

THE EPOCH TIMES

LIFE &

TRADITION

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Whether you're the parent of one child or seven, your life becomes a spectacle Barnum & Bailey once billed as 'The Greatest Show on Earth.'

Our Children Are Our Treasures

They enrich our lives here and now, but our society will also need them in the future

JEFF MINICK

That headline has two meanings. Most parents regard their children as treasures. They love them, care for them, and try to prepare them for adulthood.

When the kids are small, Mom and Dad change thousands of diapers, teach them how to walk, and tell them a hundred times, "Don't talk with food in your mouth."

Later, they help their adolescents with their schoolwork, play catch in the backyard, and counsel them on their educational and employment options as high school graduation approaches. Even after Mom and Dad send their young people into the world, the health and welfare of their grown children remain of paramount concern. The children leave home, but they never leave a parent's heart.

Continued on Page 2



As they grow, you grow. Their triumphs are your victories, their losses your sadness.

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Facing the elements and having fun as a family build bonds and camaraderie.

PARENTING MATTERS

Make Having Fun With Your Family a Priority

PARNELL DONAHUE

When our family lived in Wisconsin, we took advantage of February's cold weather by having a cookout on our pond. By Valentine's Day, the pond was topped with 15 to 20 inches of solid ice, so we had no fear of breaking through. We invited every family we knew and borrowed grills from some of our guests. Each year, we served 12 to 15 dozen hamburgers.

Most of our guests hadn't skated before, while some of the younger ones were accomplished skaters. Many of the adults just enjoyed the warm sun and watching the skaters perform. Our friends from the Philippines commented that the weather was very cold but that the party was the

best they had ever attended.

All in all, these were great times for everyone. What made them great? It wasn't the cold weather or the ice, not the food, it was the camaraderie of a group of people willing to face the elements and enjoy life.

Enjoying life and having fun is essential for both kids and adults. Fun, play, and enjoyment are the best teachers.

Childhood educator Maria Montessori said, "Play is the work of the child."

Playing outside on the grass, in the snow, or in the woods has been shown to help kids with ADHD control their emotions and temper their activity.

Continued on Page 2

Our Children Are Our Treasures

They enrich our lives here and now, but our society will also need them in the future

Continued from Page 1

But children are also treasure boxes for the rest of us.

When they come of age and enter the workforce, they're the ones whose wages help support society. Part of those earnings goes toward Social Security, assisting the elderly, the infirm, and retirees. A solid chunk of their income, taken in taxes, supports everything from the military to welfare for the indigent, from schools to police departments and fire brigades.

In addition, their financial investments in their homes, stocks and bonds, and all sorts of other endeavors keep the bloom on society. Their contributions to volunteer organizations help people of all races, creeds, and ages. Their creativity produces inventions and ideas that can benefit millions of people.

These contributions are clearly real and vital to a stable society. For years now, however, that treasure trove of children has dwindled away.

Birth Dearth

The replacement fertility rate for a population is 2.1 births per woman, barring immigration.

The online site Statista reports that many countries are far below this grid mark. In Taiwan, for example, which has the lowest fertility rate in the world, the number is 1.07. In nations such as Japan, Italy, Spain, and Hungary, the number of births has for years fallen far below replacement levels.

In 2019, China had a birth rate of 1.70 per woman, despite the government's attempts to increase the size of families. The Chinese Communist Party, which once strictly limited births, now fears the eventual collapse of their system because so few women want children.

In the United States, the number of births is less than 1.70, a rate that in 2020 fell by 4 percent to the lowest on record.

Explanations

Greater professional and educational opportunities for women account in part for these falling birth rates, both in the United States and abroad. The demands of earning a degree and pursuing a career have led many women to postpone childbirth, which means having fewer children.

Still others, women and men, cite the high cost of raising children as their reason to



Being a parent demands the skills of a counselor, banker, drill sergeant, and teacher.

postpone or avoid altogether bringing children into the world. In some countries—the United States is one of them—women and some men also take an ideological stance against childbirth, referencing concerns about population growth and the earth's limited resources. Other women—and I've known some of them—wanted children in their 30s, but either couldn't find the right man or waited too long to attempt pregnancy. Finally, there are those who simply don't want the responsibility involved in childrearing, preferring instead to enjoy the freedom to travel, spend time with friends, and do as they please without the interference of kids.

Certain of these arguments against having children carry some weight.

Raising children costs money, though not nearly as much as some claim. Children also eat up lots of time and energy. Meeting up on a whim with friends for a drink, exercising every evening at the gym, devoting yourself solely to your profession, or even getting a good night's sleep: Forget about it if you have a baby in the house. Your life is no longer your own. And once they become teenagers, you'll find yourself lying awake at midnight waiting for them to come home.

So Why Have Children at All?

Recently, I caught a mother of seven offspring with that very question: "So why have children?"

"Are you joking?" she said with a laugh. When I shook my head, her eyes widened. "Oh, wait, so this is a trick question, right?"

For her, the question was incomprehensi-

ble. Later, having thought about it, she told me, "Because having children is natural."

Had someone asked me that question 35 years ago, when my wife and I were expecting our first child, I doubt whether I could have answered that question either—at least, not right off the bat.

But now, as the father of four and the grandfather of 21, plus three in heaven, I can think of a myriad of ways children have enriched my life.

Life Under the Big Top

Beginning in 1960, Bill Keane created "The Family Circus," a cartoon strip that his son Jeff has continued.

That title alone explains the chief joys of having children.

Whether you're the parent of one child or seven, your life becomes a spectacle. Barnum & Bailey once billed as "The Greatest Show on Earth." You'll have all the drama, comedy, and commotion you could possibly imagine just raising and watching over your children, even after they've flown the coop. Kids will add more furrows to your brow than found in a cornfield, but will also install laugh lines around your eyes and mouth.

And yes, those boys and girls will cost you a bundle of money, days and nights wracked by worry and apprehension, and arguments galore. Parents spend huge swatches of time wondering whether they're raising the kids right, always second-guessing themselves.

But the connections! Whether those kids are natural offspring or adoptees—and believe me, I know—is irrelevant. Have

children, and you are in the depths of a relationship unlike any other. As they grow, you grow. Their triumphs are your victories, their losses your sadness. Your vocation demands you be a banker, a counselor, a teacher, a drill sergeant, and a buddy.

If you want to join a circus, have a baby.

A Game of Chance

No matter how hard you try, however, no matter that you try to do everything right, raising children is a risky business. That son you took to church every Sunday returns home from his first semester of college a disciple of Nietzsche. That daughter on whom you spent a small fortune of time and money for ballet lessons becomes addicted to opioids. The children reared as conservatives, or as liberals, switch their political allegiance and now scarcely speak to you.

Just as there are no guarantees in the stock market, there are none in raising children.

Let's Applaud the Parents

In my younger days, I frequently heard that "children are our greatest resource."

I believed that then, and I believe it now.

Whatever we may think about having our own children, the world needs good kids, bright, strong, and morally grounded. All of us can help make that a reality. When we see a mom struggling with three little ones in the checkout line of the grocery store, we might give them a smile and remember they are the ambassadors for our future. When we meet some well-behaved adolescents helping Dad pick out a birthday gift for their mother, we might pause and offer a compliment.

Parents need these signs and words of encouragement. They're doing a tough job, not just for themselves and their children, but for the rest of us as well.

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.

Finding the Teacher Within

Self-teaching offers path to educational freedom

SAM SORBO

I had been homeschooling my three children for several years already when I realized I was stuck. My firstborn was a dedicated entertainer. Clever, studious enough, and always engaged, Braeden was my homeschool test case and by all accounts a success. Mark one for the mom who began her journey filled with doubt and trepidation.

