

THE EPOCH TIMES

LIFE &

TRADITION

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF KACEY MCALLISTER



Kacey McAllister said his parents made it a point to treat him just like his siblings. "I had to do chores!" he noted.

Kacey's Journey

After losing his legs at age 6, Kacey McAllister went on to become an athlete, a motivational speaker, a mechanic, and a dad

MICHAEL WING

Kacey McAllister was just 6 years old when tragedy struck and forever changed the direction of his life.

While visiting relatives in Utah, the boy and his parents, from Wyoming, were crossing a road when he heard his parents tell him, "There's two cars coming and a truck," he later recalled.

After the two cars passed, Kacey ran out onto the road and was struck by the oncoming truck—an 18-wheeler petroleum tanker.

"I tried to dive out of the way but the semi hit my legs and rolled me through the wheels," Kacey, now 35, told *The Epoch Times*. "And when it finally stopped, one of my legs had been completely amputated.

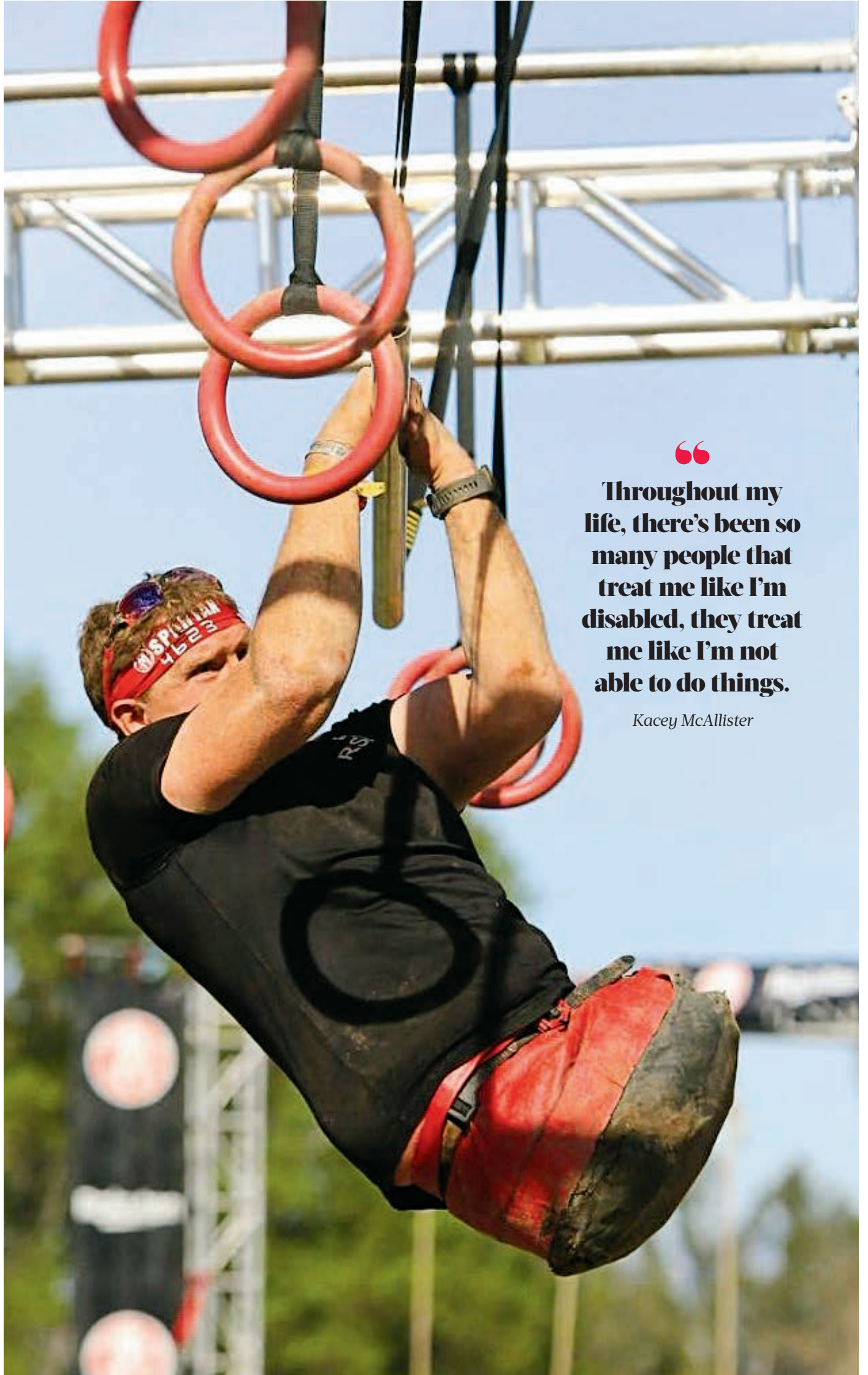
"The other one was injured to the point that they had to amputate it later at the hospital."

Today, Kacey has his own family with kids and works as a motivational speaker—but since COVID hit, he's been working for his father as a mechanic.

He recollected how, after the accident took place, he was brought to the hospital and learned the extent of his injuries. Being so young at the time, it wasn't much of a challenge to get over the loss of his legs—as it certainly would be for many people.

"When I woke up, I reached down to where my legs should have been, and my mom was right there and she said, 'OK, Kacey, your legs are gone; you don't have your legs anymore.' And I guess I kind of was like, 'OK,'" he recalled, laughing.

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As an athlete, Kacey took on daunting Spartan obstacle races. He has since completed 35 of them throughout the United States.

“Throughout my life, there's been so many people that treat me like I'm disabled, they treat me like I'm not able to do things.

Kacey McAllister

Is Chivalry Dead?

Though the name and concept seem antiquated, it persists to this day in different forms

JEFF MINICK

Chivalry.

The word summons up different images and meanings for us. Some imagine King Arthur, Sir Galahad, and the other Knights of the Round Table. Some may envision a Victorian gentleman defending a lady's honor against the insults of a cad. Others may find themselves thinking of men holding a door open for women or drawing out her chair in a restaurant.

In some ways, the word and the concept seem antique, contraptions from the past now covered in spider webs and dust sitting in some corner of the attic. Some women regard chivalric gestures by men such as holding open a door or paying for a bill in

a restaurant as insults, demeaning signals of oppression and male chauvinism, and are happy to see chivalry vanquished by our modern age.

But what exactly do we mean by chivalry? Should we celebrate or mourn its loss? And is it really dead or is it disguised in different attire?

Let's take a look.

The Meaning of Chivalry

My online dictionary partially defines chivalry as "the combination of qualities expected of an ideal knight, especially courage, honor, courtesy, justice, and a readiness to help the weak."

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PUBLIC DOMAIN
"Una and the Red Cross Knight," circa 1860, by George Frederick Watts.



Kacey with his family.



"Trials make us stronger. If we are never pushed and challenged we can never obtain our full potential," Kacey said.

Kacey's Journey

After losing his legs at age 6, Kacey McAllister went on to become an athlete, a motivational speaker, a mechanic, and a dad

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"And then I kind of laid back down and that was that at the time."

Kacey would face many challenges growing up, though; and over the course of the next few years and decades, he would come to learn something that would get him through life: to always rise up and not be defeated by the challenges life does out.

Some of those first challenges came when Kacey moved to a new school, where he was seen as the "weird kid in the wheelchair."

"But then, you know, I finally got to a point where I'm like, 'I'm an athlete, I'm a wrestler, I'm tough, and it really doesn't matter what other people think.' So I was able to be just fine in school," he said.

Kacey excelled in sports. In addition to wrestling, he played wheelchair basketball, and others began to see him in a different light as he did.

"Throughout my life, there's been so many people that treat me like I'm disabled, they treat me like I'm not able to do things," he said. "They ask if they can help me, and I say, 'No, I got it.'"

"And then I go and show them, and they're usually like, 'Whoa, wow, that's insane! That's incredible!'"

He attributes his positive, can-do attitude to how he was raised. "My parents made a point



Kacey as a child. He said that even before his accident, he knew that life was an adventure. After the accident, he found the will and strength to "conquer unimaginable things."

to treat me just like they would any of their other children. I had to do chores!" he joked.

Early after his injury, doctors had told his parents not to do things for him, as that would do more harm than good, not allowing him to overcome his own challenges.

"If my mom treated me like an invalid, I'd become an invalid," he said.

"I had to figure out how to vacuum the floor, do dishes, do laundry, make meals."

Later on, Kacey's pursuit in athletics led him to run marathons—which he soon found to be too easy. Kacey always took others' judgments that he "couldn't" do something as a challenge. But soon, he came face-to-face with his worst naysayer: himself.

He learned of a Spartan obstacle race, an international franchise that often puts on events in the U.S. Kacey doubted his own ability to finish the course.

"It didn't take myself long to realize that I was the one telling me that I couldn't do it. And so, I decided, 'You know what, I don't know if I can do it or not, I really don't. But I'm going to give it a try,'" he said.

He signed up for the daunting obstacle race. And although it took him "forever," he said, he completed it. He's since conquered 35 Spartan Races, traveling to various parts of the country to compete—from Seattle to Hawaii. His next one will be in Sacramento, California.

Kacey also went on to become a motiva-

tional speaker to inspire others with his life philosophy of "rising up" to meet life's challenges.

