# THE EPOCH TIMES LIFE TRADITON



# Greek Artist's Miniature Worlds Inspire Beauty and Kindness

'Being an artist brings with it a lot of responsibility,' says Gregory Grozos





### DAKSHA DEVNANI

With a harmonious combination of tiny pieces and materials, a Greek artist has been creating aesthetically pleasing miniature worlds enclosed in small boxes, frames, and watch cases.

From an early age, Gregory Grozos had a natural inclination for the arts, as his father was a graphic designer who also liked to paint in his free time. Following in his father's footsteps, Grozos went on to study graphic design and earned a degree from the Athens School of Fine Arts.

"There were many art books in the house that I would take off the bookcase and go through as a young child," he told The Epoch Times. "It was a great environment to start developing my aspiration to become an artist."

Grozos said he's aware of the responsibility he shoulders in creating works that have the potential to impact the world and "how art can affect people positively or negatively." He said it's his faith in the divine that leads him to envision whether his reasoning and purpose for creating a piece of art would make our world a better place or a worse one.

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1. A miniature town is set upon a beautiful old bronze button. The buildings and other details are made with painted watch parts. Surrounding the town are a bridge, a pavilion, a well, and a water mill.

2. A tiny man works in a miniature factory inside a glass dome.

# Good Talk: Reviving the Art of Conversation

### JEFF MINICK

In "Lost in the Cosmos: The Last Self-Help Book," Walker Percy writes, "Johnny Carson, when questioned about his aplomb on the stage before a TV audience of millions, replied: 'Sure, I'm at ease up there—because I'm in control—but when I'm at a cocktail party and caught in a one-on-one conversation: panic city!"

on-one conversation: panic city!"

In his book of essays, "Wind-

Sprints," Joseph Epstein recounts an incident from the life of John Keats when the poet took a two-mile walk with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "one of the famous talkers of his day." In a letter to his brother, Keats wrote: "I heard his voice as he came toward me—I heard it as he moved away—I heard it all the interval—if it may be called so."

Regarding conversation, most of us probably find ourselves in the mid-

dle of these two extremes. Perhaps we do just fine when talking one-on-one with a friend, but clam up when we find ourselves at a wedding where half the guests are strangers to us. Perhaps we do better in a crowd, working our way around the room from person to person without having to engage anyone except on a surface level.

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The art of conversation is an essential tool in personal relationships as well as in business networking.



1. A unicorn next to a waterfall. inside a silver antique pocket

2. A scene from Jack and the Beanstalk. The gold coins were made by hammering tiny gold

3. An astronomer observes the cosmos. Next to him is a table with a candle, quill pen, and a book where he is noting star charts and

4. A "Pied Piper" miniature world based on the classic fairy tale.

# Greek Artist's Miniature Worlds Inspire Beauty and Kindness

'Being an artist brings with it a lot of responsibility,' says Gregory Grozos

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Grozos, who began creating miniature worlds about a decade ago, comes up with his own themes and ideas that he classifies as "fantastical

"Astronomers, alchemists, inpopulate tiny workshops, building machines, and flying vehicles. In some of my other works, unicorns, fairies, and mythical beings inhabit magical landscapes," Grozos said.

Creating each dainty-looking treasure is a "learning process" that involves a lot of trial and error along with a neverending process of self-development, he sayd. There's always a "trail of failures" that leads to every "bit of success."

"Sometimes things do come out rather effortlessly, but many times, having things work out is a matter of persisting through difficulty and overcoming many obstacles," he said.

To develop himself and his artistic production further, Grozos said he's taken the ancient spiritual practice of Falun Gong, or Falun Dafa, as his "guide." The practice consists of five gentle exercises, along with moral teachings based on the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance. The



Through his spiritual practice of Falun Gong, Gouzos has discovered a more positive mindset and made profound changes to his life.

in China in 1992, is now practiced by more than 100 million people

practice 11 years ago, said that when he began to apply positive univer- exquisite works of art at both a physipach" all aspects of his daily life, he experienced a "profound shift" in

"I have learned that being a little kinder and patient is actually becoming more attuned to how the universe itself works, and things tend to become more harmonious and turn out better," he said.

With consistent practice, Grozos noticed that when he began to adjust his thoughts to a "more positive direction," a lot of issues would naturally resolve themselves in the

The catalyst for starting his work the book "Zhuan Falun," the main

"After reading this book, I gained an understanding of how entire worlds exist on the level of microscopic particles," Grozos said. "This insight led me to develop the idea of creating a miniature world, populated with tiny people, buildings and the Chinese Communist Party. machines, so small that a person can

spiritual discipline, first introduced actually carry [it] on him or herself." He found this concept very intriguing and set about pursuing the materials and techniques needed to real-Grozos, who began the spiritual ize his dream of creating miniature worlds. He showcases and sells his

sal principles "to evaluate and ap- cal store and on Etsy. While Grozos strives to create piecthe ideas of "beauty, creativity, and his way of thinking and living. benevolence," he has also seen how ideologies such as communism and socialism have impacted the world

> "These ideologies debase the human intellect, spirit, and value of human life, attempting to turn society into a giant machine where people become little more than robots performing functional roles," he said.

"Living our life in this modern society has become not only a constant attempt to try and do better despite with miniature worlds came from all everyday difficulties, but also a struggle against this set of societal and political forces trying to pull us down to rob us of our happiness, creativity, and spiritual potential." Grozos believes that the danger is more apparent in China, where faiths, including Falun Gong, have become the target of suppression by

"The benevolent principles of the

practice—truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance—could not be tolerated by a materialist Marxist regime which operates by turning people against each other and uses corruption, lies, and hatred in order to oppress them," he said.

In the last 22 years of persecution, millions of Falun Gong adherents es of art that reflect and incorporate have been detained, imprisoned, tortured, and lost their jobs. Witnessing such a crime against humanity, Grozos found it to be intolerable and has been working to raise more awareness of these "heinous crimes."

Using the platform of art, Grozos tries to bring together the destructive elements with the positive ones and show in an aesthetic way "how a man can make a moral choice be-

"I believe in preserving and building upon a positive, artistic, philosophical, and moral culture that reflects who we are at our core as human beings," he said. "Our basic principles make us who we are and the aspiration to become better humans is a limitless journey that can open a world of wonder and beauty."

Epoch Times staff member Arshdeep Sarao contributed to this

# A Stoic Approach to Self-Improvement

### **ANDREW THOMAS**

Ed Latimore, a professional in the self-improvement arena, found his own strategy for success. It is a practical, stoic approach, which he learned through his struggles, including growing up poor and dealing with alcohol problems.

### Childhood

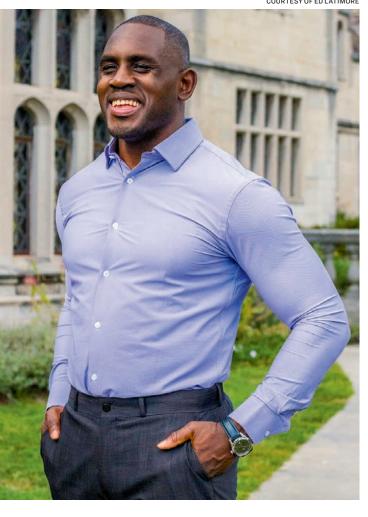
Latimore, 35, grew up in a housing project in Pittsburg where abject poverty and violence were the norm. When he was only 3 years old, he witnessed the murder of another kid in his neighborhood. Every day, as he grew up, he was forced to defend himself.

"One of the things I don't ever remember having was a sense of safety anywhere," Latimore said.

Latimore developed two coping mechanisms that kept him calm, strong, and away from the trouble around him. His first method was playing video games, particularly role-playing games that featured a comprehensive narrative. His favorite game was Final Fantasy. He also read voraciously, and his mother stressed to him the value of books. Both kept him from interacting extensively with the environment around him.