My second, Shane, was my mathematician. "Mommy, I want to do 30 pages of math today." "OK!" I'd oblige him, of course.

He completed his first-grade math workbook on Halloween of that year. Shane loved math, and I loved math enough to have been a sought-after calculus tutor in my college days. I had him covered.

From a young age, my daughter loved to draw. To empower her, I told her that if she was really interested in something, she should purpose to do it for at least 15 minutes each day, as a way of learning her craft. I knew she'd either dig in more and hone her skills or she'd discover early on that it wasn't really her calling. Octavia started doing two or three hours of art each day, even researching fine art and current artists to emulate. She was and is incredibly gifted in both her imagination and her expressive abilities.

So, as she turned 12, I hit my knees. I'm an entertainer and an engineer, but one thing I am certainly not is an artist!

"God, what am I supposed to do with this? I don't have her kind of talent. How can I homeschool that?"

I also started asking around for insight into how one leads budding artists into their talents, and someone suggested that artists typically take anatomy classes in order to learn better how to depict the human form. Eureka! Something concrete that I might do to further my child's studies, and something that fit my grade-school-engendered notions of education being simply about identifying and assigning the right teacher for the job.

I headed straight upstairs to Octavia's bedroom and found her, as per usual, at her desk, drawing. I related the idea I had just gleaned and asked her, "So, shall we find you an anatomy class?"

"Oh, Mom," she replied, somewhat amused by my naiveté. "Look." She opened one of her sketchbooks and showed me a double-page spread of drawings of a human knee, inside and out, in varying positions. She had already been doing her own research of human anatomy, having long before recognized that it would be key in improving her abilities. She was, I realized just then, self-teaching.

I was still in the old paradigm of teacher-imparts-knowledge and student-imbibes-pre-digested-information. Although I had been home educating already for a while, I was still simply homeschooling.

In this surprising twist, I realized that the ideal teacher for the child can be found within. Show a child where to find knowledge, encourage exploration, and foster a freedom mindset. Young children



Show a child where to find knowledge, encourage exploration, and foster a freedom mindset.

With parents as guides, children can develop their talents and interests.



need some guidance on what to learn, but ultimately their gifts are best discovered and developed from within. Once that fire is stoked, they can often determine their best path forward.

That doesn't mean abandoning the child to his own devices on every occasion. Some things are hard to learn but meaningful in the long run. My son Shane wanted to quit piano. I disallowed it, thankfully. Later, as a teen, he grew to love piano and asked me to find him a better piano teacher. He knew what he needed, to improve. And he loves it now. He said to me the other day how sad it made him when he learned a new friend had been allowed to quit piano previously.

Public school has captured the culture for decades. That implies not necessarily success, but a laziness in the population to hold it responsible. Take a moment to consider how the schools/administrators/educators know what they are doing: It's simply what they've been taught to do. While some students excel in the classroom setting and become valedictorians, many others get left behind—lost on their

own journeys.

A self-teaching paradigm would likely have served them far better at identifying their gifts and exploiting their full potential more effectively, expeditiously, and enjoyably. Seeking conformity for our offspring by sending them to school or even trying to emulate school at home is entirely counterproductive when, as a culture, we value individuality.

The traditional homeschool paradigm is also flawed, as it follows the flawed school structure. People who pursue public education at home have the highest burnout rate.

I learned a crucial lesson from my child that day, and it still took me some time to fully process it. Children are naturally curious. Forcing them to focus on something uninteresting for hours a day squanders their innate talent and potentially distracts them from what they truly love. Calling that disruption education ultimately discourages them from learning. We do our children a grave disservice by imposing conformity, in the way of school institutions, on their unique talents and abilities.

Self-teaching takes the tremendous onus off the parents by empowering them as guides, not lecturers. It offers students opportunities for self-determination and responsibility, as well as the freedom to learn at a desirable and satisfying pace. Let's work toward educational freedom for our children and their parents.

Sam Sorbo is an award-winning actress, author, and host of "School's Out With Sam Sorbo" on Epoch TV, who has home educated her three children for over a decade. Her books "They're YOUR Kids" (Reveille Press, 2017), "Teach from Love: A School Year Devotional for Families" (Broadstreet, 2019), and "Words for Warriors" (Humanix, 2021) are available at SamSorbo.com

PARENTING MATTERS

Make Having Fun With Your Family a Priority

Continued from Page 1

Every parent knows that being active is a great way to control weight. Fat tissue is to the body what gas tanks are to cars. The more miles you drive, the less gas will be in your tank; and the more active you are, the less fat will be on your body.

But many adults fear winter and think of it as a time to sit in rocking chairs by the fire and complain about the cold weather. Kids have a different outlook. In Wisconsin, we often saw kids come to school in T-shirts without jackets, and, I'm assuming, against their mother's advice.

You don't need a pond or ice skates to have fun in the winter. Fresh snow makes great snow angels! If it falls on a hill, you can ski or sled on it; you don't even need a sled, just grab a cardboard box and make your own toboggan. What could be more fun than building a snowman, a snow fort, or your very own igloo?

Our home in Brentwood has a large hill just behind our house. Every snowfall attracts the neighbor kids, many dads and moms, and a few dogs to the hill pulling sleds, toboggans, and cardboard sheets, knowing that by evening most of the snow will be melted. But that doesn't stop the fun.

Not all cities have snow-covered hills but ice rinks and indoor basketball courts are available in most places. And every day, winter or summer, is a great day for a nature hike.

In cold January as well as hot July, whitetail deer, wild turkeys, squirrels, and all kinds of birds are common in most of the states; my wife, Mary, and I once saw a bobcat prance past our house, and a few days later, a red fox visited our lot. Keep your eyes and ears open for these beautiful creatures whenever you are outside and every minute you spend outdoors will become a nature hike. If you're really lucky, you will have a set

of encyclopedias with lots of information about the native plants and animals you see on your walk. If not, a search online can be helpful. Best of all is a parent or someone ready to talk about the things you discovered. Nature hikes make learning fun.

For misguided reasons, many schools no longer provide recess.

There are many reasons why being active is more than just fun. That's why the American Academy of Pediatrics and the NFL have called on kids to be more active. NFL PLAY 60 is the league's national youth health and wellness campaign, which encourages kids to be physically active for at least 60 minutes a day. The NFL has provided more than 38 million children the resources they need to boost their activity levels by supporting programs in more than 73,000 schools and constructing more than 265 youth fitness zones nationwide. Reading the NFL 60 website with your kids (NFL.com/causes/play60/) will give you much-needed information.

Since kids spend much of their waking hours in the classroom, schools have a responsibility to promote physical activity and give kids a recess break. According to former Georgia State professor Olga Jarrett, "There is this assumption that if you keep kids working longer, they will learn more. It's misguided."

Jarrett explained that no research supports the notion that test scores go up by keeping children in the classroom longer, but there is plenty of evidence that recess benefits children in cognitive, social-

emotional, and physical ways. Research shows that children with recess have improved memory, more focused attention, and better leadership and negotiation skills, and are better at resolving conflict.

For misguided reasons, many schools no longer provide recess. If your kids' school does not, get your friends together and make a visit to the principal, the superintendent, and the school board. If they are unwilling to add recess, find a different school or homeschool! Parents must insist on taking the lead on what goes on in their kids' schools.

The NFL and schools solve this problem without the help of parents. It's up to parents to make sure their kids get time every day to play and get the exercise they need. And, like everything else, kids do what they see their parents do.

To paraphrase a common adage: The family that plays together stays together. Play can be the glue that holds families together. With parents as coaches and team leaders, kids learn respect for each other as well as for their parents. They also learn how to follow the rules of the game and the consequences of violating a simple rule.

It's also interesting that most things kids and adults love to do involve activity, for example,

Children learn through play, and games engage the whole family.