Recently though, the pandemic put a halt to large gatherings, and he has found new work as a mechanic, working for his dad in his auto shop.

"I had to figure out how to do a lot of different things. A lot of the machines—we use the tire machines—they're designed for someone with feet to be able to use them," he said.

"But honestly, though, there's a lot of things that are easier for me to do; because I don't have to lift the car way up into the air, I can have just a couple feet off the ground and get right in there and have little to no problem doing a lot of the work."

Yet, perhaps Kacey's greatest challenge is being a father and raising kids. "One of the biggest challenges, when you talk about accomplishments, is, honestly, my family, because I have five kids and nearly anybody with kids knows how challenging children can be," he said.

"But I have such an amazing family and such a supportive wife, and kids that helped me to achieve these incredible goals."

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Is Chivalry Dead?

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Inclusion of the word knight in this definition shows chivalry's links to the Middle Ages and to men. In fact, the word itself derives from the French "chevalier," meaning a horseman or a knight, and the code of chivalry is a product of the late medieval period. In 1883, Leon Gautier published "La Chevalerie" in which he summed up these ideals of the medieval knights as "the ten commandments of chivalry." A few of these would be dated today, but overall Gautier's commandments undergird the above definition.

Vocabulary.com includes this short, stand-alone definition: "courtesy toward women," a meaning that's perhaps closer in spirit to our modern conception of chivalry.

Let's ask ourselves a few questions. When we look at that first definition, would any man argue that these qualities are ridiculous or unfashionable? Wouldn't a decent father seek to raise his sons with these as guides for living an honorable life? And wouldn't a woman seeking marriage treasure a man marching beneath these banners?

And what woman—or man, for that matter—wouldn't wish to be treated with courtesy?

'Men Without Chests'

While I know many young men who fit the dictionary's definition of chivalry, others come nowhere close.

I live in a quiet suburban neighborhood. Across the way, a construction crew was recently remodeling the basement of a house. At one point, a member of this crew strode up and down the street for almost a quarter of an hour, bellowing obscenities into his phone, curses, it soon became apparent, delivered

to a woman—and anyone within earshot.

A New York friend tells me that young men on the buses and subways rarely offer their seats to female passengers. Some are undoubtedly afraid of having their heads snapped off by an angry feminist, while others are simply oblivious to this once-common courtesy.

On the radio in the coffee shop I visit, I'll occasionally hear rap music denigrating women and filled with obscenities. In "The Canterbury Tales," Geoffrey Chaucer described a "verray, parfit gentil knight." Were that knight to rise from his grave and stride the streets of some of our cities today, he might wonder whether his chivalric code was as obsolete as Chaucer's spelling.

Our crude, profane, and sexualized culture has bred what C.S. Lewis described in "The Abolition of Man": "We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful."

Ladies and Gentlemen

Women often deplore the lack of courtesy and chivalry among men, yet they, too, must bear some responsibility for this decline.

In her online article, "Low Standards, Apathy to Blame for the Death of Chivalry," 19-year-old Te'Kayla Pittman wrote: "This generation of women have become independent and headstrong, and nothing is wrong with that. However, the problem comes when women want to be independent to the point that they don't want men to do anything for them."

Pittman then cited author Suzanne Venker. "Men only changed because women did. That's because men are born to please

women. Modern women don't know this, for they've been conditioned to think of men as oppressors," she wrote.

Pittman concluded that both genders share responsibility for the decline of chivalry.

"Both genders are at fault for the demise of chivalry. ... Nothing is wrong with being an independent woman, but feeling as though you don't need a man to be a gentleman can be a curse," she wrote. Radical feminism accounts for a part of this decline in male chivalry. "A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle" was a popular maxim 50 years ago. When a man feels unneeded, he's not apt to go out of his way to meet someone's standards.

Women who lack decorum and respect for themselves have also abetted the waning of male courtesy. In a book of history I read long ago with a title and author I've forgotten, the writer made the point that in the Old West, respectable women, known in those days as ladies, could travel cross-country without fear for their honor or their lives.

Women who want a man to be a gentleman must themselves be ladies.

What's in a Name?

Some words become extinct with time. For instance, anyone who opens Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" may feel as if they're reading a foreign language.

Perhaps it's time to let chivalry rest its bones in this linguistic cemetery.

But we're making a grave mistake if we plant the ideals of chivalry into that same grave. Courage, honor, justice, courtesy, and a willingness to defend the weak or to help the impoverished: Surely these are the blood, sinew, and nerve of true civilization, and they're

virtues that belong to males and females alike. We can—we must—keep these ideals of chivalry alive, even if we mutter our prayers over her headstone.

Becoming Gallant

So how do we perform that resurrection?

When I was a child, my parents subscribed to Highlights, a children's magazine that featured a monthly comic strip, "Goofus and Gallant." Goofus was a self-centered, mean-spirited kid, while Gallant was polite, helpful, and kind. Gallant was a knight, Goofus the varlet. It was always perfectly clear which was which.

If we want to raise our children with these same ideals, and if we ourselves want to practice them, we must bring to bear this same clear distinction. A year ago, I wrote a piece for The Epoch Times on men keeping chivalry alive. This time, I write for both men and women. If we want to preserve chivalry—not the word, perhaps, but the ideal—then the best way to do so is to adopt its principles and to live by them.

No one can resuscitate the ideals of chivalry, except us.

And if we want to revive Gallant, we must say goodbye to Goofus.



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.

VETERANS

The Tale of Armand Sedgeley, World War II Hero

JOHN CHRISTOPHER FINE

"It was traditional in Maine where I was growing up. Most families had baked beans and brown bread Saturday nights. My mother used to make it for us," soon-to-be 100 years old Lt. Armand Sedgeley said.

This World War II hero is now in hospice care just outside of Denver. How I came to know him is as intriguing as his bravery on Feb. 14, 1944, when, while on a mission to bomb enemy rail yards in Verona, Italy, his B-17 was attacked by five Nazi Messerschmitts.

Sedgeley joined the Air Cadets as a teen with his buddies. With the attack on Pearl Harbor, he immediately applied for flight school with the U.S. Army Air Corps. He wanted to be a pilot. He was selected for bombardier school. He graduated and was assigned to a crew destined to fly a B-17 to England. They were soon transferred to North Africa, where sorties were being flown against targets in fascist Italy.

On this mission, Sedgeley's 36th, fate would change his life forever. Seeing his B-17 coming under attack, Sedgeley jettisoned the bomb load. Almost immediately, a 20 mm explosive shell hit the bomb bay. If it hadn't been for his quick thinking, the ship would have exploded.

The enemy attack damaged three of the B-17's four engines. Repeated attacks shot up the crew. In a final attack to finish off the stricken B-17, a Messerschmitt came in with machine guns blazing. Sedgeley took the machine gun in his bombardier compartment up to the nose of the aircraft and shot down the enemy fighter.

The tail gunner was screaming in agony into the intercom. Sedgeley gave up his oxygen unit to the navigator because, as a young man, he was able to withstand high-altitude flying without oxygen. He saved the navigator's life. He then obtained morphine from the pilot and went back into the shot-up fuselage to see to the wounded and dying. He turned the radio operator over and saw he was dead, shot through the left eye. He saw a waist gunner who appeared uninjured until a hole showed fatal wounds to his body. Sedgeley made his way aft. The tail gunner had both legs almost shot off. His agony was only allayed when Sedgeley gave him a morphine injection. He couldn't remove the tail gunner from his cramped post and left him to attend the others as soon as morphine took effect.

The pilot, with only one engine functioning at full power, diverted his plane to the island of Corsica, now in Allied hands, located roughly 200 miles away. It wasn't possible to land the B-17 on Corsica's airfield. Capt. Frank Chaplick ditched his B-17 in the sea just in front of the walled citadel city of Calvi.

That's where I found it in 1993. I was doing marine research with Dr. Daniel Bay, director of the University of Liège research station. Commercial divers, long after World War II had ended, discovered the sunken B-17, found human remains inside the aircraft, and notified U.S. authorities, who sent a mortuary team to Corsica to retrieve the dead.

Three dead were left inside the B-17 when it sank just minutes after it was ditched. Sedgeley had been able to get the hatch open and deploy a life raft, despite his own grave injuries. But he became pinned behind a chart table. It was only by a miracle that, as the B-17 sank and he was underwater, that he pulled carbon dioxide cartridges on his life vest, freeing him. He was propelled upward and out of the hatch, where he was pulled aboard the inflatable life raft.

During my filming and research, I entered the fuselage of the sunken B-17 in about 121 feet of water. What possessed me to fan the sand and silt away in one particular place, I don't know. The light fanning revealed a box cover. Underneath it was an ampoule of iodine. I recognized it as the first aid kit. I fanned again and saw immediately what I recognized to be a military dog tag. By this time, the fuselage was silted from my air bubbles hitting the overhead. There was little visibility. I fanned again. The dog tag was propelled up. I grabbed for it, missed, fanned again, and took it in my fingers. Pressing the metal identification tag to my dive mask, I could read it: "R.H. Householder, Wellington, Colo."

That led to a two-year odyssey to find survivors and discover the history of the B-17, as well as an idea that had immediately come to mind and was approved enthusiastically by Bay—to have a memorial service for the crew.

