

THE EPOCH TIMES

LIFE &

TRADITION

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Behind the sometimes formal nature of manners is simply respect for those around us.

Rules of Civility

Some Advice From the Past and the Present

Paying attention to others in all sorts of ways—talking with them, laughing together, really listening—is surely the foundation of civility.

JEFF MINICK

Civility.

We don't hear that word much these days. My online dictionary defines it as "formal politeness and courtesy in behavior or speech." Come to think of it, we not only don't hear much about civility, but we also don't see much formal courtesy exhibited by most of our public figures or even by some of the people we encounter in everyday life.

Instead, "Do your own thing" and "Be yourself" seem the watchwords of our age.

Look, for instance, at our casual use of language. In some professional settings, we find ourselves addressed right off the bat by our first names. To the doctor or dentist we visit, we're "Bob" or "Sally," though most of us bestow on them the honorific of "doctor," which, unintentionally or not, places us in a subservient position.

Even worse is the frequent crudity of our words. Today's F-bombs dropped in casual conversation, public pronouncements, books, and rap music would have

shocked my mother and her friends. Or my father and his friends, for that matter. In my childhood and even later in high school, I never once remember hearing anyone using that word.

Other examples of incivility abound. We may not think of dress as a matter of civility, yet many people present themselves in public in ways that 60 years ago would have also induced in my mother and her friends a major meltdown. The plethora of tattoos, the purple hair, the pants drooping down the posterior, the pajamas worn on shopping trips to the grocery store, and the obscene T-shirts some wear: all send messages that we're a culture big on doing our own thing. Civility isn't a part of that equation.

At any rate, "formal politeness and courtesy in behavior or speech" seem at times missing in action. Yet, I wonder: In abandoning formality and politeness, are we possibly abolishing some element vital to our interior selves, or even to civilization itself?

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Easy, Quick Pick-Me-Ups to Brighten Your Day

A change in mindset can be simple to achieve

BARBARA DANZA

We all have those times when things don't go the way we had hoped, or we're just feeling down or low in energy for one reason or another. Moments like this don't necessarily have to last all day or define a longer period of time. Sometimes all it takes is a reframe, a change in mindset, or even some bodily movement to go from glum to gleaming.

Here are some ideas to try the next time you could use a pick-me-up.

Go for a Walk

It couldn't be simpler—just lace up those

shoes and head out the door and into the fresh air for a brief or lengthy walk. I'm continuously amazed at how great a simple walk feels mentally, physically, and spiritually. Making this activity a habit in your life will turn into a treasured practice.

Smile

Did you just roll your eyes at this suggestion? The next time you're in a bad mood or just can't seem to summon the enthusiasm to take on the day, head to the nearest mirror and smile big. Don't feel like it? Force yourself.

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PEOPLEIMAGES/GETTY IMAGES



Taking a simple walk or bike ride can do wonders for your mind.



WESTENDG/GETTY IMAGES
It's easy to go through life on automatic, but paying attention to people around us is rewarding to both giver and receiver.

Rules of Civility

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Manners

When we hear the words etiquette or manners, most of us probably think of rules taught in childhood: Don't chew your food with your mouth open, put your napkin in your lap, say please and thank you, and don't interrupt a conversation. These precepts when practiced are a sort of modicum of civilized behavior, signs of a proper upbringing.

Although this view of manners is all well and good, however, it constitutes just the surface meaning of civility, and for that matter, of personal dignity. We may know which fork to use for eating a salad or the correct way to introduce a friend to our grandfather, meanwhile treating others rudely or with contempt. In other words, we may know and practice the rules of etiquette but lack the fundamentals of civility.

Dignity

In his introduction to "Rules of Civility: 110 Precepts That Guided Our First President in War and Peace," Richard Brookhiser explains how George Washington as a boy developed a list of rules—some of them acquired from other writers—that would serve as his guide through life, at least in terms of his behavior. Many of these guidelines, like "Do not laugh too loud or too much at any public spectacle," are quite specific and aimed more at outward conduct than at moral principles.

Yet, as Brookhiser wisely describes these rules, "They seek to form the inner man (or boy) by shaping the outer. ... The effect of all the rules taken together is to remind you that you should not just do whatever feels right, or the first thing that comes into your head; rather, you should always be mindful of other people, and remember that they have sensibilities, and feelings

of self-respect, that deserve your respect."

This development of outer behavior working its way inward left its mark on Washington for the rest of his life. Though he at times displayed a fiery temper, most of Washington's contemporaries remarked on his composure and great sense of dignity. Brookhiser gives us this example of the effect he had on others: "When Washington had been president for seven years, a foreign diplomat's wife observed that he had 'perfect good breeding, & a correct knowledge of even the etiquette of a court,' though how he had acquired it, 'heaven only knows.'"

Washington had this persona because he had aimed at this impression of good breeding and etiquette his entire life. Given the impression he made on the other Founding Fathers, it's even likely that he became our first president in part because of his bearing and his taciturn dignity.

Civility

Washington's first rule introduces this principle of proper behavior: "Every action done in company ought to be done with some sign of respect to those that are present." His last rule, #110, reads as follows: "Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience."

Both rules lead us toward civility, the philosophy behind etiquette.

In "Choosing Civility: The Twenty-Five Rules of Considerate Conduct," Johns Hopkins professor P.M. Forni lists as his first rule, "Pay attention."