GRADYREES/GETTY IMAGES

Epoch Times Interviews Shen Yun Audiences

'There was power, there was beauty'

New York-based Shen Yun Performing Arts

is the world's premier classical Chinese dance and music company, established in 2006. Aiming for an artistic revival and celebration of China's rich cultural heritage, the company performs classical Chinese dance, ethnic and folk dance, and story-based dance, accompanied by orchestral and solo performers.



One section that impressed me the most is how freedom over there has been elusive to the majority of those people. And a lot of people in America do not realize just how fortunate they are to have the freedom we have here. And so I really have to applaud the production team for producing that segment.

LEWIS LAW, SR., communications specialist, U.S. Air Force, from Charleston, S.C.



I am so happy that in our nation we may see the rich heritage of the Chinese nation before communism.

JESSICA GRIFFIN, architectural designer, from Charleston, S.C.



As the song said ... tradition is good. And staying with the traditional sense of values and cultural norms that we have brings people together.

RICHARD MCDONALD, attorney, from San Jose, Calif.



I think the world is lacking in faith, and I think anything that brings people closer to the Creator, espouses goodness, and remembers the historical culture of where we came from, I think that's great.

ROBERT NICOSIA, finance manager, from New Brunswick, N.J.



It moved me. ... There was power, there was beauty.

JOHN VISHNESKI, conductor, and clarinetist in the Chicago Bar Association Symphony Orchestra, from Chicago



I've had a really hard lifestyle that comes from really hard training and hard work. So now that I'm older, I'm trying to find more peace in study. ... I learned a lot tonight, and I think it was really good for me to be here.

NICK DIAZ, UFC middleweight, from Modesto, Calif.



The stunned groom.



The bride walks down the aisle.



The bride and her father.



Chelsie Hill married Jay Bloomfield on Sept. 24 at the Hyatt Regency in Huntington Beach, Calif.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF @ASHABRILEY, VIA CHELSIE HILL

A Surprise Walk Down the Aisle

LOUISE BEVAN

A young woman who'd dreamed of walking down the aisle her whole life was left paralyzed in a car accident as a high school senior, throwing her future into uncertainty. Yet after meeting the man of her dreams, she summoned the strength to practice walking and surprised the groom by meeting him at the altar on her own two feet.

Chelsie Hill, 29, who hails from Los Angeles, married Jay Bloomfield, 34, on Sept. 24 at Hyatt Regency in Huntington Beach. "Jay had absolutely no idea that I was actually planning, our entire relationship, to walk down the aisle," Hill explained to The Epoch Times. "It's something that I had to hide from him for a very long time ... I had to train for it."

Hill, who is a professional dancer, community leader, content creator, and founder/CEO of a wheelchair dance company, was left paralyzed after leaving a senior high school party in 2010 with a driver who had been drinking. The car Hill was riding in hit a tree, head-on, at 35 miles per hour. The then-17-year-old lost all movement, feeling, and function below her level of injury and is considered a T10 paraplegic.

Hill's world was rocked after her accident, and the reality of her injury took time to sink in.

"I didn't really know what had happened to me when I was airlifted to the nearest trauma center," she recalled. "They performed a seven-and-a-half-hour back surgery on me and fixed my back. Then about two weeks later, the doctor came in and said, 'Do you have any questions for me?'"

"I said, 'Yeah, why can't I feel my legs?' and he said, 'Well, you have a spinal cord injury, and you're never going to walk again.'"

However, for the first year after her accident, Hill, who has been a dancer since the age of 3, found it hard to believe that she wouldn't be able to walk. She strongly felt that she was "going to be the miracle that gets up and walks again."

"I realized over that year that a spinal cord injury doesn't mean you break a bone, it

heals, and you go back to your normal life; a spinal cord injury is really a disability, and it can happen to anyone," Hill said.

Nevertheless, staying true to her dream to become a dancer, she founded a Rollettes, a Los Angeles-based wheelchair dance team that's committed to education, disability representation, and female empowerment. In 2014, Hill also began taking able-body dance classes at the top dance studios, learning to adapt the choreography to fit her wheelchair.

But since her injury, Hill wondered if she would fall in love again—until she met Bloomfield seven years ago while he was selling a product for which Hill was a spokesmodel. They locked eyes from across the room but didn't connect until six months later. As they kept in touch with each other, their love blossomed.

Bloomfield then proposed on Hill's 10-year "life day," a celebration of 10 years since her injury, with a touching video message.

"I was sobbing," Hill recalled. "He said, 'Your whole life since your injury, you always wondered, are you going to fall in love again? Are you going to be able to dance again? Are you going to be able to find your passion? Are you going to be able to run a company? All of the answers were 'Yes,' so now I'd like for you to turn around because I have a question for you.'"

Hill said yes to Bloomfield's proposal, and over a year later, the couple got married.

On her big day, Hill wore leg braces beneath her dress and held a walker decorated with white fabric to match her dress.

"When I got to the aisle, I got very nervous," Hill recalled. "I remember taking a deep breath ... standing there going, 'OK, this is it, this is the first moment of the rest of my life.'"

Bloomfield, who had no idea about the surprise, was shocked to see his bride walk toward him.

Hill recalls the struggle of walking on a wet carpet and a moment of exhaustion halfway down the aisle when she wanted to give up—until she saw Bloomfield's face.

In a film of the wedding produced by The Film Poets, Hill meets her groom at the altar and Bloomfield greets her with the words,

Hill recalls the struggle of walking on a wet carpet and a moment of exhaustion halfway down the aisle when she wanted to give up—until she saw Bloomfield's face.

6 MONTHS

"I trained with my personal trainer at a regular gym for about six months beforehand, to just get more comfortable when it comes to being in the upright position," Chelsie Hill told The Epoch Times.

RYAN MOFFATT

The principle of right thinking is an idea that is neither old nor new, but it's always relevant. It has been repurposed, resold, and refurbished for each generation.

British philosophical writer James Allen, regarded as the father of the modern self-help era, penned a remarkable treatise on the power of thought in 1903. His 50-page pocketbook, "As a Man Thinketh," is perhaps the most concise and poignant articulation of the effect of thought on circumstance.

There are hundreds of quotable lines in this small book, but the message can be summed up in its most quoted passage: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so shall he be." This serves as an allusion to Proverbs

"You blow me away, every single day."

With her surprise of walking down the aisle, Hill stunned the entire congregation. It was not only Bloomfield who was unaware of her plan; a lot of their friends and extended family had no idea either. Attendees would later tell Hill that other hotel guests came onto their balconies to watch as she walked down the aisle.

For the bride, the surprise was surely a labor of love.

"I trained with my personal trainer at a regular gym for about six months beforehand, to just get more comfortable when it comes to being in the upright position," she told The Epoch Times. "When I take steps, I don't know where my legs are; I can't feel them. So I had to practice not looking down the entire time."

The surprises that day didn't just end with Hill's walk. She stood for hers and Bloomfield's first dance; performed a special choreographed father-daughter dance with her dad, who has always been her rock; and even did a surprise performance for Jay.

Since marrying in September, the couple is now looking forward to starting a family. Hill says that Bloomfield is "going to be the most amazing father," and that she is "really excited to be a mom with a disability" as she, with Jay's support, will be able to give their children a different perspective on life.

In the meantime, she and Bloomfield love to travel—the U.S. is very accessible, she said, and imposes few physical limitations. Apart from traveling, Hill also loves to cook dinners, and the couple loves dancing in the kitchen.

"What I love most about Jay is he always reminds me to stop and smell the flowers," Hill reflected. "I also feel like Jay has the biggest heart I've ever met ... dating someone with a disability, it's just different. What I love about Jay is he never made me feel like I was different."

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23:7: "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he."