It was only when I was preparing to leave for Corsica to preside over the International Underwater Film Festival that a colonel in the secretary of the air force's office called me. He was shredding secret documents,



COURTESY OF WILLIAM SEDGELEY



1. (L-R) Lt. Armand Sedgeley, Commandant Philippe Tailliez—the man who taught Jacques-Yves Cousteau to dive—and the author, John Christopher Fine, with a dog tag and the plaque to be placed on the sunken B-17 in 1995.

2. The sunken B-17 bomber that Sedgeley and his crew flew in.

3. Retired USAF Lt. Gen. Bruce Wright gives Sedgeley a medalion from the U.S. Air Force Association.

4. A Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress, a 1930s U.S. Army Air Corps bomber, underwater off the coast of Calvi, Corsica.

5. The author places the memorial plaque on the sunken B-17.

Seeing his B-17 coming under attack, Sedgeley jettisoned the bomb load. Almost immediately, a 20 mm explosive shell hit the bomb bay.

found my letter to the secretary, and called. "Did anyone help you on this?" He asked.

I said no. I could get nowhere with the U.S. Army—they never responded. The colonel was a history major in college, and once I told him of the plan to have a memorial service, he asked if it would be alright for him to try to help find survivors.

Within two hours the colonel had found two survivors. At the time, Chaplick was alive, but had medical issues and his brother was dying, thus when I called him, he couldn't participate in the service. Sedgeley, the bombardier hero of the mission, was enthusiastic. He said he had no funds to travel to Corsica. As a result of a front-page story in The Denver Post, a United Airlines chief pilot got Sedgeley and his son first-class air tickets to Corsica.

The event was momentous. It became, with then-President Bill Clinton's endorsement, the last World War II 50th Anniversary Commemoration in 1995. Sedgeley was honored. The ceremony took place at sea, and I had my friend Philippe Tailliez aboard the dive boat with me to place a memorial plaque on the sunken bomber with a U.S. flag. Tailliez was the father of deep-sea diving, the man who taught Jacques-Yves Cousteau to dive and was Cousteau's commanding officer in the French Navy.

We remained in casual contact, Sedgeley and I—occasional Christmas cards and a call now and then. It was only about four years ago that Sedgeley told me that he never received his Silver Star medal. He was transferred to a hospital in the United States for his injuries, received five air medals with oak leaf clusters, and a Purple Heart, but never the Silver Star that was awarded to three others in his crew, including the navigator, whose life he had saved.

I haven't been able to persuade the U.S. Army or the U.S. Air Force to issue it. Now, there are no other survivors from that crew, save for Sedgeley.

On Oct. 26, 2021, he will turn 100 years old. They insisted on personnel records from his file. Those burned in a warehouse fire in St. Louis in 1972, as they well knew. I obtained group records from the National Archives and bomb group records from U.S. Air Force history. Good people in charge got it done and the records docu-

ment clearly the heroism in combat of this valiant man.

The silver star is on appeal now. Hopefully an appeal board, given the support of three senators, one representative, a governor, retired USAF Lt. Gen. Bruce Wright, retired USAF Maj. Gen. J.P. Klein, and others will be staffed with good-hearted, caring people with honor and they will issue this medal to a deserving combat hero.

Wright and his wife Kerri visited Sedgeley recently and gave him a medallion from the U.S. Air Force Association. I met a family with t-shirts emblazoned with "Rolling Thunder" on them. They put me in touch with Randy Taylor, the president of the nonprofit Rolling Thunder in Colorado. As it would happen, perhaps only as God ordains such miracles, Taylor and his wife live 10 minutes away from where Sedgeley is in hospice care.

Taylor visited Sedgeley and installed a basket on his walker so he could put things in and not trouble his caregiver with minor chores. Best of all, Taylor and his wife shopped for navy beans and brought Sedgeley his favorite Saturday meal: homemade baked beans and brown bread.

Americans rise up to the heritage that so many defended with their courage, so many with their lives, and so many with their youth. The United States is a beacon of freedom to enslaved people everywhere. Let that beacon shine as the goodness of our words are preserved by our actions through the heroism of the defenders of liberty.

Take a lesson from Sedgeley, who at 21 years of age brought hope to the oppressed so long ago.

John Christopher Fine is a marine biologist with two doctoral degrees, has authored 25 books, including award-winning books dealing with ocean pollution. He is a liaison officer of the U.N. Environment Program and the Confederation Mondiale for ocean matters. He is a member of the Academy of Underwater Arts and Sciences in honor of his books in the field of education. He has received international recognition for his pioneering work investigating toxic waste contamination of our land and water.

DEAR JUNE *On Family and Relationships*

When Being Unvaccinated for COVID-19 Causes Personal, Professional Issues

→ *Dear June,*

I'm writing not for medical advice, but regarding the confronting aspects of my decision to remain unvaccinated for COVID.

Let me start by saying that I am by no means "Anti-Vax." I believe the speed of creation and the efficacy of the vaccines to be a technological achievement. My 73-year-old mother has ovarian cancer, and I'm very relieved that she's vaccinated.

So my conflict isn't with the vaccine itself, but the way in which it's been rolled out and increasingly being mandated for participation in society. My reasons for resisting the vaccine mandates are:

1. It violates my religious and spiritual beliefs.
2. It violates my civil rights.
3. I believe the justification for vaccinating all of society is under a false pretense. The original justification for mass vaccination was to prevent the spread, however, that has been clearly disproved as countries such as Israel with high vaccination rates have also experienced high outbreaks among the vaccinated, debunking the narrative that the vaccinated are somehow safer to be around than the unvaccinated.

4. Since I'm not at high risk, if I get COVID, I'll be able to clearly recognize the symptoms and quarantine, in contrast to the vaccinated, who are participating in society while potentially COVID-positive and asymptomatic and thus spreading the disease.

5. Since I'm not at high risk, I believe it's more egalitarian to save those 2-3 (and maybe soon 4) shots for those at high risk in poorer countries where supply is limited.

6. With the now well-exposed knowledge that the CDC and Dr. Fauci were misleading the public on the virus origins and that they were funding gain-of-function research in the Wuhan lab, I'm no longer confident that the CDC has the public interest as their primary motivation. I find it appalling that it took a Freedom of Information Act and scrubbing of their vast emails to demonstrate the duplicity of their public narratives contradicting their private correspondence.

So despite the societal pressure and misleading data reported by the mainstream media, I've remained comfortable in my choice for myself and my family. My wife had long COVID and pericarditis. My whole family was exposed to COVID, and I feel that based on the Israel study, we're safe from hospitalization from COVID based on our natural immunity lower risk cohorts. That's our decision based on all the information we can evaluate and our personal values. And my boss is by and large supportive of my decision as I've been able to excel in value creation despite the remote nature of our work in the tech industry.

However, recently the tide has started to turn, not in the form of medical risk, but deprivation of societal inclusion, both professionally and personally. Some recent examples are:

1. This week I was asked to not participate in an executive forum based on my vaccination status by the conference organizer. To add insult to injury, I had a flight booked and was ready to go. While I'm permitted to join remotely, it's not at all as effective for my business where more is accomplished in building trust over a meal or drink than during the content.

2. I will also be forced to miss another work function next month because of a New York City executive order that discriminates against unvaccinated people.

3. I received an invitation from a neighbor to come participate in a



"block party," but only if I'm vaccinated.

4. Several people within my circle of friends in the community parrot what they see on the mainstream media and demonize those of us who are not vaccinated. If the circumstance were right, I could calmly exchange understandings, but as things are, I risk further alienation. Although personally I don't care what people think of me and I'm more interested in truth, my wife and small children don't have thick skin like I do.

5. The pressure to mandate vaccines on children to participate in school (which we strongly oppose based on the uncertainty of long-term effects) seems to be right around the corner, but I don't want to uproot my family and move to an unknown "red state," since we feel a part of our community and have made many lifelong friendships that we consider to be a part of our extended family.

While I'm hopeful some of the legal challenges to these mandates will speedily succeed, bringing a calm and more inclusive climate, I don't know if or when that will happen.

Should I choose to continue to alienate myself over my principles, or should I just take the shot because it's the quickest path to be able to excel professionally and personally? While it's a somewhat cynical view, I've learned through marriage and other experiences that you can choose to be right or you can be happy. As the Serenity Prayer goes:

"God, grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot
change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference."

Part of me wants to stand in courage with those like me who resist non-sensical loss of liberty, but I accept that I'm just one guy up against a huge machine, and I have a primary responsibility to my family, community, and employer.

I'd appreciate your wisdom—as I'm struggling to know the difference.

Sincerely,
Seeking Serenity in Connecticut

→ *Dear Seeking Serenity,*

Peace of mind comes from making moral decisions.

There is absolutely a principle in personal relationships that at times we need to forgo being "right" in a narrow sense in order to maintain

the well-being of the family. But this shouldn't mean we take immoral action.

So then the question is: Is getting vaccinated a moral decision? The answer will be different for different people. We all have different situations and understandings.

You said, "Part of me wants to stand in courage," which is a moral question. As you're clearly a man who cares about his family, his faith, and the well-being of society, my answer on this point is yes, please be courageous. We all need your strength and protection.

