help children become their best.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE



## FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

Week 15, 2021

### The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

by Aesop

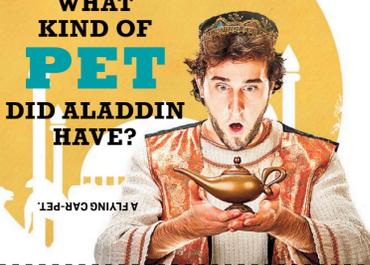
ONCE UPON A TIME, a Wolf resolved to disguise his appearance in order to secure food more easily. Encased in the skin of a sheep, he pastured with the flock deceiving the shepherd by his costume. In the evening, he was shut up by the shepherd in the fold; the gate was closed and the entrance made thoroughly secure. But the shepherd, returning to the fold during the night to obtain meat for the next day, mistakenly caught up the Wolf instead of a sheep and killed him instantly.

Harm seek, harm find.



ISAAC LUGALIA ARTS/SHUTTERSTOCK

### WHAT KIND OF PET DID ALADDIN HAVE?



ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK

“Every man's life is a fairy tale written by God's fingers.”

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN (1805-1875), DANISH AUTHOR



PUBLIC DOMAIN

By Aidan Danza, age 14

## A TOUR OF THE SALT MARSH

ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK

**A** salt marsh is a very interesting place.

You might have seen one—if you live near an estuary (a body of water that holds a mix of salt and fresh water) you probably have—but have you ever been in one?

Walking on a trail that goes through a salt marsh doesn't count here, I mean actually going off the trail and walking into the marsh.

Walking off the trail you might find yourself in a vast field of grass. This is salt hay, a fine grass that grows in thick mats with small gaps in between. Usually, the grass will be blown over, because there is nothing to shield the long grass from the wind that constantly whips through the open marsh

day after day. These vast stands of grass are called salt meadows.

Walking toward the estuary, the grass will change. There you'll likely find another species, smooth cordgrass, which takes the place of salt hay nearer to the water. It's perfectly suited for the changing tides, unlike the salt hay, which couldn't withstand the constant barrage of water. There are two types of smooth cordgrass: a short, two-foot type present where the tides don't

change very much; and the tall type, which grows up to seven feet tall. The latter is found in estuaries where tides are variable and would drown the short type.

Both types of salt meadow form important habitats for various types of juvenile invertebrates and birds like the saltmarsh sparrow. They are also important for controlling erosion of land and act as a buffer between the estuary and more stable ground, something very important for whoever

lives beyond the salt marsh.

Everything in the salt marsh comes down to a muddy substance called detritus, which you'll find in between mats of salt hay or cordgrass, or just an entire island of it where nothing grows. If you step in it, your foot will sink a few feet. It's hard to believe that everything in the salt marsh grows on this, but it does. Detritus is just dead and decaying plants and animals, mostly cordgrass.

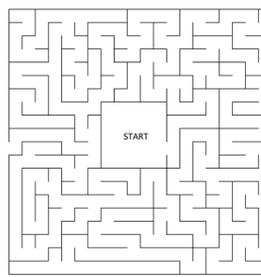


A male fiddler crab inside a burrow in a salt marsh.



A salt marsh sparrow.

## 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



Solution For Easy 1

9 + 9 × (6 - 9)

Medium puzzle 1



Solution for Medium 1

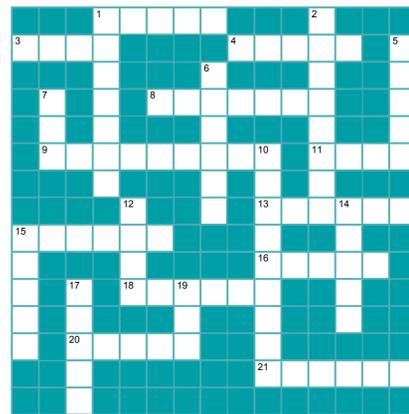
6 - 6 - 21 + 81

Hard puzzle 1



Solution for Hard 1

9 - 9 × (92 - 96)  
96 - 92 + 9 × 8



### Down

- Hans Christian Anderson's "The Little \_\_\_\_\_" (7)
- Fairy-tale heroine (8)
- Hex (5)
- Captain Hook in Peter Pan (6)
- Santa's helper (3)
- A land where magic prevails (9)
- A kiss may turn him back into a prince (4)
- They live under bridges and charge tolls (5)
- Dorothy dropped a house on one in "The Wizard of Oz" (5)
- "The Lord of the Rings" figure (5)
- Fiddle stick (3)

### Across

- Hoodoo (5)
- Hideous sort (4)
- Knights have one (5)
- Has one horn (7)
- "Cinderella," e.g. (9)
- Wicked (4)
- Royal home (6)
- Magician (6)
- Steel plating (5)
- Enemy of Tolkien's Dwarves (6)
- Road marker (5)
- Hagrid's Norberta (6)



# NTD NEWS

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