But he knew that eventually he would have to engage with others. So he learned how to be funny and likable in order to deescalate violent situations. Humor also took his mind off the stress surrounding him. At the same time, he had to strike a balance between fitting in and becoming somebody he didn't want to be.

"I didn't want to be someone that everyone was going to mess with," Latimore said. "But I also had no interest in following the crowd and doing what it took to be that kid either.



Ed Latimore learned how to be likable in order to



has made a career out of self-

Latimore also learned how to proactively control his emotions and how to obscure what set him off from others. Everyone tried to get a rise out of him, but he wouldn't indulge

in a reaction, whether at school or

"If people don't know what can tick you off, you take back a lot of power. You remove the ability for a person to manipulate your emotions," Lati-

### **Resentment and Growth** When Latimore reached high school,

more said.

he encountered a world that was starkly different from the environment he had grown up in. He had won a spot at a nationally respected school through a lottery system, and for the first time, he was going to class with people from the middle and upper-middle classes. The students he was around now hadn't experienced the poverty, crime, and violence he had during his early formative years. Latimore started playing sports and got involved in other extracurricular clubs, but he still felt somewhat out

While high school offered new opportunities, Latimore struggled to fit in. For the first time in his life, he saw functional families that were well adjusted. He had a different background, and he resented the poverty and violence he had grown up with.

"I felt like I was tolerated," Latimore

When Latimore became a young adult, he discovered that he could feel like he belonged by drinking. Partying made him feel accepted, and he built an identity around letting loose. Soon, the only way he could socialize and enjoy himself was with alcohol.

Latimore recognized he had a problem once he began hearing tales about his behavior while he'd been intoxicated, so he tried to address the issue first by managing his drinking. However, more and more accidents and problems ensued even as he tried to drink more moderately. Fortunately, a turning point was around the corner.

At age 27, Latimore was working a menial job and knew he wanted a different life for himself. He had spent the past decade as an amateur boxer and professional drinker, and was angry at who he had become. He had failed out of college once, and he decided to enlist in the Army National Guard for a second shot at higher education.

When Latimore arrived at basic

training, he was confronted with a sobering reality: he couldn't drink for 10 weeks. When he returned at the end of December 2013, he immediately went out. He woke up at a friend's house and started to think about all he had to lose: the Army, college, a professional boxing career, and his fiancée.

"I was thinking back to all the problems I had, all the failures I had, and the common denominator was alcohol," Latimore said.

### **Self-Improvement**

Latimore decided to see what life without alcohol would be like, and set short-term goals to achieve sobriety. After two years, he liked his life without booze. He had gained respect for himself and from others. Furthermore, his sobriety and writing about it encouraged others to try to quit drinking. Dec. 23, 2013, is his sober date.

Latimore has always loved storytelling and has written about many of his experiences on his online platform Stoic Street-Smarts. His articles range from "The Hagakure: 10 Best Quotes and Ideas" (lessons from a samurai guide) to "How to Be More Likeable: 5 Strategies That Worked

Not only has his online writing developed a following, but he's also a bestselling author. Through his writing and ideas, he's developed a practical approach to stoic philosophy for the modern day.

His approach is broken up into the mastery of three categories: mental, physical, and emotional. He's learned how to master the three pillars from his own life experiences, and he stresses that they are critical supports in anyone's mission for personal development.

"That is the underlying foundation of all self-improvement," he said.

Are you eating at your desk while

you're working or simply grabbing

food from your children's plate of left-

overs? Try setting a few minutes aside

to sit down and enjoy a healthy lunch

each day. A colorful salad, a cup of

soup, or a simple sandwich can be

enjoyed and focused on singularly if

you make the time for it. Slow down,

appreciate the food you're enjoying,

step away from the task list, and make

it a fruitful break.

# 6 Ways to Make the Most of Your Break

### **BARBARA DANZA**

Tired? Exhausted? Worn down? There's a lot of that going around

A couple of years ago, you might have guessed that an increase in "staying home" and canceled plans over an extended period of time would lead to an increase in rest and relaxation. That's not what my totally unscientific and completely anecdotal research has determined,

The reality of working from home, homeschooling, and trying to cope with the uncertainties of the world have taken their toll on many of us. When you work from home, you might feel like you live at work.

One simple idea that can elude someone trying to check all the boxes and perform all of their roles well is

jumbled reply, and they are obvious-

ly somewhere else other than in the

conversation.

least, stunned.

**Ask Questions** 

ist? Listen. Intently.

If you want to strike up a relation-

ship, find out more about the other

to be intentional about taking breaks. This isn't an earth-shattering concept here, but if you're feeling worn out, audit how often you actually give yourself a break during the day.

If you power through your day, more often than not reacting to all of the inputs coming your way, and never pausing for more than a few minutes at a time, no wonder you're beat. My suggestion: Prioritize taking at least one rejuvenating break each day. Here are a few ways to make that break worthwhile

20-minute power nap and wake rejuvenated and ready to tackle the second half of your day, by all means, make it happen. Set up your napping space with light-blocking curtains, a sound machine, and a comforting blanket; inform the people around you when you're not to be disturbed, or time it with your young children's naps; set a gentle alarm to ensure you don't sleep through dinnertime; toss guilt aside for indulging in what may turn out to be a productivity booster.

### Meditate Much of our exhaustion comes from

the overload of noise and messages we receive from countless sources



If you're someone who can take a all day. Taking a few minutes to tune When you're having a the noise and quiet your mind can meal, make sure to step do wonders in reducing anxiety and maintaining a calm state.

Lace up those shoes and head out the door for a walk in the sunshine. If you want to get the most out of this break, you'll leave your phone at home. Soak up the sights of your neighborhood, revel in the beauty of nature all around you, turn your face toward the sun, breathe the fresh air, and allow your body to benefit from the movement it needs daily. It's amazing how a simple walk can shift your perspective in all the right ways.

away from your tasks and take time to enjoy it.

Enjoy a Cuppa The quintessential break is the coffee break, yet how often are you taking advantage of a few minutes to step away from the grind and enjoy your beverage of choice? Pencil in an intentional break to sit, sip, reflect, and

Carving out time in your day for spiritual renewal may be just the thing to get to the root of the exhaustion. Whether peacefully reading, praying, journaling, or taking in some inspirational wisdom online—connect to your core values and what's most fundamental in your life. Nurturing your spirit is the antidote to the worry and the busyness that so many are struggling with today.

# Good Talk: Reviving the Art of Conversation

Continued from Page 1

Whatever the case, all too often we forget to consider the art of con-

### Why It's Important

Few people, I suspect, look in the mirror and think, "You're a great conversationalist! Keep up the good work!" In fact, most of us rarely think of talking with others as an art requiring any skill at all.

But being able to carry on a conversation—and even better, to make that exchange a delight for those with whom we're speaking—is a vital tool in everything from build-

ing friendships to forging connections in the business world. And in these days where we communicate so much by our electronic devices, honing this skill takes on new importance as we seek to establish relationships by means of our voices and our words over a phone.

Fortunately, there are techniques and tactics that can improve our tal-

### **Opening the Dialogue**

Whether visiting with a friend or meeting a stranger at a party, a smile and a compliment sincerely delivered establishes an immediate link with the other person. We may



Listening is a crucial part of any conversation.

compliment that person directly— "That scarf looks great on you!"—or offer a remark on our circumstances—"What a wonderful place for a birthday party!"

With these accolades, we bring to any chat an immediate enthusiasm, a warmth that draws people closer to us and who are then more interested in what we have to say.