However, this is definitely not to say that getting the COVID vaccine is inherently an act of cowardice. On the contrary, some people get it because they feel this is the best thing they can do to protect their loved ones and community, so for them, getting a vaccine might be an act of bravery.

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I received an invitation from a neighbor to come participate in a 'block party,' but only if I'm vaccinated.

Seeking Serenity in Connecticut

As I've said before, we're in the midst of a cultural revolution, and I think those who are aware have an obligation to stand against it—there's a tremendous amount on the line. However, there are many battlefronts, so each of us needs to choose where and how we're going to resist. This decision is between you, your conscience, and a higher power. For some people, their battle might be to reunite estranged family or befriend a neighbor with a different point of view. Truth and compassion are our best weapons.

Perhaps the COVID-19 vaccines are the issue you are being asked to stand up against?

I do think at some point the mandate tide will turn, but I have no idea how long this will take.

Earlier this year, I was asked about vaccine mandates, and at the time I believed we could have a rational discussion about the COVID-19 vaccine mandates given that they were then not even FDA-approved. I was wrong. Despite the fact that we still don't know anything about the long-term effects of these vaccines, some places even seem to be gearing up to

mandate them for children.

And this is where I would definitely draw a moral line. Our children have their whole lives in front of them, and assuming they're healthy, they're not at great risk of death from COVID-19. I think it's unconscionable to give them medical treatment the effects of which we don't know.

I would start paying attention to school board decisions and join or even organize a parent group that will stand up against the issue.

And pay attention to state laws. Washington D.C. passed a law last year allowing children as young as 11 to be vaccinated even without the consent or knowledge of their parents, and in 2019, New York state took away the religious exemption for schoolchildren after an outbreak of measles in some Orthodox Jewish communities.

You brought up the issue of protection—certainly a big concern and responsibility for a father—so I'd like to offer a few thoughts.

You have a primary responsibility to protect, lead, and teach your children. As you mentioned, besides protecting them from the vaccine, you also have to be concerned about providing for them materially and keeping nasty comments from affecting them psychologically. I believe that your staying strong in your beliefs—especially your faith—will offer them the best protection possible.

This is why:

Psychological protection: Imagine you're with your family and someone starts off on you for not vaccinating. Your kids will be scared, but you respond calmly, kindly, and firmly. You deescalate the situation or, if that's not possible, you lead your kids away. After this, your children will see you with new respect. They will understand clearly that you're able to protect them, and this will give them immense comfort.

Of course the nasty comments may also come when you're not around, but probably your children will bring the issue to you later and you can help guide them then.

Material protection: You're also concerned about protecting them from material hardship, and thus about loss of job opportunities if you remain unvaccinated. You're not alone in being caught between a vaccine and a job. In recent months, we've started seeing reports of health care systems facing shortages of workers because a significant number of medical professionals don't want to get the vaccine them-

selves. The CDC director recently said that medical staff shortages are becoming a challenge around the country.

It's great that your boss supports your decision, but as you mentioned, you need to be concerned with the value you provide your company. It may not be possible to quantify just how much loss your not being vaccinated will incur, but could you perhaps take a proactive approach and try to up your game, work a bit extra, maybe see if you can be better prepared for the meetings that you'll join remotely? Maybe you could also talk to your boss to see if there are any ways you can support more on the back end, maybe help mentor new employees.

Remaining unvaccinated will likely require sacrifice. However, this may be a wonderful opportunity to teach kids about the beauty and necessity of sacrifice. It's an antidote to decadence and thus an important safeguard for kids today who live in a world of great material abundance, which can put them at great risk of spiritual poverty.

I don't mean to suggest that you go to an extreme and force your family to face destitution, but it might very well be worth sacrificing expensive Christmas gifts or having a staycation next year instead of traveling in order to give your children an example of the mindset needed to remain true to what's right. Learning to sacrifice will strengthen their character, which will surely protect them from many ills in life.

You're already a good person by sticking to your beliefs and acting with courage during this challenging time—you can perhaps become an even greater person, a man that other people know they can trust and respect.

And you may not even know you've inspired others. For example, when you're asked to join a business event remotely, which I completely understand is not ideal, but the reason you're calling in is probably pretty clear to those at the event. In this current climate, some people may think you're an idiot—but I would guess that others will think to themselves, "Wow, he's brave."

I see the push to mandate COVID-19 vaccines as akin to the current of a great flood—many people are unwillingly being caught up. Every person who resists the current is like a tree with deep roots, standing still and strong amid the rushing waters. Each tree offers a small spot of protection for others who may cling to the trunk, climb it, or stand on the downstream side where the current isn't strong. I wouldn't underestimate the importance of this.

And, by the way, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, you and I are both anti-vaxxers. Their revised definition now reads: "a person who opposes vaccination or laws that mandate vaccination." So we'd better get used to wearing the epithet, which clearly means nothing now. I don't mind, as in a revolution, the issue is never the issue.

And ultimately, the only protection we have is divine protection. So again, this is why I think the best course of action is the one that satisfies our conscience.

Sincerely,
June



Do you have a family or relationship question for our advice columnist, Dear June? Send it to DearJune@EpochTimes.com or Attn: Dear June, The Epoch Times, 5 Penn Plaza, 8th Fl. New York, NY, 10001

June Kellum is a married mother of three and longtime Epoch Times journalist covering family, relationships, and health topics.

Raising Adolescents in Trying Times

A conversation with parenting expert Erica Komisar

BARBARA DANZA

The pandemic and related public health measures delivered more anxiety than most adults can handle. Adolescents were already struggling with record levels of anxiety and depression when our way of life was turned upside down.

Today, many parents are struggling to find the best way to comfort, support, and nurture their adolescents in the face of uncertainty and overwhelming circumstances. I asked Erica Komisar, author of "Chicken Little the Sky Isn't Falling: Raising Resilient Adolescents in the New Age of Anxiety," for her advice.

The Epoch Times: Parents are worried about their children. What are the most important things parents can do during this time to provide their adolescents with what they need?

Erica Komisar: Parents mistakenly believe that adolescents need them less and as a result become less available themselves. It is often a time when parents go back to work full time or travel; some go back to school themselves. All of these things are helpful in the separation process so parents have something of their own when their children ultimately leave home.

The problem is that if you approach your own interests or work intensely and are less present for your child, it leaves them vulnerable. It is important to balance your own needs as a parent at this time with the knowledge that your child needs you to be as physically and emotionally present as possible so when the door opens and they want to process their day, their experiences, and their feelings you are there. If you are not there and the door closes, you have to wait until the door opens again until they will let you in.

Unfortunately, adolescents' defenses work on their own time—not on your time—which means coming home from work and knocking on their door is not a bad idea but usually ends up with a conversation that goes something like this: "How was your day?" with their response being "Fine." You want to catch them when they are vulnerable and open to talking.

Another important thing parents can do is learn to listen without judgment, interruption, and without trying to fix their problems. They will let you know when they want your advice; otherwise, they are usually looking for your empathy and understanding.

These are just a couple of the many things I talk about in the book that parents can do to help their children during this critical period of development.

The Epoch Times: Your book "Chicken Little the Sky Isn't Falling: Raising Resilient Adolescents in the New Age of Anxiety" aims for resilience. How can parents teach their kids to be resilient?

Ms. Komisar: Resilience is not something we are born with, rather it is something we learn by our primary attachment figures providing us with sensitive empathic nurturing from an early age. When mothers or primary caregivers soothe a baby when they are in distress from moment to moment, that baby develops an emotional scaffolding or way of seeing the world and relationships. They develop a sense of trust and emotional security, which is the foundation of resilience to stress or the ability to cope with adversity in the future.

It is the same in adolescence. When parents provide adolescents with the same comfort and empathy, rather than judgment and harshness, they become the emotional refueling stations for their kids. We live in an individualistic, self-centered world where we are all encouraged to put ourselves first, but if we do not put our children first when they are going through this challenging time, they often lose their way.

This does not mean becoming overbearing helicopter parents. It is important for adolescents to become independent and try to do things on their own, but that is different than being alone with their emotions or having to cope alone with many of the conflicts they may face.

Learning as much as you can as a parent about their culture, music, dress, and interests is positive so you can accept their individual identity, but that is not the same as trying to be their friend or peer. Adolescents need to know you are the parent and that you are secure in that identity, so they can be the child. They will need to push you away emotionally, but if you are secure and understand why they are pushing you away you can remain loving, non-defensive, and empathic. This security, stability, constancy, empathy, and attention to their feelings promotes resilience.

The Epoch Times: What are the most common misunderstandings parents tend to have about adolescence?

Ms. Komisar: Parents often feel their adolescents don't need them because they seem more independent or seem to avoid contact with their parents. This is truly a misunderstanding. Yes, they do need to distance themselves from you physically and emotionally at times, but it is a kind of practice for being on their own. If you become defensive or feel rejected by them or get angry in response to their aggressive behavior, you are missing the boat. They



From age 9 to 25, the brain is very susceptible to environmental stress, says Komisar, making adolescents more emotional fragile.

need you as much as they needed you when they were small, just in a different way.