It's a profound statement on the nature of reality and the age-old question of whether we're the victims of circumstance or the creators of our own destiny.

This idea that the mind is of primary influence on the external world runs throughout Allen's work, a sentiment expressed in the passage, "A man's mind may be likened to a garden, which may be intelligently cultivated or allowed to run wild; but whether cultivated or neglected, it must, and will, bring forth."

Principle and Potential

The principle of mind over matter is agnostic and can be made to either serve us or impede us. While harmony with divine principles of thought and character yield abundant fruit, immorality thwarts us at every turn.

The modern self-help genre tends to overlook the importance of morality. It's largely technique-based, with a heavy emphasis

Mom Shares Final Moments With Husband Who Lost Cancer Battle

LOUISE BEVAN

Since her husband's cancer diagnosis, a grief-stricken mother of five has been sharing their journey as a way to make connections and navigate through their pain. Unfortunately, her husband lost his battle at the age of 42.

In a series of raw social media posts, she shares their final conversations, her heartbreak and healing, and what it means to her to be a widow in this world.

In the summer of 2020, Eric and his wife, Bethany Ashabranner, from Indiana, were in the happiest phase of their life, celebrating the upcoming summer and making plans for his retirement as an elementary school teacher. At that time, they were completely unaware that life was going to throw them a curveball.

In July 2020, doctors found a 28-centimeter (11-inch) cancerous mass in Eric's abdomen that had seemingly appeared overnight.

"We were surprised, shocked, and completely taken off guard," Bethany, 38, an elementary school teacher-turned-business coach and entrepreneur, told The Epoch Times.

The family was unaware of their path ahead and the daunting challenges that they were going to endure with chemotherapy, face surgery, and more.

"We did the only things we knew to do: we took deep breaths, fell to our knees in prayer and worship, and called upon our close circle of people for support," Bethany said.

Eric beat the disease by the end of the year, and Bethany marked their victory over the battle with cancer on an Instagram post, captioned, "Don't take one second for granted."

However, not long after, the family received the shocking news that cancer had returned. A large mass had grown and the cancer was more aggressive than before. Since Eric had to undergo treatments, Bethany had to care for their five children.

In May 2021, everything got much harder and the family dealt with more disappointing news.

"Never in my wildest imaginings did I ever anticipate conversations about hospice, bereavement, and comfort care as a wife at age 38," Bethany wrote on an Instagram post. "My sweet husband is shocked, bewildered, and in agony at the talk of death. So am I."

As Bethany was overwhelmed with sadness, anger, and grief, Eric's fight for his life continued and he longed to see his children.

As the end drew near, the couple began to talk about their deepest feelings and the reality of Eric's departure at a hospital in St. Louis. Bethany shared one of their most poignant conversations on Instagram.

"Do you feel like the end is near?" I asked. 'Yes,' he said. 'Do you feel right with God?' I asked. 'Yes,' he said. 'Are you scared?' I asked. 'Yes,' he said, but mostly of leaving you.

"How am I supposed to do this without you?" I asked.

"You can do anything, Bethany. And then, he put his hand on my arm. He looked at me. 'Bethany, I'm truly sorry. I never wanted to leave you. Not like this. Not ever,' he said.

"What is Jesus telling you?" I asked.

"He's telling me He has something wonderful ahead for you and for the kids,' he said. 'Something beyond. Something incredible. Something extraordinary. So don't be afraid.'"

Eric's words tempered Bethany's grief, a grief that extended to their children, three of whom are adopted.

Yet, through it all, Bethany thanked God, even as Eric was dying.

"I will never stop saying it: This is my greatest, deepest honor," she wrote. "To usher my husband while surrendering my broken heart to His good and perfect will. This is my cup, and I willingly accept it."

Eric lost his battle with cancer and died on June 10, 2021, in their living room. Eric wrote to his wife, telling his family he wanted them to remember him every time they saw a butterfly.

"That way, you can see me no matter where you go," he reasoned.

Both elementary school teachers at the time, Eric and Bethany met on a dating website in the summer of 2006 and mar-



In raw social media posts, Bethany Ashabranner shared many of her last conversations with her husband Eric (above).

Never in my wildest imaginings did I ever anticipate conversations about hospice, bereavement, and comfort care as a wife at age 38.

Bethany Ashabranner

ried one year later. They made their home in Fishers, Indiana.

Since losing Eric, Bethany has reimagined and redefined what it means to be a widow. Their children—Elika, 12, Johnathan, 11, Elijah, 9, Abigail, 5, and Lillian, 4—are encouraged to remember their father in many ways, and to trust in God.

"If you had asked me five years ago, I would have said Eric's death would pull me under and drown me," Bethany said. "And now he isn't here, and he has died, and I am raising my children as a single mama.

"But hear me loud and clear: I will not wear the widow label as a symbol of weak, poor, or ruined ... I am a widow and I bear the label proudly, because I know that I am part of a set-apart group of women who God has called to experience a type of agony that will, in turn, impact others in a way that otherwise would not have happened."

Speaking to The Epoch Times, Bethany claimed her social media posts touch on the challenges her family has faced since Eric was diagnosed, and how they have survived the pain of losing him.

"Our stubborn faith and our desire to use this story for massive impact are how we overcame," she said, adding, "Faith is the journey. It is our compass."



Eric and his wife, Bethany Ashabranner.



Eric with one of his daughters.



Eric and his wife, Bethany Ashabranner, with their five children.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF BETHANY ASHABRANNER



Bethany with all her children.

TIMELESS WISDOM FOR THE MODERN MAN

The Thinking Man's Path to Success

COOKIE STUDIO/SHUTTERSTOCK



James Allen likened a man's mind to a garden, which could be allowed to either run wild or be cultivated with care.

The principle of right thinking is an idea that is neither old nor new, but it's always relevant. It has been repurposed, resold, and refurbished for each generation.

British philosophical writer James Allen, regarded as the father of the modern self-help era, penned a remarkable treatise on the power of thought in 1903. His 50-page pocketbook, "As a Man Thinketh," is perhaps the most concise and poignant articulation of the effect of thought on circumstance.

There are hundreds of quotable lines in this small book, but the message can be summed up in its most quoted passage: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so shall he be." This serves as an allusion to Proverbs

on visualization and affirmation. But this approach undermines the essence of mental power, which at its core is about right thought. If we seek to manipulate the world to our will rather than live with noble purpose, we're limited to temporary loss and gain, never fulfilling our potential.

In contrast, Allen insists on moral living as a critical factor to sustainable success. His ideas are directly derived from Christian ethics and heavily emphasize virtue as the primary source of energy.

"Self-control is strength," he said. "Right thought is mastery. Calmness is power."

We must become the worthy inheritors of our fortune. If we attempt to shortcut the process of rectifying ourselves, we'll fall short, no matter how powerful our desires may be.

"The outer conditions of a person's life will always be found to be harmoniously related to his inner state. ... Men do not attract that which they want, but that which they are," Allen said.

If we seek to manipulate the world to our will rather than live with noble purpose, we're limited to temporary loss and gain, never fulfilling our potential.

A Hand in Destiny

"The perpetual creation of our lives is largely dependent upon the quality of our thoughts. We credit our good fortune to luck and effort, but we tend to blame fate and circumstance for our failings. If a man accepts the premise that the outer world is a reflection of the inner, he becomes the sole creator of his destiny. This is at once a source of comfort and unease. For although a man has the ability to change his circumstances, he alone must bear the burden of his failures.

"Man is buffeted by circumstances so long as he believes himself to be the creature of outside conditions, but when he realizes that he is a creative power, and that he may command the hidden soil and seeds of his being out of which circumstances grow, he then becomes the rightful master of himself," Allen said.

Any gain must come from loss. Whether through toil or austerity, achievement has its price.