My longtime friend John is one of the most natural practitioners of the icebreaker I've ever seen. He has a vibrant, energetic voice, and people respond to that and to the interest he shows in their lives. When we travel together to visit my daughter, he'll chat with the clerk at a convenience store. At parties and get-togethers with my daughter's friends, John jumps right into the conversation, engaging strangers young and old alike. In the coffee shop I frequent, he once initiated a conversation with a high schooler, and by the time we left, John had discovered where the young man went to school—Fork Union Military Academy—what his parents did for a living, and what his future plans and some of his political opin-

Listening is also a vital part of any conversation. Most of us have undoubtedly spoken with another person at some gathering who's not really listening to a word we say. Their eyes flit away, they mumble out some

Once I attended a wedding when an older man I knew well passed by a

friend he hadn't seen in a while. The older man was heading to the dessert bar, and as he passed the woman, he said, "How are you, Jenny?" "My husband died last month," the woman said. "How bout those Redskins?" the man said as he trucked toward the table of cake and cookies. (I wish I were making this up.) The expression on this woman's face was, to say the Want to be a good conversational-

a compliment sincerely delivered establishes an immediate link with the other person.

switched from working as an attor-A smile and ney to teaching in a public school, ask her about that shift. Was it difficult? What are the rewards? What are the costs? Why did she decide to leave the courtroom for a classroom?

Not only do many people enjoy talking about themselves, but we can also learn by our inquiries, adding to our own store of knowledge about them and about the world at large.

person. If a woman mentions she's

Of course, we need to be careful. Recently in the coffee shop that is my second home, a stranger introduced himself and then began questioning me about my life. No—let's say he began interrogating me. One breathless question followed another. He learned a good deal about me, and he gave me almost no chance to discover anything about him.

### Other No-Nos

In "The Art of Civilized Conversation," Margaret Shepherd warns against other conversation killers: "don't be a bore," "don't touch taboo topics," "don't interrupt," and more.

"Don't interrupt" is a particular complaint of mine. When I'm in my car and hear a talk show host cut in on a caller, I actually shout at the radio to let the person finish speaking. And when someone keeps interrupting me as I'm telling a story or making a point, it drives me just as crazy.

Unless the speaker refuses to let you get a word in, don't interrupt.

Compared to my friend John, with one exception, I would judge myself as an average conversationalist.

That exception occurs during phone

interviews I often conduct, especially with homeschooling mothers from across the country. As Johnny Carson said, I'm in control, but that means I'm not only asking questions, but also must make the other person comfortable and at ease with me.

And so I follow much of the advice given here. I introduce myself, often compliment them on the accomplishments of their children—I know these ahead of time—ask questions, let them talk at length without interruption while I'm making notes, and sometimes interject something from my own experience. I take pleasure in this time we share and in the stories of these folks.

Whether by phone or in person, good conversation enriches our humanity. Plus, we can have a whale of

## A Boy and His Dog? No, a Boy and His Phone!

**JAMES L. CASALE** 

Are there still bonds of love and lovalty between a boy and his dog? Do teens even have time to spend with their pets, or are they too busy with their electronic devices? I'm an unlicensed and uncertified undercover observer of how parents and their children interact in different

My most recent observation occurred in a restaurant on Aug. 5. I covertly witnessed and took mental notes on the absence of any interaction between a boy and his parents. He also ignored his brother, who was sitting across from him.

Unless you live the monastic life, everyone has witnessed teens, pre-teens, and adults obsessed with their phones via an invisible umbilical cord. It's so commonplace it hardly deserves my attention except when this cordless monster appears at a dinner table, at home or away. Electronic devices and toys are verboten at a dinner table.

My wife and I were excited about trying a highly recommended country food restaurant, Julie's Place, in Murphy, North Carolina. We were delighted when our fried green tomatoes, homemade onion rings, collard greens, and fresh trout arrived. At about the same time, a family of four, including a mom, dad, and two teenage boys, strolled in and were seated a few tables away from us.

My PCIA (Parent Children Interaction Antennae) was immediately activated when one of the boys, seated next to his mom, had headphones attached to his ears, and that entertainment thing was mysteriously gorilla-glued to his left hand. I could hardly eat my dinner. Observe I must. This article began forming in my head. Why didn't I have notepaper?

For the next 15 or 20 minutes, the teen never looked up and interacted with his family, shoving a biscuit in his mouth with his right hand. When his mom tried to talk to him, he did face her with a puzzled "why are you bothering me" look on his face. Still, it took him a moment or two to eventually remove his headphones and respond.

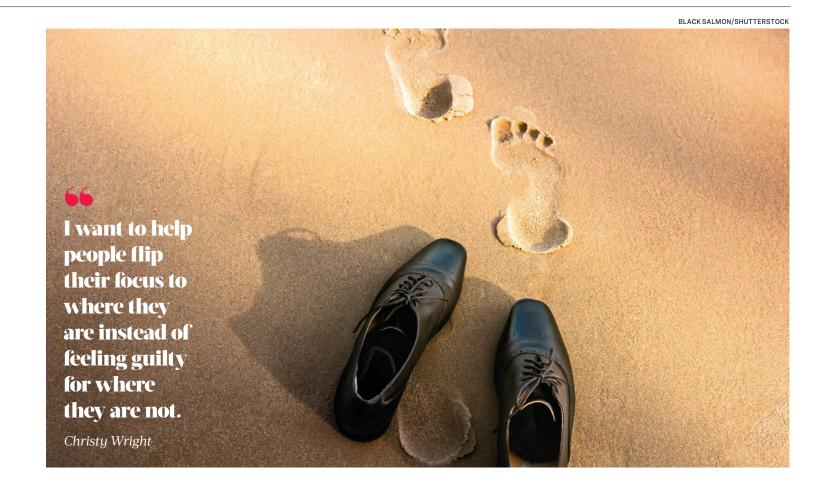
This minor interaction was over in less than a minute. Then the boy resumed his devotion to his electronic pet, grabbed another country biscuit, and started munching. What was he viewing? What was he listening to? As the dinner continued, no one interacted or smiled, and the dad was fingering his phone. What's wrong with this picture?

There's a universal recommendation from every parenting expert in this galaxy: No electronic devices at the dinner table! Dinnertime is sacred. At home or in restaurants, dinnertime provides the time for happy talk among family members. It should be used as an opportunity to laugh, discuss, review, compliment, praise, bond, make plans. Dinnertime is one of those family routines that should never be canceled or ignored, because regular family discussions are benchmarks of effective parenting.

Dr. James L. Casale is a state and national award-winning educator. He is a former Florida Teacher of the Year and was the principal of Purchase School in Harrison, N.Y., when the school was cited as a National School of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education. He is the author of three parenting books, a family cookbook, and two brief memoirs about growing up in the 1950s, all available on Amazon.com.



Make dinnertime a time to connect with and bond as a family—without phones in sight.



# Redefining Life Balance

A conversation with author Christy Wright

**BARBARA DANZA** 

ife balance—who among us doesn't crave that elusive idea of checking all the boxes, feeling on top of things, and never letting one ball drop. Is true life balance even achievable?

Author and business expert Christy Wright set out to answer this question in her new book, "Take Back Your Time: The Guilt-Free Guide to Life Balance." She redefines the idea of life balance and offers a practical guide to achieving it. I recently asked for her advice in achieving this elusive goal.

**The Epoch Times:** Why do you think a sense of life balance seems so elusive to so many of us?

Christy Wright: Because we never define it. We don't know what balance is; we're just sure we don't have it. We all want balance whatever that means for each of us—but it's like chasing a moving target. Any version of balance we think we're supposed to want or have is impossible.

Many people think balance is a 50/50 split between work and home. Other people think it's doing everything for an equal amount of time. But neither of those definitions of balance is possible or even desirable. That's why we end up feeling exhausted and like we're failing.

The path to balance is not productivity. It's not waking up earlier and staying up later and running faster in between. It's not being more efficient and multitasking more effectively. And we don't need more time.

The good news is that balance is possible, but we need a new definition of balance, and that's exactly why I wrote this book. I want to reclaim and redefine this word that haunts so many of us, and show you how to practically create it in your life.

The Epoch Times: What's your new definition of life balance?