If you are calm, present, empathic (asking good questions, being a good listener, and reflecting their emotions), and accepting without judgment their thoughts and feelings, then you are on your way to understanding your child. You can love your child with all of your heart and not understand them which can be as painful as not feeling loved at all.

The Epoch Times: What are the signs that an adolescent is really struggling mentally and emotionally? **Ms. Komisar:** Look for any changes in their behavior such as sleeping too much or too little, eating more or less than usual, fatigue, or hyperactive energy, [or] more aggressive behavior. Look for any signs they may be socially isolated or having trouble socially. Also, look for a dramatic change in school performance.

A student who was an A student who is suddenly getting Ds—[this] may be a sign of stress. Anxiety can take the form of panic attacks, so look for extreme bouts of sweating, racing heart, or a tight-chested feeling. In addition, look for feelings of intense sadness, despair, or hopelessness and ask them if they think of harming themselves to understand if they have suicidal thoughts or urges.

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Parents mistakenly believe that adolescents need them less and as a result become less available themselves.

Erica Komisar

If they express at least a few of these symptoms for more than two weeks, get them help right away. The longer you wait, the harder the symptoms are to treat. Seek out a talk therapist who specializes in children and adolescents. Only seek out psychiatry as a last resort. Medication may be recommended by not as the first stop on the treatment train.

The Epoch Times: What's your biggest concern about these times we're living through and the impact on this age group?

Ms. Komisar: There is much more uncertainty than ever before. Adolescents and young adults who have so many choices (which can also be overwhelming) often feel they will have very few choices in a climate of COVID, unemployment, shifting work, and economic trends, and a world in which climate change and global warming dominate the news.

In addition, adolescents have too much pressure on them to be amazing, high-achieving, and perfect in terms of their appearance, their career choices, and their social lives. Social media exacerbates this perfectionistic environment which interferes with kids accepting normalcy and "good enough" to be happy. Parents can exacerbate this already fragile and rigid way of thinking by focusing too much on getting good grades and getting into the "right" college, which is code for getting into a top college. We need to be softening the already harsh expectations of children in this age group rather than sharpening them.

The Epoch Times: What does it look like when an adolescent is mentally and emotionally thriving? **Ms. Komisar:** When an adolescent is healthy, they have relationships with parents, siblings, and friends that are interactive, supportive, and constant and which involve sharing thoughts and feelings about their daily experiences. Friends who they feel understand them and share their experience are particularly important. Interest in activities that give them pleasure outside school is also the sign of a healthy child. In addition, sleeping without help or disruption, eating in a healthy, non-obsessional manner, working hard at school but not obsessing over grades.

Healthy adolescents can celebrate their victories and strengths, and mourn their losses and disappointments without feeling overwhelmed or crushed by them. Resilience does not mean they do not feel sadness or loss, but it does not overwhelm them in the same manner that it does to a child with low self-esteem or one suffering from anxiety or depression.

Ohio Mom Reunites With Son She Gave Up for Adoption

LOUISE BEVAN

An Ohio woman and Virginia man have reunited 33 years after she gave him up for adoption as a newborn baby. Greg Vossler, 33, traveled 300 miles from Winchester, Virginia, to Wadsworth, Ohio, to visit his birth mother, Melanie Pressley, in June 2021.

Pressley, 53, hadn't seen her son since the day he was born. Yet he never left her thoughts through all these years. Born and raised in Canton, Ohio, Pressley became pregnant at the age of 19 in 1987. She took a pregnancy test at work to hide the evidence from her parents. Terrified by the results, she met and informed her then-boyfriend, who wanted her to have an abortion.

When Pressley said she couldn't do that, the baby's father walked away. She then broke the news to her parents with the much-needed support of her sister, LeeAnn. "My mom was pretty upset, and my dad was quiet," Pressley told The Epoch Times. "It didn't take long to realize that I was going to give my baby up for adoption. ... I knew I couldn't financially support a child, and I wanted him to have a mom and dad. I wanted him to have a family."

After an intense and exhausting labor with her mother by her side, Pressley gave birth at Canton's then-Timken Mercy Hospital on June 17, 1988. Nurses took the baby away immediately, but the following day, LeeAnn stepped in.

"She went and explained to a nurse that I didn't get to hold my son and I would like to have that opportunity just once," Pressley said, describing the nurse as "a true gift from God" for honoring the request.

Pressley was then given a private room and all the time she needed.

"I needed my time to hold him and tell him goodbye," she said.

LeeAnn took a photo of the precious moment, which Pressley has revisited every year on Greg's birthday. Pressley then signed the adoption papers, feeling empty. "For 33 years, I mourned," she said. "I knew I was not the same person anymore. I had a hole in my heart and it could never be mended."

The baby was adopted by Rich and Patrice Vossler, who named him Gregory and pledged in a heartfelt letter to Pressley that they would be the very best parents they could be.

After the birth, Pressley got a new job and



“To be honest, I couldn't believe it was real. Even to this day, I pinch myself because I think I'm dreaming.”

Greg Vossler



(Top left) Melanie Pressley and Greg Vossler meet again after 33 years. (Top right) (L-R) Melanie, Greg, and Greg's adoptive mother Patrice Vossler. (Middle) Melanie (R) with Greg and his family. (Above) Greg Vossler visits Melanie Pressley and their extended family.

reconnected with a friend from school, eventually marrying him and having a son, Brian, who's now 30 years old.

After the marriage dissolved, Pressley went on to work in finance and met Tim, her husband of 25 years, with whom she has two daughters: Rachel, 24, and Jessica, 22.

As the years went on, Pressley's kids came to understand the depth of her grief. As a

joint birthday and Mother's Day gift in May, one of Melanie's daughters bought her a gift: a DNA testing kit from 23andMe in hopes that she would find her son.

"To be honest, in the back of my mind, I too was hoping I would find my son, but also realizing what are the odds that we both would take the same DNA test," Pressley said.

Meanwhile, Greg Vossler was raising a

family and working in accounts at Green Bay Packaging Inc. when he decided to take a DNA test to learn about his genetic history. He had known since the age of 8 or 9 that he was adopted, but had never explored his roots in depth.

"Becoming a father, I realized I needed to look into this," Vossler said. "Funnily enough, the 23andMe DNA test was a gift from my mom."

"I am very, very lucky to have supportive parents and a supportive family on each side urging me to explore this."

Pressley opened her test results alone and was astounded to see a line drawn from her name to another: Greg Vossler. She made first contact by asking Vossler for his age, then letting him know that she thought she was his birth mother.

She then posed a meaningful question that let Vossler know that she had cared deeply ever since the day he was born: "Are you happy?" The pair began to message back and forth.

"To be honest, I couldn't believe it was real," Vossler said. "Even to this day, I pinch myself because I think I'm dreaming."

Pressley met Vossler, his wife, Chelsea, and their two young sons, Gregory and CJ, for the first time on June 26. They talked "for what seemed like 15 minutes," according to Vossler. In reality, it had been four hours. "It was just beautiful," Pressley said.

Vossler met his extended family in a meetup filled with love and laughter. After the mother-son duo connected, Pressley said her sister LeeAnn said: "I have my sister back. For 33 years, you were not Melanie, but now you're back."

When Pressley's daughter Jessica and her fiancé, Max, invited Vossler and Chelsea to their wedding in October, the pair accepted.

"My heart grew 10 times bigger," Pressley said, referring to the incident.

Pressley has since enjoyed a warm visit with Vossler's adoptive parents in Virginia. She and Vossler are intent on nurturing their bond and talk almost every day.

"I was so afraid of finding him and what he would think of me that I kept myself from trying," Pressley said. "Little did I know, I had a son that was raised extremely well with a lot of love to give."

"I would also advise any young mother out there who chooses to place their child up for adoption: After giving them up, write a letter. Write it with all honesty and all your feelings, then tuck it away. ... If the day ever comes and you reconnect with your child, give them the letter."

This letter may give the child a healing insight into their birth parent's experience, she said.

Vossler hopes that sharing his and Pressley's amazing story helps people from all walks of life eradicate the stigma of adoption.

"My goal in life is to always make an impact, however big or small, in someone's life every single day," he said. "I hope this does just that!"

due to the fact that during my childhood, our family moved almost every year all over North America. Perhaps the RCMP desired candidates whose upbringings had greater stability. I was a tad depressed but moved on because I was attending university and working, so I didn't have time to wallow in depression.

Next, during my four-year tour in the U.S. Coast Guard, I had a roller coaster event. I was very interested in a flying career, so I applied to the Coast Guard aviation sector. I passed the flight physical and underwent an interview before a panel of officers in Mobile, Alabama. After a few weeks, I received one of those "soft" landing rejection letters that offered no specific rationale for turning me down. I figured that it could be due to a minimal number of completed math/physics courses, which are requisites for piloting and navigation.

It took me longer to get over this rejection because I had exerted much more effort into the entire process. However, I carried on with my duties and vowed to do my best in whatever avenues life took me, because some events are beyond one's control. I've lost count of how many rejection letters I've received from private and public sector institutions, as well as for articles submitted to print publications.

Finally, my third experience has a happier evolution. It reinforced the fact that we rarely get exactly what we want, but we often get what we need to strengthen our purpose in life. In high school, I realized that I had some talent for writing, so I began journaling and creating poems.