"He who would accomplish little need

sacrifice little," Allen said. "He who would achieve much must sacrifice much. He who would attain highly must sacrifice greatly."

Lost in the mundane routines of everyday life, it's easy to lose sight of the critical importance of right thought. Many external forces are conspiring for our attention, and they don't have our best interests at heart. In today's age of information overload, it's even more necessary to be vigilant with the ideas and impressions that take residence in our minds.

The remarkable human capacity for logic and reason is our greatest attribute and when misused, our greatest adversary.

It takes effort and dedication to absolve ourselves of the thoughts that no longer serve us. But transformative change doesn't happen in a vacuum. The mind can only become a beautiful and powerful ally when we endow it with high and noble thoughts.

Ryan Moffatt is a tradesman, father, writer, and musician.

DEAR NEXT GENERATION:

Go Ask Your Mother!

→ Advice from our readers to our young people

Go Ask Your Mother!

My mom's pink and white pajamas fit me well. The soft material made me feel I was being surrounded by one of her hugs. Because she had lost a lot of weight, I inherited some of her barely worn clothes. Communication was muddled from my mother's pain and medications. My regrets grew as her health declined. Why hadn't I spent more time, asked questions, and learned more about her life?

My encouragement to young people is this: have an urgency in treating the elderly as fascinating, living history lessons. If you have a special interest or curiosity about a certain time period, war, or political action, find someone who experienced it. What were the activities of daily living like 60 or more years ago, and what hardships did they include? What reactions did they see when a war ended, man reached the moon, or other noteworthy events? How large was their childhood home, and how many people lived in it? What was their first job, and who was a mentor? Ask them how difficult it has been to adjust to a fast-changing world of technology.

If you don't have the blessing of older folks in your family, ask a church, senior center, or assisted living home for a recommendation. I've been surprised at the accuracy of memories and the honesty of feelings shared. Often, people will feel valued as you ask questions and show interest. Every aged person needs that. Perhaps an "oldie but goodie" can teach you a hands-on skill that not too many people have. There will always be something new to learn. And if it's from your own relative, you might learn about yourself!

—Susan L. Fink, Wisconsin

Please find below some examples of my advice that I drafted for my young son and daughter across the categories of character, opportunities, and risk. As I started drafting this advice, I simply kept writing and two years later had a manuscript that culminated into my publishing the book "8 Steps to Overcoming Everyday Adversity." The feedback I have received has compelled me to share the advice and book with a wider audience.

On Character

1. In competitive sports and life, use good judgment to know when you need to score versus providing an assist.
2. Being cheap is a character flaw. Always reciprocate when a friend gets the bill or pays your way. His act of the offer, or lack thereof, will say much about his character.
3. Sometime in your teenage years or early 20s, you will likely consider the option to serve in the military. Having never served (with some regret), my only advice is this (taken from a WSJ excerpt): Men like me



Ask your elders about their lives and their memories; they have much to teach.

“My regrets grew as her health declined. Why hadn't I spent more time, asked questions, and learned more about her life?”

Susan L. Fink, Wisconsin

“In competitive sports and life, use good judgment to know when you need to score versus providing an assist.” writes Chris Greco of Missouri.



who have never served often feel that we've missed out on an important part of life. We don't know what it's like to be young and very far away from home, vulnerable to instant personal extinction, but also part of the comradeship that such danger creates. In this sense, these men and women who have served (especially those serving multiple combat tours) [have accomplished] a far greater thing than I have ever done.

On Opportunity and Risk

1. To my son and daughter: The fact that you were born in this country, and that you have parents with a strong marriage, means that you will have more opportunities than you'll be able to handle. Compared to other children around the world, your life circumstances are to be envied. The problems you will face will be “first world” problems and are surmountable.
2. Leverage your failures or losses into learning AND motivational opportunities. Look back only to learn, rather than regret.
3. Take risks early. The younger you are, the more failures you can absorb.
4. Doubt is very expensive. You are much more capable than you think.

—Chris Greco, Missouri

Your article inspired me to send you a copy of what I have been teaching each of my six grandchildren from their birth. Probably all of these can be found in the book of Proverbs, but this is in today's language.

Granddad's 10 Rules to Live by and Best Advice

1. Be honest.
2. Be safe.
3. Never do anything stupid. Avoid stupid people, places, and things.
4. Have fun.
5. Be too smart to start! Never even once! No tobacco, no alcohol, no drugs, no tattoos, no profanity! Following this rule will keep you healthy and separate you from average people! No premarital sex will keep you pure.
6. Live for God, family, country.
7. Be thankful, be grateful, and be polite.
8. Anticipate the unexpected.
9. Think twice before speaking once.
10. Pay it forward. (It'll come back to you.)

Best Advice

1. Never, never, never quit.
2. Write down your life purpose and goals. Modify them when necessary.
3. In life, you will get a lot more nos than yeses. Shake off the nos and be grateful to God for the yeses, and take advantage of them.
4. Do something every day toward achieving your goals.
5. Learn something from every job or task you are given.
 - Girls: The No. 1 rule is never kiss a fool and never be fooled by a kiss!
 - Boys and girls: Never even date anyone who would not do to marry, because you never know who you might fall in love with.

—Jim Crawford, Maryland

I started my career in education teaching and coaching at the high school and college levels. When it became obvious that I

was working in a world of growing left-wing radicals and colleagues who were telling me how to vote to support the unions that I did not belong to, I decided to leave and enter a world of competitive capitalism. That world was commission-only independent sales. I chose the medical field for pursuing my new career. I am very fortunate to have made a very good living in this pursuit. Along the way, I attended many sales and medical procedural conferences to add to my knowledge of our products and how to successfully communicate our advantages to our client base doctors.

Along the way, our company started to conduct yearly seminars involving our doctors and their support personnel. We would choose attractive locations and invite our doctors to attend. We as salespeople were incentivized to encourage as many of our customers to attend, with a very generous bonus attached. I won those contests on a yearly basis, and after four years, the organization wanted to know what I did to convince so many doctors to accept my invitation. At the same time, many of my colleagues wondered out loud how it was that I was able to establish what seemed to be such strong relationships with my customers. This is the rest of the story.

I observed very early on how everyone in the business conducted themselves. I saw really sharp reps schmooze, wine and dine, hustle their way to business that I envied. But sooner or later, they were burnt out and were gone. I chose a different path. I worked honestly and diligently for years to establish myself as a trusted, loyal, dependable champion of my customer and their support staff. It was at this time that I started feeling comfortable accepting and inviting personal relationships to build, and found that as I did I became more and more secure in the volume of business I was producing. I was finally reaping my rewards that were next to impossible to lose.

The bottom line to my company and all the younger reps who wanted to know how or why I was successful in my relationship building:

“Always start to develop a professional relationship way before focusing on building a personal one. If done the other way around, you will fail like so many I observed in the many years I was employed. Now retired, I still have as some of my best friends those folks I once called on for business.”

A simple story of the tortoise and the hare. —Dan Berner, Minnesota

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

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

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

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



Orson Welles was only 24 when he directed and starred in “Citizen Kane.”

Wunderkind Orson Welles's Monumentally Epic Debut

MICHAEL CLARK

As “Citizen Kane” appears on countless critics' and filmmakers' all-time top 10 lists (many at No. 1), it wouldn't be going out on a limb to state that Orson Welles's 1941 debut feature is the most respected, if not the greatest, film of all time. While its popularity within movie industry circles is beyond worshipful, “Citizen Kane” was a box office flop and still remains a mystery to the majority of the movie-going public.

Although his acclaimed work in theater netted Welles numerous offers from Hollywood, he regularly demurred. It was only after the infamous 1939 “War of the Worlds” radio broadcast—which everyone listening believed to be an actual invasion from Mars—did the offers become impossible to resist.