Ms. Wright: What I discovered is that balance isn't as much about something you do or how you "balance it all." Balance—real balance that we all crave—is something you create in your life. You can create a sense of balance and still be busy. You can become a balanced person in an out-of-balance world. Balance is not doing everything for an

equal amount of time. It's about doing the right things at the right time, and the good news is that you get to decide what's right for you. When you do that, you will feel that sense of balance you've been searching for all along. It looks less like juggling balls, spinning plates, and walking a tightrope, and it looks more like peace, confidence in your choices, shaking the guilt that's been nagging at you for years, and finally being proud of how you spend your time.

I think that's what we're really after when we say we want balance, anyway. And the good news is that it's possible.

**The Epoch Times:** The key to spending your precious time on the things you deem most important is being able to identify what those things are. How can one go about discovering one's true priorities?

Ms. Wright: When we talk about priorities, it's not a "set it and forget it" thing. I want people to think in terms of the season they're

Something that was right six months or six years ago isn't necessary right today. Get into a rhythm of asking yourself, "What's right,

So, for example, what's right in the sum-



"Be present for what matters," says Christy Wright.

Balance is not doing everything for an equal amount of time. It's about doing the right things at the right time.

Christy Wright

Christy Wright.

ent from what's right in the fall when I'm launching a book. In the summer, my house was pretty clean, I saw my friends regularly, and I worked out consistently. This fall, I'm focused on work. My house is not as clean as I'd like, I haven't seen my friends much, and I'm not working out. But that doesn't mean I'm failing. In fact, I am spending my time on what I decided were the top priorities for this season: work, family, and seminary classes. When you ask yourself, "What's right, right

mer when my work is slower is very differ-

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now?" you not only give yourself permission to focus on what's right for you, you allow yourself to make progress there and even be proud of those things. You also allow yourself to shake the guilt for all the things that are not right, right now. Just because something isn't right, right now doesn't mean it will never be right. It's just not right, right now. Focus on what's right and watch how that helps you shake the guilt, build confidence in how you're spending your time, and even helps you feel more balanced.

The Epoch Times: Your book maps out a fivestep "path to balance." Which step do you find is most challenging to people and why? **Ms. Wright:** Without a doubt, it's the last step: Be present for what matters. Because even if you create the most perfect schedule in the world, if you aren't present for it, you miss it. We can do all of the things that help us figure out what balance means to us. We can be exactly where we're supposed to be, and even want to be, and still miss what's right in front of us because we're too worried about the places we're not. This is hard because there are so many things competing for our attention all day, every day.

I want to help people flip their focus to where they are instead of feeling guilty for where they are not. Be where your feet are wherever you are, be there. Research shows that when you're present in the moment, you're not only more balanced, you're hap-

**The Epoch Times:** The pandemic gave many people a different perspective on time management and life balance. How did current events shape this book, if at all? **Ms. Wright:** For the first time in a long

time, and maybe ever for some, the pandemic gave people a chance to think and to breathe. Many people are rethinking how they live their lives and how they spend their time. We're seeing the effects of this in the labor force right now. Millions of people are leaving their jobs and millions more are considering a change. They're working from home, changing careers, and going part-time. So this question of balance is as relevant as ever.

**The Epoch Times:** What do you most hope readers of "Take Back Your Time" take away with them?

**Ms. Wright:** Millions of people are walking around all day every day feeling like they're failing. And they're not. My hope is that after reading the book, people realize that they are doing better than they think they are. And that if they want their life to look different than it does, they have the power to

How you spend your time is how you spend your life, and I want to help people spend their one life on what matters most to them. I want to help them define and create their version of balance so that they can live it. It's their life, after all. That's the only version of balance that should matter to them anyway.

# Family's Love Surrounds Boy Born With Rare, Terminal Condition

**LOUISE BEVAN** 

An 8-year-old deaf-blind boy with a rare, terminal condition who was told he wouldn't live past his first birthday is growing up in a happy home thanks to his parents' determination in making him feel and experience love from all angles.

Gideon Jolicoeur from Rockwell, Texas, was diagnosed with a degenerative genetic condition called peroxisomal biogenesis disorder (PBD) at 7 months old. He is legally blind, profoundly deaf, and has reduced mobility.

Before they could get their heads around his diagnosis, they were hit with yet another blow: he might not survive his first year.

Gideon lives with his parents, Samantha and Kevin Jolicoeur, and siblings, Laynie, 11, Josiah, 5, and Nya, 3.

Both former teachers, Samantha and Kevin were ecstatic to learn they were expecting their second child. Samantha's pregnancy was "typical." But on the day Gideon was born, Jan. 18, 2013, doctors suspected something was wrong with him.

"During labor, his heart rate began dropping with each contraction. The doctor made the decision to do a Caesarean section," stay-at-home mom Samantha



Kevin and Samantha named their son Gideon. meaning "mighty warrior."



told The Epoch Times. "The first time I saw Gideon, it was only for a few brief seconds."

Riddled with fear, Samantha waited two hours before her beautiful baby boy was placed in her arms. "Unfortunately, he had several oddi-

ties that didn't fit into a diagnosis," she recalled. "We took him home on day five, not knowing what was really going on

Later, a diagnosis of PBD at 7 months gave a name to Gideon's struggles.

Explaining his condition, Samantha said that every child is different, but peroxisomes exist in every cell of the body, and Gideon's don't work properly. His PBD means he has degenerative deafblindness, and he can't walk, crawl, or sit independently owing to low muscle tone.

The day Gideon was diagnosed, the elpless, heartbroken couple said they shared a profound moment in their ge-

"With tears still streaming down our faces, we both agreed that any children we have don't belong to us anyways, because they're on loan," Samantha said. "They're truly a gift from God, and He

loves them so much more than we do." The couple named their son Gideon,

meaning "mighty warrior," believing that God created him for a purpose. But before they could get their heads around his diagnosis, they were hit with yet another blow: he might not survive his first year.

"It was the death of a dream for us as parents," Samantha said. "We decided fairly quickly that whatever time God gave us with Gideon, we were going to make the most of his little life. So I started a blog."

Within days, the mother of an 8-year-old child with PBD contacted Samantha to connect her with a specialist in Omaha, Nebraska, who had a different insight,

ple learned that Gideon has a "moderate" way and back, using his walker. form of PBD. "According to the doctor in range anywhere from 2 to 20 years," said amid the challenges.

Life at home in Rockwell was soon filled with challenges, as Gideon's needs

"Gideon can do absolutely nothing for

himself," Samantha said. "He requires the same care as an infant ... feeding, diapers, baths, therapy, moving him from one activity to the next, all on his time schedule.

"Like most kids with PBD, Gideon has trouble eating, so all his food is pureed." In 2015, Gideon suffered seizures for five months. However, Samantha credits Charlotte's Web Hemp Oil for abating them. She considers her son "one of the lucky ones" for having only three hospi-

talizations in his eight years of life. Today, she feels her family has landed upon a winning formula and describes Gideon as "the most chill kid" she knows.

Describing his personality further, Samantha said he loves to touch, being in the water, holding onto a vibrating toy, and car rides with the windows down to feel the breeze on his face.

We decided fairly quickly that whatever time God gave us with Gideon, we were going to make the most of his little life.

Samantha Jolicoeur

Meanwhile, nurse recruiter Kevin has kept his beard long as Gideon loves to caress it; and he "recognizes" his father this way. Apart from the challenges in caring for Gideon, Samantha shares some of the

best parts of being his parent. "The best part of being Gideon's parents is having a front-row seat to watch how God is using his life," she said, "not only to impact us, but also a world that Gideon

will never fully know nor understand. "He expresses pure joy in spite of the challenges he faces. He challenges us to see past our own selfishness and to live life with a happy heart, no matter what

we're facing. The family chronicles their daily life on a dedicated Facebook page, Life with a sharing that peroxisomal disorders are Happy Heart. On Sept. 24, they celebrated a major milestone with a post showing After in-depth genetic testing, the cou-Gideon walking the length of their drive-

Omaha, Gideon's life expectancy could the higher power as they strive forward

"Each day is a gift," Samantha told The Epoch Times. "We try to live every day intentionally, as if it would be [Gideon's] last, because, truth be told, any day could be our last as well."