In a few years, I started to pen essays on a wide range of topics and began to submit them for publication. For over 20 years, I was also involved with education, where I had the privilege of assisting students who wrestled with reading and writing assignments.

I discovered what an arduous process it was for some of my writing samples to be accept-

ed in a few print media outlets. There were countless rejection notices by email or postal mail, and often no response at all from editors and publishers. These learning experiences fueled my persistence in writing persuasive and timely articles that fit the particular philosophy of each publication. I discovered that writers are fortunate if 20 percent of their creations are accepted for publication. I've had over 100 articles published, so do the math as to how many I've authored!

Rejection is part of life and it can be painful, but it can also build character and lead you toward your destiny in life. Whenever you face rejection, cope with it by putting your shoulder to the wheel and seeking the silver lining in each situation. With time, you might even develop a thick skin and shrug off each closed door with a view toward the next learning opportunity. Faith in your God-given talents can also generate a balanced perspective on life. Remember that acceptance or rejection can arrive when you least expect them to, so expect the unexpected and handle each moment with dignity.

—Christian Milord, 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, 5 Penn Plaza, 8th Fl. New York, NY, 10001



The Hall of the Celestial Kings adopts an architectural layout from the Tang Dynasty, with one central hall balanced by a drum tower and bell tower, one on either side. These two side pavilions reach forward as if arms outstretched to welcome guests.

LARGER THAN LIFE: ART THAT INSPIRES US THROUGH THE AGES

A Portal Into an Ever-Present Spiritual Realm: Chin Lin Nunnery and the Nian Lin Garden

JAMES HOWARD SMITH

The 1998 construction of the Chin Lin Nunnery and the Nian Lin Garden of Hong Kong are remarkable representations of China's ancient culture, which sought to bring harmony between Heaven and Earth. Grand Tang Dynasty temples stand overlooking broad courtyards that seem-

ingly float upon lotus ponds and open to the heavens. Pavilions rise above the mystifying garden ponds arousing wonderment and joy.

Passing through the Shenmen (main entrance) symbolizes the passage from one shore to the other. The most captivating scene then appears: A courtyard richly ornamented with bonsai trees and the Lotus

Pond Garden lies in the foreground of the Hall of the Celestial Kings.

This scene was inspired by and hence is the physical manifestation of a monk's mural that depicts his meditation journey into Buddha Amitabha's Paradise, "The Pure Land." The mural is one of the High Tang Dynasty's paintings of 705-781 A.D. found in the Mogao Caves in the far northwest of China.

The courtyard seems to be a portal into an ancient, but ever-present spiritual realm, where the mural depicts Buddha's residing there and in the temples beyond. The courtyard's walkways are arranged around four lotus ponds; yet, in walking along them, it's as though you are crossing over bridges and floating above one larger pond.

This technique of essentially creating a microcosm of grand remote landscapes is typical of Chinese classical gardens. It provides those without an opportunity to travel the experience of an uplifting atmosphere within an urban setting.

Nian Lin Garden

After passing back through the Shenmen, a vermilion arched bridge draws the eye to and offers a direct connection to the

main focus of the Nian Lin Garden: the Pavilion of Absolute Perfection. Exuding a golden glow, the pavilion rises amid the vibrant green landscape from an island in the lotus pond.

The unique Black Pines bonsai combined with weathered rock formations establish the ancient Eastern setting. They also set the miniature scale that is supported by the small hills and water bodies. Together they create an illusion of a journey through a remote, mountainous landscape.

This technique of essentially creating a microcosm of grand remote landscapes is typical of Chinese classical gardens. It provides those without an opportunity to travel the experience of an uplifting atmosphere within an urban setting.

James Howard Smith, an architectural photographer, designer, and founder of Cartio, aims to inspire an appreciation of classic architecture.

DEAR NEXT GENERATION

Coping With Rejection

→ Advice from our readers to our young people

Throughout our lives, we all confront the challenge of rejection in our personal relationships, at school, the workplace, and so on. Of course, some folks struggle with this sense of loss more than others. How individuals deal with rejection can partially shape the trajectory of their lives.

Some people can expect the worst if they become accustomed to rejection and crawl into a shell of anxiety and depression as a result. By contrast, others might strive to build character traits such as motivation and perseverance due to several rejections. Famous athletes, business folks, entertainers, military leaders, etc., often have had to toil for years through trial and error before they "made it."

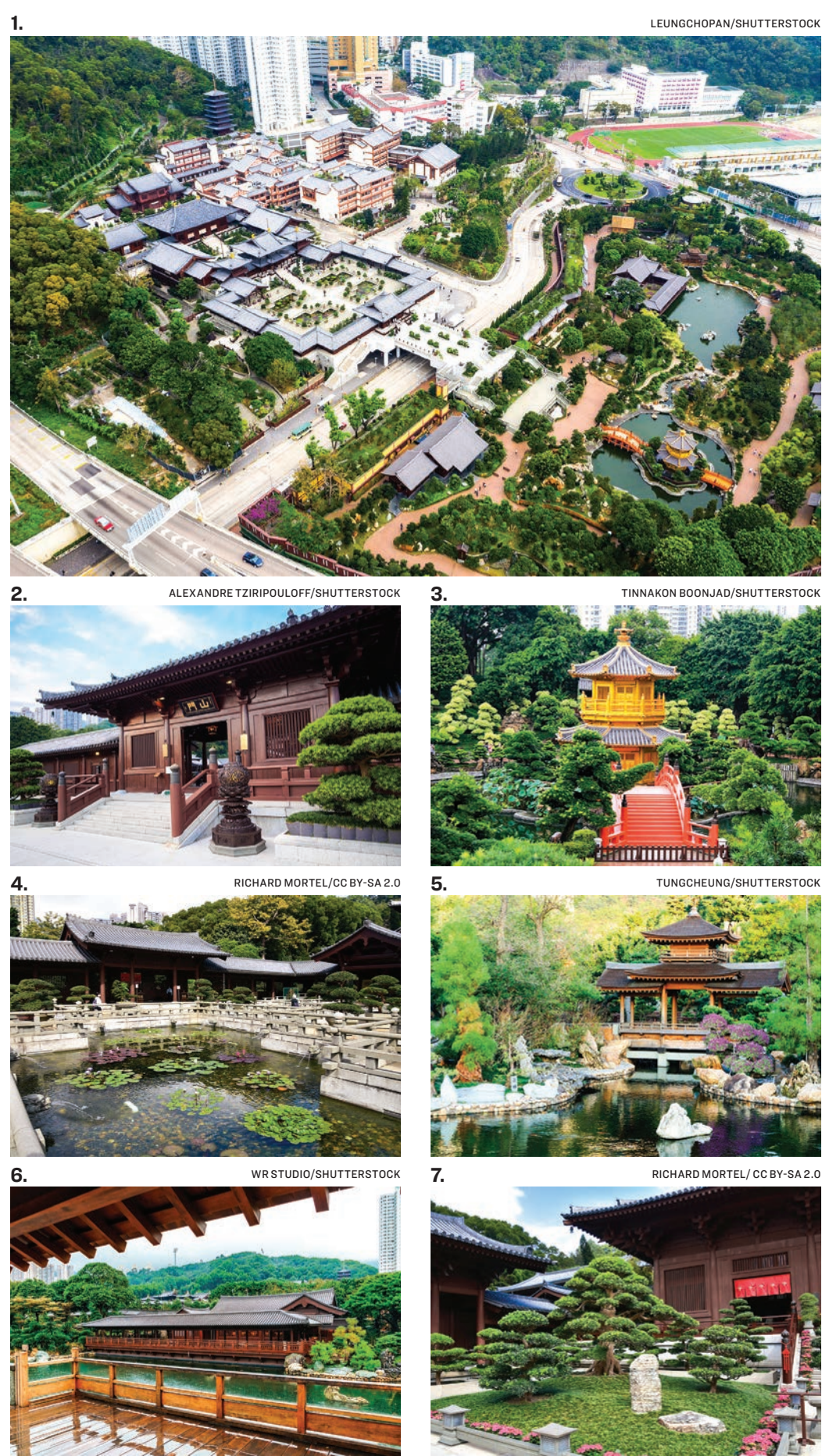
If you encounter a rejection scenario, it's crucial to take it in stride as just a natural facet of the slings and arrows of human existence. However, it's normal to feel gloomy when you experience an occurrence of a turnaround. I recall a number of examples from my own life, when I attempted to transcend depression following rejection letters in the spheres of employment and writing. Yes, written letters delivered by mail, whereas now you might receive a letdown notice via email or text!

First, several years ago I applied to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) when I resided in Winnipeg for about five years. I did not reach the interview stage that follows the application process. I received a "diplomatic" rejection letter, but there were no stated reasons for this turnaround. It might have been

How individuals deal with rejection can partially shape the trajectory of their lives.



Thomas Edison said: "Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time."