Welles's RKO Deal Was Unprecedented RKO offered Welles a two-picture deal and (nearly unheard of at the time) complete artistic autonomy, including the ultra-rare “final cut.” Welles was 24 and had never acted in or directed a movie before. This was an unprecedented arrangement and not only ticked off the other major studios, but also dozens of jealous, seasoned filmmakers, who felt this “boy wonder” was being given unchecked carte blanche.

After a failed attempt at adapting Joseph Conrad's “Heart of Darkness,” Welles teamed with Herman J. Mankiewicz, who was working on a spec screenplay based on the career of publishing magnate (and his estranged friend) William Randolph Hearst, titled “American.”

After an extended back-and-forth, the final script was finished, yet for many reasons this writing partnership ended in acrimony. This relationship provided the basis for the brilliant 2020 film “Mank” and the acclaimed 1971 Pauline Kael essay “Raising Kane.”

Even after multiple denials by Welles, it was impossible not to see the overlap between the title character he played and Hearst. Both men were born into enormous wealth, oversaw the mining of ore, ran multiple daily newspapers, cheated on their wives, ran for political office, and witnessed the significant downsizing of their own respective fortunes.

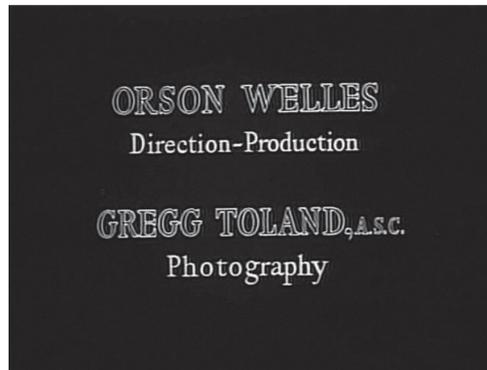


Orson Welles and Gregg Toland direct a scene in “Citizen Kane.”

Much has been said about the contribution of Gregg Toland's cinematography to the overall artistic success of the film.

The last credit of the film includes mention of Gregg Toland.

RKO RADIO PRODUCTIONS



Joseph Cotten (center R) appeared in three of Orson Welles's pictures in the early 1940s: “Citizen Kane,” “The Magnificent Ambersons,” and “Journey Into Fear.”

For those who have seen the film multiple times, it's highly recommended to seek out any home video edition that includes audio commentary by the late critic Roger Ebert. It is to the credit of Welles and editor Robert Wise that “Kane” is so impossibly well-constructed, allowing Ebert to break it down scene by scene and address every technical facet and special effect, while largely avoiding remarks on the plot.

Few people, beyond those familiar with Welles's stage work, are aware that many of the characters with major speaking parts were played by performers who were also making their feature debuts. Ray Collins, Agnes Moorehead, Everett Sloane, and William Alland had all appeared in previous Mercury Theatre plays—all overseen by Welles. Another Mercury alum, Joseph Cotten, would also work alongside Welles in two future masterpieces: “The Magnificent Ambersons” and “The Third Man.”

Toland's Cinematography Forever Altered Perceptions

Much has been said about the contribution of Gregg Toland's cinematography to the overall artistic success of the film, which can't be overstated. Toland didn't invent “deep focus” or depth of field, or ceiling, floor, and background lighting, but he was the first to do all of them at once in the same film. His uninterrupted shooting of many key scenes, particularly one early on where Kane's mother (Moorehead) signs away custody of her son, is mesmerizing.

Many times after completion of the film, Toland recalled that he wanted to work with Welles because the first-time director had no preconceived notions of the look going in. A frequent collaborator of John Ford, Toland had much to offer the greenhorn Welles, and their partnership was mutually beneficial. So grateful was Welles for Toland's contributions that he included both of their names on a single end-credit title card.

Also included in most home video releases is the 1940 trailer for the film, which seems in itself no big deal—trailers are regularly included as bonus features. But the one for “Kane” was indeed unique. At four minutes, it is nearly twice as long as most trailers, yet doesn't include a single frame from the film. Welles doesn't appear in it but does provide narration while introducing the actors and

extras as both their characters and as themselves. This de facto documentary short film shows that Welles acknowledged the commercial and promotional need for a trailer, yet his cheeky rejoinders and sarcastic asides indicate he would—to no one's surprise—approach it with knowing droll irreverence.

Hearst Almost Prevented the Film's Release

There are many people who have never seen the movie but are fully aware of the controversy that almost resulted in it never being seen and having its photonegative destroyed. After catching wind (via gossip columnist Louella Parsons) that the movie was “based” on his life, Hearst moved mountains to halt its release. While he wasn't entirely successful, Hearst greatly crippled advertising and exhibition for the movie and sent Welles's career into a tailspin from which it never fully recovered. The superb 1999 HBO movie “RKO 281” goes into great detail of this behind-the-scenes stand-off, as does the excellent 1996 PBS Oscar-nominated documentary “The Battle Over Citizen Kane.”

Is “Citizen Kane” the greatest movie of all time? As with all art, it's highly subjective. It sits at No. 5 on my own top 10, which is not so much a “greatest” but more of a “favorite” list. I've seen it well over two dozen times and always discover something different with each viewing. The fact that it is on so many critics' and filmmakers' lists does provide it an undeniable level of universal consensus.

There is something few could disagree with: “Citizen Kane” forever changed the way movies were made and interpreted. The fact that it is still relevant 80 years after its release further supports its importance and staying power.

The greatest movie ever? Maybe, maybe not. The most influential? Without a doubt, yes.

Originally from Washington, D.C., Michael Clark has written for over 30 local and national film industry media outlets and is ranked in the top 10 of the Atlanta media marketplace. He co-founded the Atlanta Film Critics Circle in 2017 and is a regular contributor to the Shannon Burke Show on FloridaManRadio.com. Since 1995, Mr. Clark has written over 4,000 movie reviews and film-related articles.



Be willing to learn alongside your child, and you will be fine, says Wilson.

Inspiration for the Homeschooling Journey

A conversation with veteran homeschool mom Durenda Wilson

BARBARA DANZA

Stepping out on the path of homeschooling can seem a daunting endeavor. Thank goodness for the many moms and dads who've gone before and who willingly share their wisdom.

Durenda Wilson is one such homeschooling mom. A mother of eight and grandmother of six, she homeschooled her children from the very beginning. Now she shares her insights through her book "The Four-Hour School Day: How You and Your Kids Can Thrive in the Homeschool Life," her weekly podcast, and her encouraging social media posts.

I asked Wilson about her homeschooling journey and for her advice for parents just getting started along theirs. Here's what she said.

The Epoch Times: What inspired you to homeschool your children?

Durenda Wilson: My husband and I often say it's because we are selfish. We didn't want to share our kids with someone else for that many hours per week.

We wanted to be able to create a life for our family that gave us the freedom to do the things that our kids were interested in and things we loved to do together. We wanted our kids to have a childhood. We wanted to provide opportunities for our kids to connect with a variety of people and develop healthy relationships with learning so they would become lifelong learners.

We also felt responsible to raise our kids with the value system that we believed was best for them and would truly prepare them to be healthy, productive, contributing adults. We knew these things simply couldn't happen if we sent our kids to school seven to eight hours a day, five days a week.

Twenty-six years later, I can honestly say that homeschooling was one of the single best and most important decisions we ever made.

The Epoch Times: What have you found to be the greatest benefits of homeschooling?

Ms. Wilson: One of the greatest benefits of homeschooling is having the freedom to give your kids the education that allows their gifts to be discovered and flourish. Instead of spending copious amounts of time on things they are not good at—a remedial approach—we can spend time homing in on what they are good at.