(Above, below) Raider at work.



# A Fine Nose

Sniffer dog goes viral for detection skills

MICHAEL WING

Raider may be an adorable black Lab, but its uncanny hunt instinct made it the perfect K-9 sniffer dog.

The cute pup went viral on TikTok after its fun-loving owner and work partner, Officer Ritchey, of the Alpharetta Police Department, started recording their adventures together.

Officer Ritchey first met Raider on a small farm, where he would intentionally toss a tennis ball into thick, tall grass for the dog to fetch. Raider wouldn't come out of that grass without the ball—no matter how long it took.

"This was great to see because we look for a strong hunt drive in detection dogs," Ritchey told The Epoch Times.

Then he shared a funny anecdote: "The farm had chickens, and the owners had a large bag of chicken feed in the kitchen. Raider must have been a fan, because when she came inside, she ran to the bin, knocked it over, and started stuffing her mouth with as much chicken feed as possible, it was pretty funny."

Soon they partnered up, and Raider started its stint with the department, initially making trips to schools with Officer Ritchey as a community relations and youth drug prevention K-9. Their job was to "be in the public eye as much as possible,"

conduct narcotics sweeps "to help deter students from bringing drugs to school," and also "create relationships with the community."

But when the pandemic struck, the pair were reassigned, and Raider became a sniffer dog on the frontlines, locating drugs, catching criminals, and finding missing persons.

"Recognizing how great of a detection dog she is, we have been reassigned as a patrol K-9 team," Ritchey told the newspaper. "I don't think she's much different than other K9s other than her initial job was a little different.

"We are a support unit to the patrol officers," he said. "If officers request us on a traffic stop because they suspect drugs are in the vehicle, we would respond and Raider would do an exterior vehicle sniff."

Watching their TikTok videos, millions of viewers have been amazed by Raider's faculty as a sniffer dog. In several short clips, Officer Ritchey releases Raider into a parking lot; not minutes later, she's poised sitting in front of a car, nose pointing at a wheel well, tail wagging furiously. Ritchey is seen peeking under a bumper and catching sight of a small bag filled with a white

Although timid in crowds, once the search command is given, Raider becomes the Epoch Inspired newsletter at a "completely different dog," her handler The Epoch Times.com/newsletter



Officer Phillip Ritchey and Raider.

said, adding, "Raider's hunt and prey drive overpower any of her fears and she will find whatever she is looking for when it's

"Her most favorite thing to do at work is her job, finding drugs or people."

But beyond a remarkable skill set, Raider is just plain adorable. "She is the sweetest dog and very lovable," Ritchey said. "She's very friendly and

loves to greet people with kisses. Even suspects love Raider. "On several occasions when we show up on a traffic stop, and after Raider is alerted and drugs are located, the suspects often

say, 'Aww your dog is so cute!'" Share your stories with us at emg.in-

spired@epochtimes.com, and get your daily dose of inspiration by signing up for

Gratitude is the "positive feeling of looking at the good things in life and realizing how fortunate we are," writes Jim Blumel, Sr.

### **DEAR NEXT GENERATION**

# 'The Virtue of Gratitude'

### → Advice from our readers to our young people

he most important message I've tried to impart to my grandchildren is the virtue of gratitude. Too often we see ourselves as victims and lament the perceived injustices against us. We dwell on negatives and are easily offended. The result is unhappiness and depression.

### No matter what our circumstances, we all have something to be thankful for.

Gratitude is the opposite. It is the positive feeling of looking at the good things in life and realizing how fortunate we are. It is the ability to give thanks for all those who have helped us in life—our parents, grandparents, teachers, clergy, physicians, friends, and others.

No matter what our circumstances, we all have something to be thankful for. All we have to do is to take stock of those positives and make a purposeful effort to appreciate them. Being able to thank God for the gift of life, our family, our country, our freedom, and all our blessings is to know true happiness.

—Jim Blumel, Sr., 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

"She knew full well it was an embarrass-

ing joke, but she also knows it was a gift of

endearment that will become more mean-

ingful—while still embarrassing—over

The parents, who operate Whitney Scott

Photography in Bentonville, started their

venture to spend more quality time with

their kids, and looked forward to moments

"We knew the blanket and pillowcase

would end up in her closet immediately

after we left from drop-off at college," David

said. "We also anticipate it coming back out

Despite Emma's dubious look, though,

 $\hbox{``She was taken aback at first because it is}\\$ 

quite garish, but we could see little smiles

trying to break through her otherwise stoic

face, because I think she didn't want us to

The couple took some priceless photos af-

ter Emma found her gift (they made a game

of hide-and-seek out of it), and then shared

pictures of the fun prank with their friends

"We were surprised at just how many re-

acted to it," David said. "Other sites picked up

on it, as it demonstrated ... the fun family was

doing [it] to help balance out the emotions of

Prior to opening their studio, David worked

in a youth ministry while Whitney was a

Of course, the parents gave their daughter

a few other things, but they knew this gag

gift was one she would "appreciate and en-

joy," while they got to check off one of those

embarrassing moments on their parenting

"That's part of the joy of parenting!" Da-

sending their daughter off to college."

know she really liked it," the dad said.

her parents suspect she's just holding back

time," David told The Epoch Times.

when they could embarrass them.

around midterms."

pleasure.

on Facebook.

career counselor.

bucket list.

vid said

The Gift of Family

Steve Finn quit his

career with the metro

Atlanta Police Depart-

ment to start a boys'

Former police officer starts Christian school and home for boys

### **MICHAEL WING**

A former Atlanta police officer decided to hang up his badge after seeing too many kids fall through the cracks of the system. They deserved a second chance. "I saw what most police of-

ficers see, the good and the bad," Steve Finn, 51, told The Epoch Times.

"I was seeing more and more young people making really poor decisions that were sending them to jail for the remainder of their youth or were sending them to the grave early."

There had to be something he, along with his wife, then a social worker, could do that would have a greater impact on the lives of these young men these children—who needed help.

"We started praying about it," said Finn. "OK God, what do you want me

to do with the time I'm here?' "And everything just kept circling back to these kids who did not have

hope, who did not have a future." Their hearts in the right place, the Finns found their calling after they were invited to the Eagle Ranch Christian boys home north of Atlanta. With that successful model in mind, they started a journey to set up a school of their own. "I had no fundraising background,"

Finn said. "I was a cop." They planned to move where they were needed most and eventually took the leap. In 2003, Finn and his wife left

their careers. They traveled to West Vir-

ginia in search of a plot of land upon

which to found their school. If God was in this, it would succeed, they knew. If not, it wouldn't.

"We had enough money to keep our family fed for about a year," Finn said. "I knew after 12 months, if we didn't have a plan, we would have to move back to

Months passed without luck. At one point, they were down to their last \$25. But then out of the blue, the pieces started falling together.

"It was kind of a miracle story," Finn said. "The funds came in from very unlikely sources; some of the Atlanta Falcons players surprised us; churches in West Virginia; churches in Georgia. Chunks started coming in.

"And we bought this land debt-free, and we had a \$400 balance after; it was just enough.'

Someone had decided that they deserved a shot at success and sold them



(Above) The model is based on unconditional love and accountability, all while bringing out the boys' God-given strengths. (Right) President **Donald Trump invited** Finn and some of the boys to visit the White House in 2018. These trips to the White House turned into "leadership trips" that boys worked to earn (Below) Students at Chestnut Mountain Ranch.







the land they needed. And they set up a school, Chestnut Mountain Ranch. "The boys that we get have faced a lot of challenges; they didn't come

> here just to get their grades up," Finn said. "They came here because of anger issues, because of broken families. Many of our children are in the foster system.