1. This aerial photo shows the relationship of the Nunnery, the main temple complex, and the Nian Lin Garden. 2. The main entrance (Shen Men) introduces the Tang architectural style of timber post and beam joinery, an ancient technique using no nails, that is carried on throughout the temple complex. 3. One of two vermilion arched bridges, amid the vibrant green landscape, draws the eye to the Pavilion of Absolute Perfection. 4. The Lotus Pond Garden where water flows from dragon-headed spouts into the ponds, graced with water lilies. 5. The Pavilion Bridge with its three roofs resembles a Roc, a gigantic mythical bird, with its majestic wings spread wide. It connects the two shores and is a focal point that draws people towards the east end of the garden. 6. Viewed from a pavilion on the south shore, the Song Cha Xia (tea house) appears with a covered walkway that overlooks the pond. 7. Black Pine bonsais establish the setting for the main hall. 8. The temple halls hold statues of Sakyamuni Buddha; the Bodhisattva of Mercy, Guanyin (pictured here); and other bodhisattvas.



"Carnation Lily, Lily Rose," 1885–1886, by John Singer Sargent. Oil on canvas; 68.5 inches by 60.5 inches. Tate.

ART EXPLORATION FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART

Smell the Roses: Good Taste, Beauty, and Discernment

What is beautiful? That which delights the senses, the intellect, and the soul

ANDREA NUTT FALCE

Do you start your morning with a steaming cup of coffee? Though coffee smells great, most kids don't like it. And yet, so many adults do. Is it because grown-ups have more sophisticated palates? Actually, taste buds tend to be more sensitive in youth. You were made to have great taste! But, you knew that already, so let's move on ... to candy bars.

Ooey-goey candy bars are an easy example of how grabbing at something with momentary feel-good power can overshadow good judgment, like the choice to fill your body with a better meal. While senses provide a plethora of information, taste, sound, sight, and so on are only pieces of the puzzle of knowledge. Enter the intellect! Physical cues will serve you best when coupled with a thoughtful mind and discerning spirit. Your intellect is ideal for considering the fruits. Using reason and judgment is akin to reading the ingredients. Sometimes, yucky stuff gets slipped into an appealing mix. Don't just gulp it down.

Good taste is wise to cultivate and apply in a smorgasbord of life choices. What you take into your mouth goes into your gut. What you absorb with eyes and ears enters the mind and heart.

What Is Beautiful?

Not long ago, I was invited to speak to a class about beauty and art. We began with a question. "What is beautiful?" The conversation that followed went like this: "Fireplaces with orange and blue flames," "Light on the sea at dawn," "Notes on my violin, when I play it right,"

young voices chimed. Then, one child said, "I live in a plain little house, but when the roses bloom on our path, the color and fragrance make it beautiful."

"What can you think of that is not beautiful?" I asked them.

"My neighbor's cat!" one voice called out. "That's mean," cried another.

"What if I think the cat is pretty?" someone responded.

"I think Lady Gaga's songs are ugly!" a kid hollered.

"No way! I love her music," a friend protested.

And, so it went. Then, one girl loudly announced, "Nothing is ugly! Anything can be beautiful if I just say it is!"

Voices paused. "Is that true?" I inquired pointedly.

"I guess so," one hesitant child responded, and the formerly courageous friends grew reluctant to speak. It seemed truth itself came into question, and common ground shifted from beneath their seats.

"Is truth based on essential realities? Is it an integral part of life we can learn to know?" I asked. "Or, is the truth determined by individual feelings and opinions, subject to change as quickly as a favorite flavor comes and goes?"

The room remained quiet. I watched a key chain swing from someone's backpack. What was that smirking, brown pile dangling from his carabiner? Why would anyone carry such a gross emoji around? Well, it gave me an idea, an example I prayed we could all still acknowledge.

"What about poop?" I am reluctant to own the lowliness of the question but the truth is so critical to recognize. I blurted it out. "Is poop beautiful?"

The hideous word wafted through the room.

Then, the kids started to laugh. "Poop stinks," they yelled in common agreement. "It is not beautiful!"

Of course, there was one girl who con-

tinued to insist, "If I say poop is beautiful, then it can be!"

"Does it smell beautiful, too?" someone howled in response.

The girl began to giggle and gave way, conceding that waste is not, in fact, beautiful.

Acrobatic justifications and distorted perceptions cannot remake reality. They only end up entangling our minds and hearts. What stinks, stinks. What is beautiful and true, is so based upon its essence. Life existed before us, and it will go on existing beyond the little time we are given on earth. Human beings didn't create all that is, and however we may bluster or insist, we can't make it what it's not. A wise man wrote about this once. His words apply as well now as they did when originally posted, 420 years ago:

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose

By any other name would smell as sweet"

What you absorb with eyes and ears enters the mind and heart.

That author's name was William Shakespeare. He wrote those lines for the play "Romeo and Juliet." It's a classic! Why? Because authentic beauty and truth endure. As Shakespeare explained, human labels and biases don't alter the nature of reality. Though we may discern it, truth doesn't depend upon human decree.

Like truth, beauty is a gift with recognizable qualities. Beauty is uplifting, it's unifying, it speaks to us, and will often be accompanied by wonder and delight. Authentic beauty pleases not only the senses, but also the intellect and the soul!

It's the job of an artist to appreciate the true and the beautiful, bring inspiration to light, and share.

John Singer Sargent John Singer Sargent did this well. Born in Florence, Italy, he was raised while traveling across Europe. Sargent is considered American, because his parents were. He was a high-energy boy who spent little time in formal schooling. His mother believed he could learn through experiencing beauty. The prodigious talents Sargent showed by his early teen years seem to validate her notion. Inventive and curious, Sargent became fluent in English, French, Italian, and German. Around 18 years old, he moved to Paris and began formal studies under the direction of realist artist Carolus-Duran. Shortly thereafter, Sargent was accepted to the most prestigious school of art in France, where he excelled.

At nearly 150 years old, John Singer Sargent's work hasn't lost its bloom. "Carnation Lily, Lily Rose" was inspired by a trip down the Thames River. The title of the luminous work is based on a pop song that probably floated through the atmosphere as the artist and his friends worked and sang outside. That song is now all but forgotten, except for being memorialized in Sargent's enduring work.

Completed in 1886, it took Sargent over a year to finish the 5-by-5-foot, 8-inch canvas. He toiled so long, natural lily blossoms finally had to be replaced with potted ones. Determined to capture an exacting quality of light, he would set up his easel and mix oils in advance, to paint only the mysteriously radiant moments of a day's end.

John Singer Sargent's greatest works are those most faithful to the enlightening reality of the natural world. This scene remains utterly fresh in its essence. Notice how beautifully the children bear the light. We can almost smell the roses!

Andrea Nutt Falce is a happy wife and mother of four. She is also a Florentine-trained classical realist artist and author of the children's book, "It's a Jungle Out There." Her work can be found at AndreaNutt.com



FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

Columbus

(an excerpt)
by Joaquin Miller

They sailed, they sailed, then spoke his mate:
"This mad sea shows his teeth to-night,
He curls his lip, he lies in wait,
With lifted teeth as if to bite!
Brave Admiral, say but one word;
What shall we do when hope is gone?"
The words leaped as a leaping sword:
"Sail on! sail on! and on!"

Then, pale and worn, he kept his deck,
And thro' the darkness peered that night
Ah, darkest night! and then a speck—
A light! a light! a light! a light!
It grew—a star-lit flag unfurled!
It grew to be Time's burst of dawn;
He gained a world! he gave that world
Its watch-word: "On! and on!"



MICHAEL ROSSKOTEN/SHUTTERSTOCK

WHAT WAS THE PROBLEM WITH COLUMBUS'S MAP?



THANAKORN/SHUTTERSTOCK

Following the light of the sun, we left the Old World.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS (1451-1506) ITALIAN EXPLORER



NACIYAVUZ/SHUTTERSTOCK

This Week in History

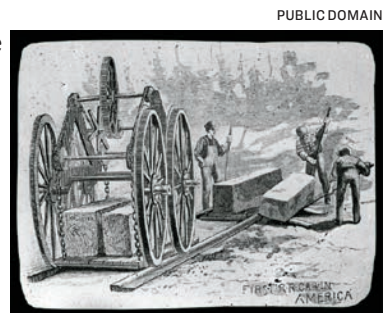
THE GRANITE RAILWAY BEGINS OPERATIONS

On Oct. 7, 1826, the first commercial railway in the United States began operation.

The Granite Railway was originally constructed to supply the granite that composes the monument commemorating the Battle of Bunker Hill—the famous battle of the American Revolution.

Horses pulled carriages along rails that carried the heavy granite from a quarry in Quincy, Massachusetts to Milton, Massachusetts along the Naponset River. The granite was then transferred to boats so it could be delivered to the site of the Bunker Hill Monument in Charleston.

Remains of the railway can still be visited today in Quincy.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

An illustration of the Granite Railway.

By Aidan Danza, age 15

THE CORMORANT



The cormorant is an odd bird, seemingly part duck and part crow.

In fact, the scientific name of the double-crested cormorant is "Phalacrocorax auritus," which roughly translates to "bald and eared raven," referring to the double crests.

Across America, there are three types of cormorant: the Brandt's cormorant, which lives on the West Coast, the great cormorant, which lives on the northeast coast, and the double-crested cormorant, which inhabits both coasts but can also be seen migrating throughout the country.

They all look quite similar. They are large, bulky birds a little bigger than the average duck, all-black. During the breeding season, the double-crested cormorant will develop two tufts on each side of the head, hence their name. Sometimes these crests are white, sometimes they are black.