No two kids are exactly the same so the one-size-fits-all approach is essentially useless and ineffective. Each child is uniquely gifted and homeschooling gives us the opportunity to walk alongside them, help them see their value, and grow confidence in the fact that their lives have a meaningful purpose. They get to be challenged, but in a way that grows them rather than discourages them.

We need to think in terms of what's useful for our particular kids. Curriculum and learning approaches exist to serve us and our kids, not the other way around.

Durenda Wilson, author

Another great benefit is being able to have a strong, cohesive family life. Families in our culture are falling apart at the seams, and family is where kids are shaped for life. When we homeschool, we have the opportunity to grow deep, healthy family relationships that in turn, grow strong healthy, productive adults who impact our world for the good. We give them deep roots so we can also give them robust wings.

The Epoch Times: What have been your biggest homeschooling challenges?
Ms. Wilson: Me. I've sometimes been my

biggest obstacle, especially if I give in to comparisons or distractions.

Every homeschooling parent struggles with feeling inadequate at least some of the time. I don't have a college degree. I've never gone to college a day in my life. I'm not sorry about that. I think college is often a waste of time and money, but that's another conversation. However, sometimes I've wondered if I was giving them enough of what they really needed.

It turns out that the biggest thing my kids needed from me was to be present and available not just physically, but mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. They needed me to set the healthy boundaries that every kid needs, in other words, to be the parent. They needed me to provide a safe, secure home life with healthy daily rhythms, regular meals, and a predictable routine.

They didn't need me to be Wonder Woman. They didn't need me to know everything. They needed me to be willing to learn alongside them, to have confidence in their ability to learn, and to do so in the way that worked best for them. They needed me to ask lots of questions to encourage them to think for themselves. They didn't need me to be a helicopter homeschooling mom or to have their daily lives planned out to the minute by me. They needed me to be their biggest cheerleader and know when to offer guidance and when to let them learn things on their own.

We save ourselves a lot of unnecessary grief when we learn to be comfortable with the unique design of our own family.

The Epoch Times: You connect with so many homeschooling parents through your books, your podcast, and social media. What do you believe are the biggest mistakes new homeschooling parents tend to make?

Ms. Wilson: The first mistake parents make is thinking that "school" (the book part) has to take seven to eight hours a day. Homeschooling is efficient and effective so it takes way less time than most people think. I talk about this a lot in my book, "The Four-Hour School Day."

Another big mistake new homeschooling parents make is trying to do traditional school at home. One of the reasons we usually decide to homeschool is because that system wasn't working well for our kids. So why are we trying to copy it? I think, often, it's because it's all most of us know, and that's OK. We can take anything good from the traditional system and use it if it's actually working for our kids and us, but whatever isn't a good fit should be reconsidered.

We need to think in terms of what's useful for our particular kids. Curriculum and learning approaches exist to serve us and our kids, not the other way around. They are tools, and not all tools work well for all of us. I often say that homeschooling is an ongoing series of experiments. None of us ever feels like we've got it all



Durenda Wilson is the author of "The Four-Hour School Day: How You and Your Kids Can Thrive in the Homeschool Life."

figured out, but the key is to be teachable and really get to know our kids.

I would advise any new homeschooling parent to give yourself some time to connect with your kids, to watch them, and take notes on what you learn about them. Have lots of conversations. Learn as much as you can about them; use that information to help you decide what approach you are going to take.

Most of all, be willing to learn right alongside your kids, and trust me, you are going to be just fine!

The Epoch Times: What advice would you give the mom or dad reading this who is new to homeschooling, has just started this year, or is about to take the plunge?

Ms. Wilson: My advice would be not to overwhelm yourself with more information than you can thoughtfully and meaningfully apply. Don't make decisions out of fear. Take some time to challenge your ideas about education so you can be more intentional in your approach. Of course, I would recommend reading my book, "The Four-Hour School Day: How You and Your Kids Can Thrive in the Homeschool Life."

It has helped so many parents relax and find confidence in their homeschooling journey. These messages are reinforced on my podcast.

And for goodness' sake, enjoy your kids! Kids are awesome, and we can learn as much or more from them as they do from us!

The Epoch Times: What advice would you offer family members of homeschoolers? How can they best support their homeschooling relatives?

Ms. Wilson: The family members of homeschoolers can provide much-needed support by remembering that the responsibility of educating the children falls on the parents. Don't try to take over a role that doesn't belong to you because, at the end of the day, they are not your kids.

Work hard not to question every decision the parents are making. Parents make mistakes, and they need space to learn and grow as well.

Let them know that you support their decision by telling them often, and if you can, offer to help in ways that aren't meddling or pushy. An encouraged parent is always a better parent.



Wilson advises new homeschooling parents to take some time to have a lot of conversations with your children and learn as much about them as possible before deciding which approach to take.



FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES



My Friend

Anonymous

True and trustful, never doubting,
Is my young and handsome friend;
Always jolly,
Full of fun,
Bright eyes gleaming
Like the sun—
Never see him blue or pouting
From the day's break to its end.

Whether I am "flush" or "busted"
Makes no difference to him!

"Let's be gay, sir"—
He would say, sir—
"Won't have any
Other way, sir!"

Oh, he's never cross and crusted—
Light of heart and full of vim!

Often we go out together
For a ramble far and wide—
Catch the breezes
Fresh and strong
Down the mountain
Swept along—

For we never mind the weather
When we two are side by side.
But my friend is sometimes quiet,
And I've caught his clear brown eye
Gazing at me,
Mute, appealing—
Telling something,
Yet concealing.

Yes, he'd like to talk! Well, try it—
"Bow, wow, wow," and that's his cry!

WHAT WOULD YOU GET IF YOU CROSSED A COCKER SPANIEL, A POODLE, AND A ROOSTER?

A COCKER-POODLE-ROO



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK



What do dogs do on their day off? Can't lie around—that's their job.

GEORGE CARLIN (1937–2008), COMEDIAN

ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK

TATYANA VVC/SHUTTERSTOCK

A PRESIDENT FLIES



A Boeing 314 Clipper in flight.



President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the early 1930s.

What would hardly be considered a newsworthy event now, on Jan. 14, 1943, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt flew in an airplane on official business. This was the very first time a president had done so. Roosevelt traveled in a Boeing 314 Flying Boat known as the Dixie Clipper to meeting with UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill at Casablanca in North Africa to discuss the tenuous events of World War II. Round-trip, Roosevelt traveled 17,000 miles.

By Aidan Danza, age 15

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

SQUIRRELS

Squirrels are some of the most common mammals seen in suburban backyards, especially if you happen to have bird feeders. There are many species of squirrels, including the gray squirrel (the most common), the fox squirrel, and the American red squirrel.

You may be surprised to learn that the gray squirrel in the western United States is an entirely different squirrel than the one in the east, though they look very similar. The western gray squirrel doesn't inhabit the entire west, but only the coastal states, including Washington, Oregon, and California, while the eastern gray squirrel lives mostly east of the Mississippi River. Both squirrels can live in any type of forest, preferring one with walnut or oak trees that bear delicious nuts. Squirrels are opportunistic feeders,

meaning they will eat a wide range of foods present in their habitat. In the winter, they will cache food in many different hiding places, which they come back to in times of need. Of course, some of these foods are forgotten and they often grow into plants.

The eastern fox squirrel is common east of the Rockies, although it's absent in New England, some of Pennsylvania, and most of New Jersey. It's the largest tree squirrel in North America. Like the gray squirrel, it lives in trees and eats

nuts, and is quite similar in appearance, except it's bigger and has a rusty red tail and sides.

The red squirrel is a little different from the previous three squirrels. It's more slender, much smaller, and predominantly red. It prefers colder climates, inhabiting Canada, the northern United States, as well as the Appalachians and the Rockies. It also prefers to eat mushrooms, as well as seeds and nuts, and instead of caching in many locations, it keeps all its food in one centralized lair.