> > "They've had their wounds. "There's acting out, there's stealing, there's fighting, there's being socially inap-

propriate, there's a lot of hurt."

Their program is based on a model of "unconditional love," yet it still "holds these children accountable," while at the same time "is building up their God-given

strengths." Bringing out where they shine is the goal—whether it be in art, mechanical skills, or a desire to do something wonderful with their lives. Finn said it's "not rocket science."

The school has met with success since it was founded some 13 years ago.

One of their first boys, who arrived at age 13 and was deeply troubled, later became a part-time police officer and a full-time federal prison guard. "He's probably making twice as much as I am now," Finn said, laughing.

In 2018, then-President Trump learned of Chestnut Mountain Ranch and invited Finn and some of their boys to the White House to meet him and Vice President Mike Pence—whom Finn connected with and received an invitation from to join in his weekly Bible study in his office. "We decided to make it something that

the boys would earn," Finn said. "And we would take two boys at a time, and we called it a leadership trip, and we would rent them the best suit, and they would get to go to a Bible study in Vice President Pence's office."

One of Pence's staff would then give them a tour that would "blow most anybody away."

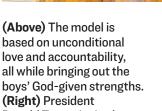
They went eight times, Finn said. One boy who made the trip to D.C. twice was Anthony, whose parents suffered from addiction. He had been in and out of the foster system and was distrustful of adults.

After "soaring" at the Chestnut Mountain program, his return home was shortlived, as his mother literally dropped him off at Finn's house, saying she "was done" "We're in this line of work, and I kind

of expected one day it might happen this way," Finn said. "We said, 'Do you want us to adopt you?' and he said, 'Yes, please."" The Finns followed through in their offer to adopt and love him, while holding him accountable. Anthony soon took their last name as his own.

Since then, the family has "seen a fine young man come out." He became a football star, is now set to graduate high school, and hopes to one day play college ball. As for Chestnut Mountain Ranch, the school has seen good fortune as of late; they are currently laying the foundation for a new chapel.

Ahead, Finn envisions adding four more homes on the property, raising their capacity to 49 kids—and eventually expanding the program to help boys across America get a second shot at life.









What does education actually mean, and what should its end result be?

### **EDUCATION**

# How Can We Best Educate Our Children?

### JAMES SALE

Parents and all right-minded people want the best for children, and one important aspect of considering what is best for them is contemplating their education.

What is the process by which they become "educated"—what does having an "education" mean? It is not enough, I think, just to select the "best" school we intend to send them to; we have to think deeper than this, because the "best" school isn't necessarily best for your particular child. Indeed, we see this clearly when parents with more than one child make different decisions for each one.

Furthermore, "best" can so often mean not very much. It may mean simply the most expensive or exclusive, if we go privately, or it may mean, if we go publicly, the most popular or most visibly branded school, with reputation hinging on, perhaps, just one sole factor such as examination results.

The idea that just because we pass lots of examinations means that we are educated should make all thoughtful individuals wince. Surely true education is much more than simply carving out a career in a narrow field by passing increasingly arduous sets of exams!

This then takes us back to first principles. What do we want education to achieve? What would it look like if our children were educated? And—what this article is about—can we learn anything from the past, and in particular from the ancient Greeks?

### **The Ancient Greeks on Education**

I think we can. Let's explore three simple ideas that come from Plato. I say simple, but this is not a derogatory term. As Irish poet and playwright Oscar Wilde said, "I'm a man of simple tastes, I'm always satisfied with the best"; and as business expert Donald G. Krause said more seriously in his book "The Way of the Leader," "Only what is simple can produce outstanding success." It's interesting that this quotation comes from a book on leadership, because the etymology of "education" is from a Latin word meaning "to lead forth." Children are not going to accidentally become "educated" or spontaneously pop up as mature adults; they need to be led there.

But to return to Plato, what are the three simple ideas he has, or more exactly, what ideas do Socrates, Plato and Aristotle share? According to traditional ornamental plasterer Patrick Webb, they laid the foundation for 2,400 years of philosophic inquiry, and "their provisional conclusion was that the Good, True, and the Beautiful at the highest actualisation of ultimate reality was indistinguishable as an unity: the One. And love is the force that draws us towards it."

There has been much development since then on these topics, but the fact is, on the face of it, we can all understand the good, the true, and the beautiful, and this relates to education and what we want for our children.

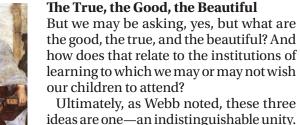


Plato (L) and Aristotle in Raphael's 1509 fresco, "The

School of Athens."

A balanced and character-building curriculum will

include the arts.



Ultimately, as Webb noted, these three ideas are one—an indistinguishable unity. That is to say, when we see one operating, usually all three simultaneously operate. Where we have one, we tend to find the

If we remove ourselves from the realm of theoretical abstractions (philosophy proper) and just consider how these ideas play out practically, which is in real human beings, what do we find? We find that when a person is good or acts on their perception of goodness, there's a behavior that manifests it. We invariably note that doing something good also tends to exhibit the is where the institution's real priorities qualities of truthfulness—the true—and also becomes in itself beautiful.

If we consider the good actions of people like St. Francis of Assisi or Mother Teresa, we're struck by both their truth and honesty in doing what they committed to do, and also a certain beauty—often via its simplicity and immediacy—that emerges from their behavior.

What I'm getting at is that ultimately what we want for our children is an education that helps lead them (and us, of course, since parents are an essential part of this process) to behaviors that are consistently



A quality education will spark a child's curiosity and imagination.

good, true, and beautiful. And the word for this is very old-fashioned: We want an education that leads to the development of character, real character.

One might expect opposition to this. Psychologist James Hillman in his "The Force of Character" observed that "character died in the twentieth century," and, according to American essayist Norman Mailer, "Ego is the great word of the twentieth century."

Political and cultural commentator David Brooks in his "The Road to Character" extends this notion further when he notes that the "Usage of words like 'character,' 'conscience,' and 'virtue' all declined over the course of the 20th century. Usage of the word 'bravery' has declined by 66 percent over the course of the 20th century. 'Gratitude' is down 52 percent, and 'kindness' is down 56 percent.'

Despite this, however, when we consider where to send our children, the question becomes: Does this institution focus on, promote, and truly commit to the development of character in its students? How would we know this? Their mission statements? Hardly—they're two a penny!

### Finding a Character-Building School Look for perhaps three things. Like always attracts like, hence the expression "birds of a feather flock together," so step one is not to focus on examination results but on the reputation and standing of the teach-

ers and professors themselves, especially their principal. After all, we're not going to get character development in our children from people who have little character themselves. Discovering whether faculty have charac-

ter means digging a bit deeper than simply reviewing their academic qualifications in the institution's handbook. What good are they doing beyond what they are paid to do? What truth do they stand for, and what's beautiful in their lives? Often we learn what's beautiful by knowing what their hobbies or passions are. Fortunately, with social media being what it is nowadays, it's not difficult to find a lot of information about individuals that they themselves have put in the public domain.

### Does this institution focus on, promote, and truly commit to the development of character in its students?

The second step is a close examination of the curriculum on offer. Clearly, this become apparent. Two things here are, I think, really important. First, balance: This almost certainly means ensuring that the humanities and arts are not underplayed and rendered subservient to science, technology, and generally utilitarian subjects.

What I am getting at is the centrality of the imagination in a curriculum that is going to develop character and characters. Imagination—once sparked—leads to the most astonishing results. Again, David Brooks: "When you go to a school, it should offer you new things to love. ... We don't become better because we acquire new information. We become better because we acquire better loves."

And this love begins in our imagination. Indeed, how many of us can truly say we loved a particular subject or discipline ever since a great teacher first taught us and inspired our imagination about it?