The Brandt's cormorant is larger than the double-crested and it has some bright blue skin on its throat. The great cormorant lives all across the world, and it's larger and bulkier than the slender double-crested, with a white throat.

In the breeding season, all cormorants form colonies, whether in trees or rocks but always near water. The birds sometimes commute to their main fishing grounds if necessary.

With this said, the cormorant isn't strictly a colony bird. While a cormorant nest will always be in a colony, the colony may not necessarily stick together during

the winter or during a fishing trip. Cormorants are often seen fishing alone or in pairs or threes.

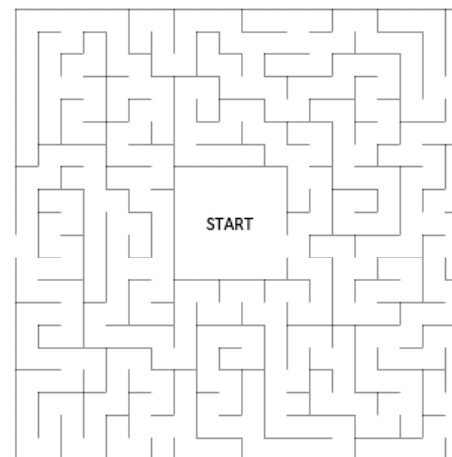
When in the water, a cormorant sits very low, sometimes so low in the water that only the neck is visible. Then it will dive, being invisible for a few seconds until it comes up again, sometimes bearing its catch—usually a fish.

Interestingly, the cormorant possesses less oil on their feathers than other birds do, and so the cormorant must perch in an airy place with wings outstretched, to air dry. This is a process that takes up a large part of the cormorant's day, and they are often seen drying.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

AMAZING ESCAPES!



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

Easy puzzle 1

9	10		
65	9		
6	9		
+	-	x	/

Solution For Easy 1
9 - 01 = 6 + 6

Medium puzzle 1

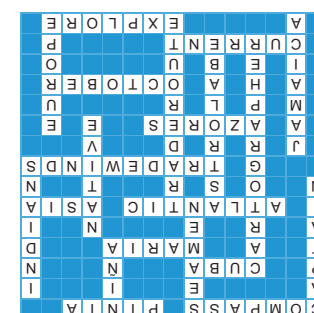
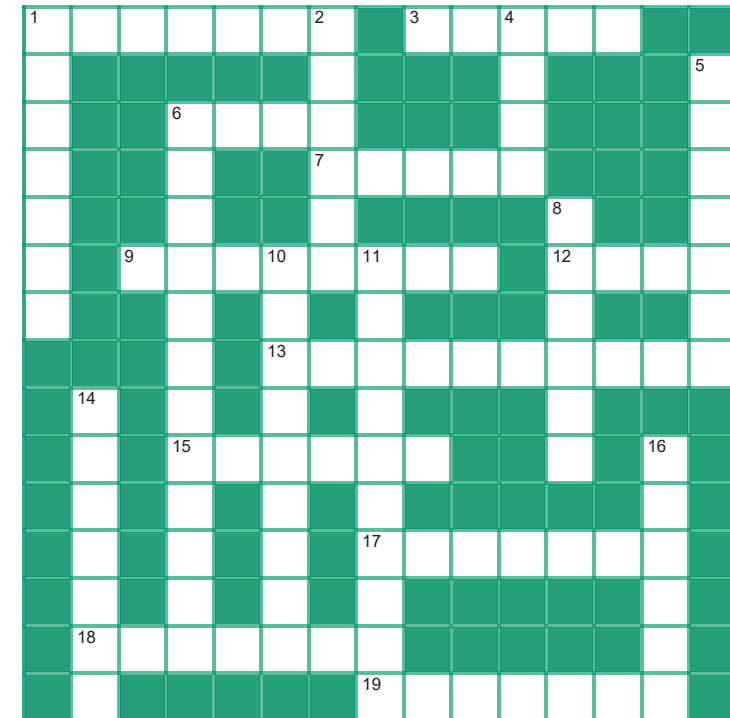
8	18		
77	17		
6	17		
+	-	x	/

Solution for Medium 1
21 + 9 = (8 - 8)

Hard puzzle 1

15	27		
48	26		
10	26		
+	-	x	/

Solution for Hard 1
91 - 01 = 92 + 22



- Down**
- Columbus' title (7)
 - Sailors (6)
 - Historic caravel (4)
 - America's first citizens (7)
 - map maker (12)
 - Local (6)
 - Sextant predecessor (9)
 - Purpose of a sea lane (10)
 - Columbus discovery (7)
 - Columbus set sail from here (6)

- Across**
- Aid for finding one's way (7)
 - Noted caravel (5)
 - Havana's home (4)
 - "Santa ..." (1492 ship) (5)
 - Columbus crossed this ocean (8)
 - Where India is (4)
 - Reliable airflows in the Tropics (10)
 - Columbus landfall of 1493 (6)
 - Discovery time: 1492 (7)
 - It's difficult to go against (7)
 - Columbus' calling (7)

THE EPOCH TIMES

Epoch Times reporter Charlotte Cuthbertson interviews Yuma County Sheriff Leon Wilmot in the desert by the U.S.-Mexico border.



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US Regional Reporter
Full-Time

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- Positions available in every U.S. state
- Requirements: a bachelor's degree and two years of experience as a professional reporter
- To apply, send your résumé, cover letter, and three or more samples of your work to careers@epochtimes.com

Senior Reporter
Full-Time

- Cover an assigned beat, including a variety of U.S. national topics and world news
- Requirements: a bachelor's degree in journalism or a related field and five years of experience as a professional reporter
- To apply, send your résumé, cover letter, and three or more samples of your work to careers@epochtimes.com

New York Reporter
Full-Time

- Cover news on one of a number of assigned beats, including City Hall, police, schools and transportation
- Requirements: a bachelor's degree in journalism or a related field and two years of experience as a professional reporter
- To apply, send your résumé, cover letter, and three or more samples of your work to careers@epochtimes.com

Economics and Business Reporter

- Cover economics, business and finance news
- Bachelor's degree and two or more years of journalism experience, preferably with a focus on business/economics
- To apply, send your résumé, a cover letter, two or more samples of your work, and three references to business@epochtimes.com

Breaking News Reporter

- Cover breaking news in the United States and around the world
- At least 2 years of experience in news reporting
- Send your résumé, a cover letter, two or more samples of your work, and three references to newsroom@epochtimes.com

China Columnist
Freelance

- Contribute sharp-eyed commentaries and analysis on the latest hot-button issues related to China
- We are especially interested in work that can provide insight into the Chinese regime's global ambitions, the latest issues affecting Chinese society and economy, and China-U.S. competition
- Requirement: Expertise in a

field related to China, including experience in conducting independent research or research for a think tank or nonprofit, or having a professional background related to China, such as military experience or analyst experience

- To apply, send your author bio, two or more samples of your work, and pitch an idea for an article to djyeditor@epochtimes.com

China Reporter
Freelance

- Cover topics related to China
- Requirement: at least two years of professional journalism experience
- To apply, send your résumé, cover letter, two or more samples of your news writing, and pitch a story idea to djyeditor@epochtimes.com

Australia Reporter

- Cover local, national and Pacific news in Australia
- A bachelor's degree and one year of professional news writing required
- To apply, send your résumé, two references, a cover letter, and samples of your work to hr@epochtimes.com.au

Wire Editor, US or Australia

- Edit and publish wire content as well as content from partner providers
- To apply, send your résumé, a cover letter, two or more samples of your work, and three references to newsroom@epochtimes.com

Travel Editor

- Shape and execute travel content strategy, manage day-to-day operations, work with staff and freelancers, and offer our audience travel stories that inspire and inform
- A minimum of five years experience in journalism, with at least two years' experience editing travel
- To apply, send your résumé, a cover letter, two or more samples of your work, and three references to philipp@epochtimes.com

Magazine Layout Designer

- Design and layout magazines and other print and digital products
- Requirements: bachelor's degree in graphic design or marketing and two or more years of related experience; advanced knowledge of Adobe Indesign, Illustrator, and Photoshop
- To apply, send your résumé, a cover letter, portfolio, and three references to careers@epochtimes.com

Assistant Food Editor

- Help shape and execute food content strategy, build and work with a team of writers, and manage day-to-day operations, including editing and occasionally writing a wide range of food and cooking articles for web and print
- Requirement: four or more years of journalism experience, with at least two years of experience in editing food content, including developing and editing recipes
- Professional cooking experience preferred, including culinary school, restaurant or catering jobs, and test kitchen work
- To apply, send your résumé, a cover letter, three to five samples of your work to food@epochtimes.com

Food Reporter

- Write feature articles about time-honored culinary traditions and recipes, from across the U.S. and around the world
- Requirement: two years of professional journalism experience, preferably with a focus on food. Professional cooking and/or recipe development experience is a plus.
- To apply, send your author bio or résumé, three to five samples of previously published work, and 1 to 3 story pitches to food@epochtimes.com

Cartoonist
Freelance

- Create series of cartoons that amuse, educate, or entertain readers
- Develop ideas relevant to the U.S.—based on the content of SpecterOfCommunism.org
- Work alongside editor/publisher's representative on ideas
- Contact kwang@epochtimes.com



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