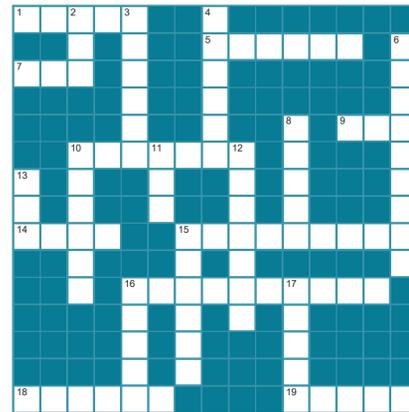
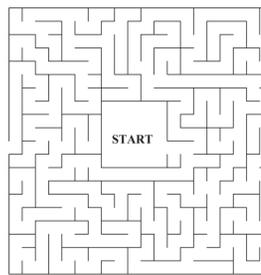


An eastern fox squirrel.

A gray squirrel.

A red squirrel.

AMAZING ESCAPES!



Down

- "Persian" pet (3)
- Cottontail (6)
- Tarantula (6)
- Pets with quills (9)
- Pocket pet (5)
- Llama's relative (6)
- "The quick brown _____" (3)
- Small porcine pet (7)
- Man's bet's friend (3)
- Animal that likes an exercise wheel (6)
- "Giddyup!" pet (5)
- Bedouin's pet (5)

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

Easy puzzle 1

5	7
2	7

39

+ - x ÷

Medium puzzle 1

11	19
11	16

22

+ - x ÷

Hard puzzle 1

3	35
1	16

10

+ - x ÷

Solution For Easy 1

2 × 9 - 2 = 1

Solution for Medium 1

11 - 11 × (91 - 61)

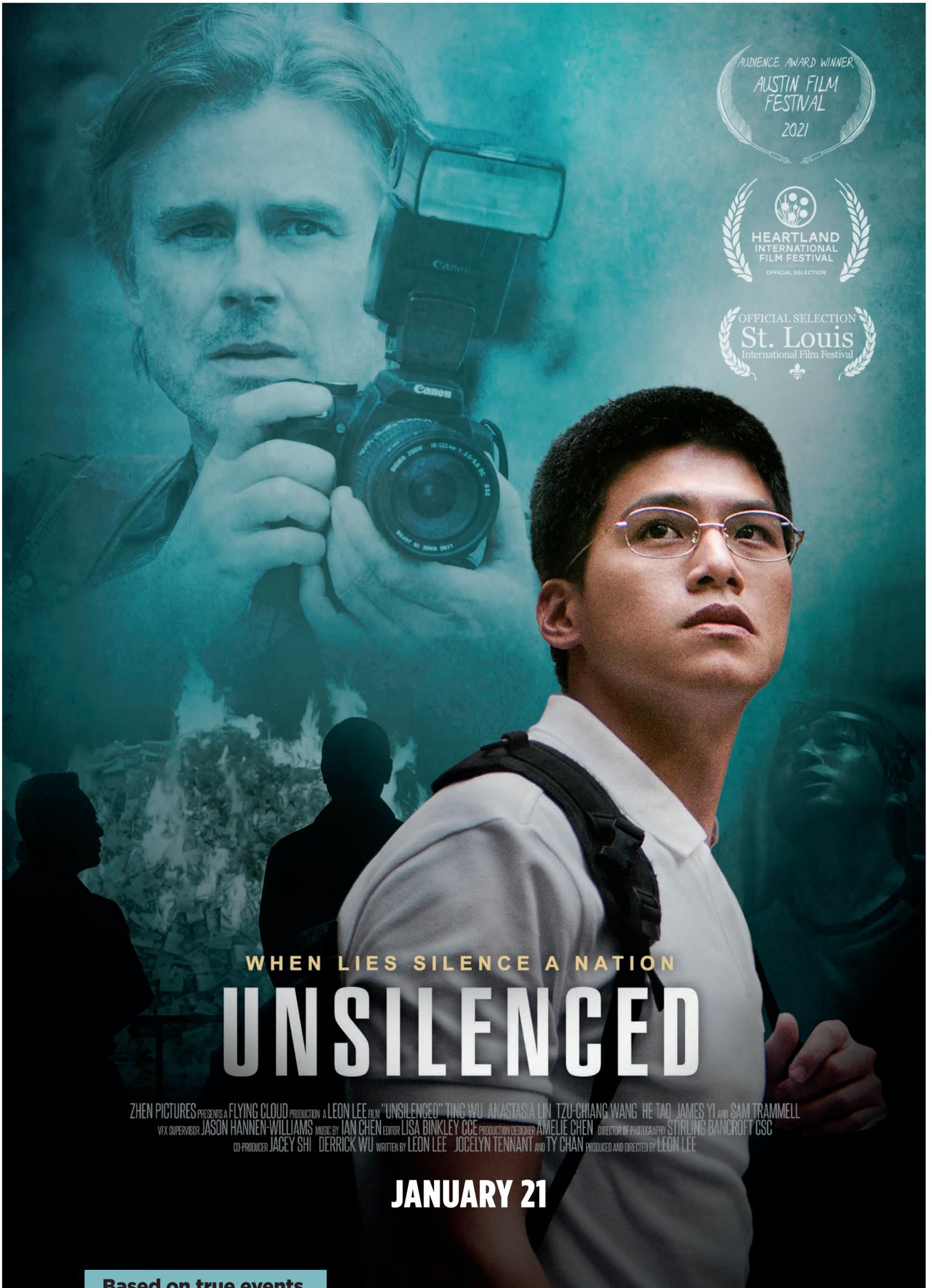
Solution for Hard 1

96 - 6 × (1 - 91)



Across

- Kind of fish (5)
- "Polly", maybe (6)
- The movie "Ben" is about this pet (3)
- Wilbur in "Charlotte's Web" (3)
- Pets in a glass box (7)
- A female pet may be a "Nanny" (4)
- Rodent often kept as a pet (6,3)
- Borrowed shell occupant (6,4)
- You might ride this pet (6)
- Andean animal (5)



WHEN LIES SILENCE A NATION

UNSILENCED

ZHEN PICTURES PRESENTS A FLYING CLOUD PRODUCTION A LEON LEE FILM "UNSILENCED" TING WU ANASTASIA LIN TZU-CHIANG WANG HE TAO JAMES YI AND SAM TRAMMELL
 VFX SUPERVISOR JASON HANNEN-WILLIAMS MUSIC BY IAN CHEN EDITOR LISA BINKLEY CCE PRODUCTION DESIGNER AMELIE CHEN DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY STIRLING BANCROFT CSC
 CO-PRODUCER JACEY SHI DERRICK WU WRITTEN BY LEON LEE JOCELYN TENNANT AND TY CHAN PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY LEON LEE

JANUARY 21

Based on true events.

When the Chinese Communist Party launches a brutal crackdown against 100 million citizens, a jaded American reporter and a team of innocent students risk everything to expose the deadly propaganda and fight for freedom.

Unsensored stars Sam Trammell (*True Blood*, *Homeland*) and Anastasia Lin (Miss World Canada) and is directed by Peabody Award-winning director Leon Lee (*Letter from Masanjia*, *The Bleeding Edge*).

IN SELECT THEATRES

- New York City: Village East by Angelika
- Somerdale, NJ (Philadelphia): Cinemark Cooper Towne Center
- Newark, DE: Cinemark Christiana
- Pittsburg, PA: Cinemark Robinson Township
- Fairfax, VA (D.C.): Cinemark Fairfax Corner 14
- Richmond, VA: The Byrd Theatre
- Newport News, VA (Norfolk): Cinemark City Center 12
- Raleigh, NC: Cinemark Raleigh Grande

For full theatre list and film trailer, visit
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