Finally, the third step to look for is the results of the work of the institution over time. How do we evaluate this? The alumni! What do these former students look like? What former students does the institution hold up as being typical of their processes? We need here to look beyond the merely famous former alumni—merely being famous or rich or powerful is not itself necessarily an example of goodness, truth, and beauty. But who are their exemplars? You'd expect, wouldn't you, some results after years of toil in the educational fields?

Remember, in undertaking this search, you are engaging in something of real and material benefit to society. For, as civil rights activist Rustin Bayard said, "The only way to reduce ugliness in the world is to reduce it in yourself." This is exactly what focusing on character—and the good, the true, and the beautiful—helps us to do.

James Sale has had over 50 books published, most recently, "Mapping Motivation for Top Performing Teams" (Routledge, 2021). He won first prize in The Society of Classical Poets 2017 annual competition, performing in New York in 2019. His most recent poetry collection is "HellWard." For more information about the author, and about his Dante project, visit TheWiderCircle.webs.com



A unique going-away

present from parents

They might have gone too far.

**EPOCH INSPIRED STAFF** 

them by.

prank—obviously.

surprises nursing student

While one Arkansas couple's daughter pur-

sues a nursing degree in college, her parents

want her to think of home, so they gave her

a hilarious going-away gift to remember

David and Whitney Scott gifted daughter

Emma a comforter and a pillowcase—the

blanket emblazoned with a larger-than-life

fabric printout of mom and dad, the pillow-

case sporting her brother and dog's head on it.

It was part housewarming for her col-

lege dorm at Harding University, and part

The Scotts with their daughter Emma.

# The Value of Pets

Not only do family pets offer many health benefits, but they can also teach kids about caring and responsibility

### **PARNELL DONAHUE**

I became acutely aware of the value of pets while at work one beautiful summer's day. I was enjoying lunch on the clinic patio when I noticed a teen patient of mine walk-

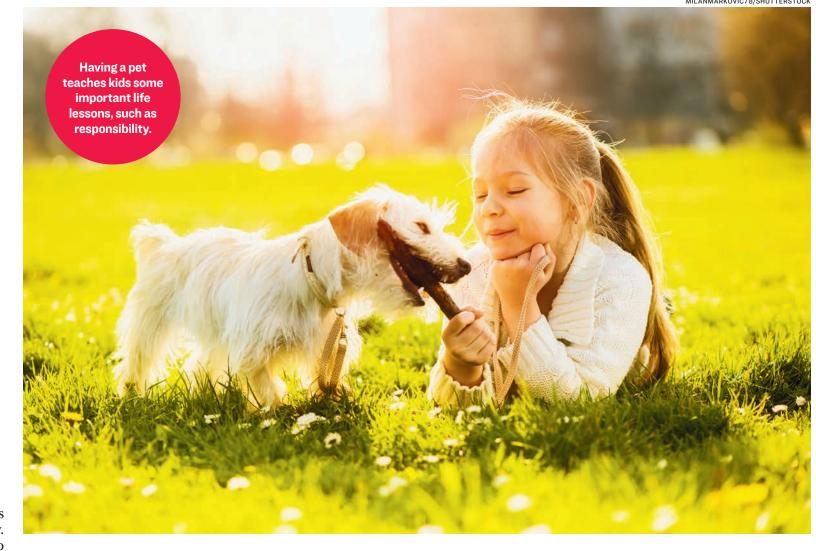
Shaking my extended hand, she began, "I want you to meet someone." She gestured to the dog on the end of a short leash. "His name is Ollie," she continued as she sat down under the market umbrella and lifted the rather large dog to her lap. He licked her on the lips.

"I suppose you think that's unsanitary," she said without embarrassment. Then added, "It's better than kissing a dumb boy!" Her mood shifted abruptly and tears

welled up in her eyes. "Sounds like you broke up with your boyfriend," I suggested.

"He broke up with me!" Tears began flowing. Ollie gazed at her as she talked, then began licking away her tears. When he thought she had cried long enough, he nibbled on her ear lobe. With that, she giggled and pulled herself together, looked at me, and said: "I just can't stay sad or mad when Ollie's around. He always understands. People should be more like dogs.

"I know my mom loves me, but she just doesn't understand the way Ollie does; neither do my friends. Having Ollie is like always having a best friend. I tell him everything, and he listens and understands. He never interrupts, never gets mad at me, never tells me what to do, and is always there when I need him."



conditional love, and they give us another opportunity to enjoy God's creation.

Studies have shown what pet owners have always known: having a pet helps us stay healthy. Doctors have discovered that pet owners live longer, recover faster after an illness or injury, and are generally happier than adults who do not have a pet.

### People seeing therapists are more comfortable talking about sensitive issues while holding, petting, or just being near a pet.

Kids who have a close relationship with a pet have an easier time coping with the stresses of life. The American Academy of Pediatrics in a statement about ways to love your kids said, "Owning a pet can make children, even those with chronic illnesses and disabilities, feel better by stimulating physical activity, enhancing their overall attitude, and offering constant companionship."

Recent studies show that infants who are exposed to dogs and cats have fewer allergies as children and adults, which is at odds with the medical advice families with a history needed and feel appreciated, which helps of allergies usually get. Doctors now know develop self-esteem. These lessons teach his wife, Mary, have four adult children; all Emily knew what she was talking about. that the presence of a dog or cat in the home structure, responsibility, and discipline. Dogs show compassion, loyalty, and undecreases the risk of allergies and asthma.

Psychologists and psychiatrists have discovered that pets can help their patients get better faster. People seeing therapists are more comfortable talking about sensitive issues while holding, petting, or just being near a pet. The grandmother of our family dog, Belle, worked with a psychotherapist

Pets, especially big dogs and horses, encourage their owners to exercise. Exercise has many health benefits; it reduces the incidence of obesity, decreases the risk of heart attack, and helps control blood pressure. And the dogs provide protection as well as companionship.

Some dogs help kids learn to read. My grandson's school had a dog named Dusty, who loved to sit and listen to the kids read. Dusty was never critical of the reader and always interested in anyone who offered attention. The kids loved to read to Dusty, and by reading more, they improved their reading skills and their self-esteem.

Pet owners have told me that caring for a pet taught their kids some important lessons. They learn to focus on things other than themselves. Feeding or brushing a dog is not like taking out the trash; both need to be done, but dogs show appreciation for what is done for them, while the trash doesn't care. Kids know when they are pet's care. Too often parents assume that responsibility, but if parents do all the work, how will the children benefit?

At the age of 16, our dog Belle became ill and crossed the rainbow bridge. It was a very traumatic event for us. I made Belle a beautiful coffin, we wrapped in a blanket her veterinarian, Dr. Bowling, kindly provided, and we buried Belle in our backyard. We pondered getting another dog. Some months later one of our grown sons asked when were we going to replace Belle. I answered we weren't sure we would. "Well," he said, "you should!"

"Why?" Mary asked.

"Because since Belle died, Dad's getting

Later that year we brought Frosty home. Frosty has many of the same pedigree ancestors as Belle, and is just as sweet. What a difference Frosy has made in our lives. If you have the space, the time, and can af-

ford it, get your family a dog, or some other pet; let your kids help with its care, and see what a difference it makes in your family. Enjoy the kids in your life, and may God continue to bless you and your family.

Dr. Parnell Donahue is a pediatrician, military veteran, author of four books, and the blog ParentingWithDrPar.com, and host of WBOU's "Parenting Matters" show. He and Make sure your children help with the him at Parenting-Matters.com

### **CHILDREN'S BOOKS**

# Children's Bedtime Reads for Fall

### BARBARA DANZA

Autumn is an exciting time for a child. The wind is picking up, trees are painted in warm hues, and pumpkins, apples, and scarecrows abound. The school session is in full swing, and the holidays are around

As night falls earlier and earlier, perhaps there is time for an extra bedtime story. In celebration of this season of brisk anticipation and home comforts, here are some titles to enjoy with the children in your life.

### As night falls earlier and earlier, perhaps there is time for an extra bedtime story.

"The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything," by Linda Williams, illustrated by Megan Lloyd, tells the tale of a spunky lady who doesn't let fear get in her way, even when she encounters two shoes walking by themselves in the woods at night or a scary pumpkin face yelling "Boo!" at her.

This enjoyable story builds and builds as the lady travels home in the dark, encountering noisy, animated objects—a pair of pants going "Wiggle, Wiggle" and two gloves going "Clap, Clap." This story handles well the subject of fear, is a delightful read-aloud experience, and is just right for Halloween time.

"Bear Feels Sick," by Karma Wilson, illustrated by Jane Chapman, is an adorable

tale of an achy, sniffly bear and the loving care his animal friends afford him to help him feel better. More than just a good book to have around during flu season, this story truly centers on compassion for others. This message of kindness is delivered nicely through simple language and endearing illustrations.

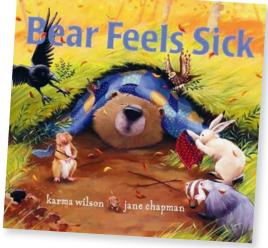
"I Am a Bunny," by Ole Risom, illustrated by Richard Scarry, is a classic board book that sweetly illustrates a bunny's experience with each season. Ideal for this time of year when the changing of seasons is perhaps most evident, this story beautifully portrays nature's annual rituals through the eyes of bunny Nicholas.

As colorful autumn leaves fall across the page, Nicholas simply says, "In the fall, I like to watch the leaves falling from the trees." "I Am a Bunny" is a picture book that can serve as a first book for the very young and enjoyed for years to come.

"Strega Nona's Harvest" by Tomie de-Paola celebrates the bounty of the season and the spirit of generosity through the familiar antics of its adorable title character, the Italian granny Strega Nona, who dePaola first introduced to readers in 1975. "Strega Nona's Harvest" follows the be-

loved grandmother and her assistants Bambolona and Big Anthony through the planting season to harvest time. When Big Anthony doesn't exactly follow Strega Nona's instructions, he finds himself harvesting more bounty than he bargained for.

At the end of the season, Big Anthony's garden produces more vegetables than he knows what to do with. Each night he secretly piles his harvest at Strega Nona's doorstep. Puzzled, Strega Nona goes to read this over and over again.



the village to find the source of the abundance. She learns there that her garden was the only successful one in the village and swiftly prepares a banquet and shares her good fortune with those in need.

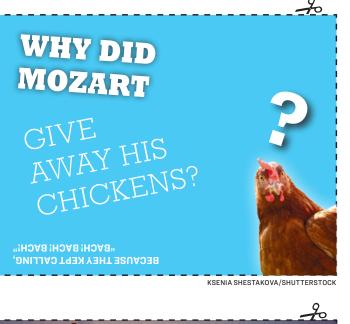
"Strega Nona's Harvest" is a delightful story that contains so many heartwarming elements; from respect for the seeds and the process of gardening and nature at large, to the diligent spirit of doing a good job, to the heart of generosity in sharing one's abundance.

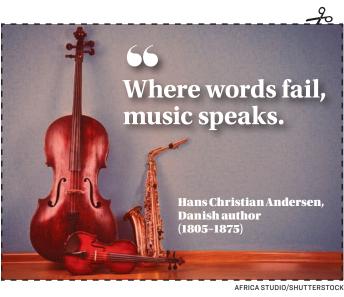
"Over the River and Through the Wood," by Lydia Maria Child, illustrated by Christopher Manson, is a lovely rendition of the classic Thanksgiving poem. It features woodcut pictures that tell the story of a horse-drawn sleigh carrying a family to grandfather's house for the holiday feast.

The illustrations beautifully portray the cold November weather, the anticipation of the trip, and the warmth of home and family upon arrival. Children will love to











# **IS PUBLISHED**

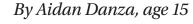
n Oct. 18, 1851, a novel called "The Whale" by American author Herman Melville was first published in London, then a month later in America. The now-famous tale of Captain Ahab and his pursuit of a giant whale was, at first, not very successful. In fact, Melville had to take on a second career to make ends meet.



It wasn't until the 1920s, three decades after Melville's death, that the novel was rediscovered and its popularity began to grown. The novel, under the name "Moby-Dick," is now considered an American classic.

The whale in this classic tale was named after a real albino sperm whale in Melville's era called Mocha Dick.





### THE MACPIE

There are more than 20 species of magpie, which are not limited to the usual black-and-white, but also include, in Asia, exotic shades of bright green and blue. Only two species, the black-billed and the yellow-billed, live in America. Both live only in the West, with the yellow-billed Mmgpie only inhabiting a small part of California. Both species are found mostly in open areas, including fields, suburbs, and

open woodlands. The Eurasian mai bie has been the subject of many a story, both fact and fiction, usually involving its reputation for thievery. An entire opera was written about it: "La Gazza Ladra," or "The Thieving Magpie," written by Gioachino Rossini. It tells the story of a servant girl who is accused of stealing silver and is sentenced to death. Luckily, before she is executed, the true thief is discovered to be a magpie, and the girl is freed.

In truth, however, it is difficult to know whether magpies actually steal things. There have been instances of magpies coveting shiny things. One

magpie stole (but later returned) a set of car keys from a mechanic's shop



# **ESCAPES!**

The Magpie is a bird

Supposedly, magpies steal all sorts of

trinkets that happen to catch their eye.

Beyond their criminal reputation, the

A close-up of magpie feathers.

patterns on them, resembling a

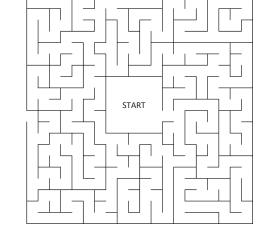
They have beautiful color

sheen of oil in water.

magpie is a most interesting bird.

most known for its

thieving.



**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:  $6 + (7 \times 3) + 1 = 28$  and  $1 + (7 \times 3) + 6 = 28$ 



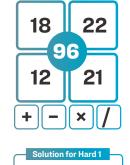
L-+8+8



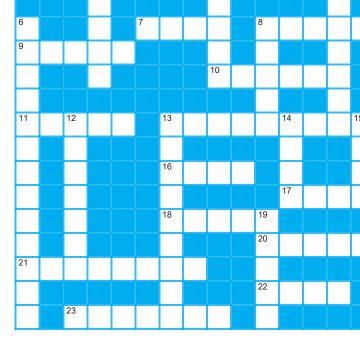
Solution for Medium 1

8 × (11 - G + G1)

(SS - 18) × SI + 1S







### 2 What 2 Jingle \_\_\_\_ (5) 4 Catchy songs (5)

Down

5 The highest part in a harmony (7)

Vocalist's musical support (13)

Luciano Pavarotti or Placido Domingo (5) 12 They used to be played on a phonograph (7)

13 Singing without instrument back-up (1,8)

14 Two people singing together (4)

15 Found on a staff (4)

19 Story told in song (5)

# One of the clefs (6)

Violin, cello, bass (7)

"Silent Night," e.g. (4)

9 Quartet member (5) 10 Series of musical movements (6)

Starts and Stripes (John Philip Sousa) (5)

16 One of the Saxophones (4) 17 Musical sound (4)

18 It has 88 keys (5) 20 Middle C is a reference \_\_\_\_ (5)

13 Squeeze box (9)

21 Band (8) 22 Music genre (4)

23 Cradlesong (7)







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independent research or research

having a professional background

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### Magazine Layout Designer

- Design and layout magazines and other print and digital products
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- To apply, send your résumé, a cover letter, portfolio, and three references to careers@epochtimes.com

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- 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 timehonored culinary traditions and recipes, from across the U.S. and around the world
- Requirement: two years
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   development experience is a plus.
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readers

- Create series of cartoons that amuse, educate, or entertain
- Develop ideas relevant to the U.S.—based on the content of Spector Of Communications and
- SpecterOfCommunism.org

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