Here, I think, Forni not only hit the nail on the head, but drove it all the way home. In the whirlwind world in which we all live, paying attention to others seems a lost virtue. We drive through our days steering by routine and automatic pilot, sometimes scarcely seeing the store clerks, our fellow employees, and even our family members, intent as we are on the headlines on the internet, problems at work, or our dwindling bank account. Here is just one reminder from Forni of how we might pay greater attention to those around us:

"I am not just talking with a colleague but with this colleague, who told me several weeks ago that he was concerned about his

child's health and whom I have seen grow more and more preoccupied in the last few days. I will keep this in mind as we plan our next month's teamwork."

Paying attention to others in all sorts of ways—talking with them, laughing together, really listening—is surely the foundation of civility.

One Small Example

Years ago, a man I know described an encounter with another driver on an entrance ramp to an expressway. He pulled onto the ramp and found himself behind a driver who refused to accelerate above 45 miles per hour. He wasn't rude enough to beep his horn, but he did let loose a string of expletives, and as they reached the highway, he slammed his foot on the gas and sped past the other car. As he did so, he glanced over and in that car saw an older woman who looked very much like his mother. There, he paused in his story.

"And?" I asked him.

"And I felt like a jerk," he said, shamefacedly.

Which leads us back to Washington's last rule about that celestial fire called conscience.

The Sunshine of Civility

At the very end of "Choosing Civility," Forni writes: "What is civility if not a constant awareness that no human encounter is without consequence? What is it if not sharing with intention the best that is in us? Sharing it again and again, adding brightness to the day."

Heaven knows we need that brightness today.

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 nonfiction, "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.

The blessings of life are on full display to be appreciated, and the sense of belonging to one's family is enhanced by this simple ritual.

Nutrition

Meals prepared at home tend to be much healthier than the typical meals quickly purchased for convenience. The potential to involve each member of the family in the meal's preparation can reinforce lessons about good nutrition and flavorful cooking.

According to The Family Dinner Project, shared mealtime has been found to promote better health by lowering the risks of depression, obesity, and eating disorders while improving cardiovascular health and overall eating habits.

Rhythm

Sitting down together as a family regularly and consistently creates a comforting, dependable rhythm to life that everyone can look forward to and rely on. Knowing that your family members value spending time together is a wonderful gift for parents and children alike and strengthens family bonds. This regular activity becomes something to look forward to and acts as a signpost in the day or week.

Tradition

Further, family dinner together becomes a tradition that every member of the family values. The memories made around the dinner table may easily become some of the most treasured. The benefits of the practice may very well be passed on to future generations. So, if you're looking for something to quell anxieties, improve your family's health, and strengthen family bonds, simply sit down to dinner together.



The ritual of sitting down together for dinner creates deepened connections, and is a regular event to look forward to.

The Benefits of Family Dinner Together

BARBARA DANZA

One of the great tragedies of modern-day hustle culture is the loss of family dinners around the table. For many today, dinner is simply something you eat in the evening, whether on the go or in front of the television—and it's usually squeezed between work schedules, commutes, meetings, after-school activities, and homework. Sometimes it comes from a drive-through window or is reheated in the microwave, and rarely does it occur for each member of the family at the same time.

However, there are some families that have managed to prioritize eating dinner together, recognizing the many benefits of doing so. Even if schedules allow a sit-down dinner only once or twice each week, the value in making that happen consistently is worth considering.

Connection

Perhaps the most important reason to consider prioritizing family dinner together is the deepened connection it fosters among family members. When family mealtime becomes a habit, conversations flow and ideas and feelings are shared.

Setting aside distractions from the many obligations of life, along with the distraction of digital devices, while partaking in the experience of a simple meal together exemplifies where the proper priorities lie.

Sitting down together as a family regularly and consistently creates a comforting, dependable rhythm to life that everyone can look forward to and rely on.



VALERIO PARDI/SHUTTERSTOCK

WELL SAID

'Stars and the Soul'

by Henry Van Dyke

To Charles A. Young, astronomer

"Two things," the wise man said, "fill me with awe:

The starry heavens and the moral law,"
Nay, add another wonder to thy roll, —
The living marvel of the human soul!
Born in the dust and cradled in the dark,
It feels the fire of an immortal spark,
And learns to read, with patient, searching eyes,
The splendid secret of the unconscious skies.
For God thought Light before He spoke the word;
The darkness understood not, though it heard:
But man looks up to where the planets swim,
And thinks God's thoughts of glory after Him.
What knows the star that guides the sailor's way,
Or lights the lover's bower with liquid ray,
Of toil and passion, danger and distress,
Brave hope, true love, and utter faithfulness?
But human hearts that suffer good and ill,
And hold to virtue with a loyal will,
Adorn the law that rules our mortal strife
With star-surpassing victories of life.
So take our thanks, dear reader of the skies,
Devout astronomer, most humbly wise,
For lessons brighter than the stars can give,
And inward light that helps us all to live.
The world has brought the laurel-leaves to crown
The star-discoverer's name with high renown;
Accept the flower of love we lay with these
For influence sweeter than the Pleiades!

SHEN YUN PIPA VIRTUOSO



Liang Yu on Choosing Justice Through Art

CATHERINE YANG

Onstage, an emotional story set in mainland China was playing out through dance. A young couple who practiced the spiritual discipline Falun Dafa had just welcomed their first baby. It should have been a happy story, but soon the couple were kidnapped and tortured by regime authorities, and their newborn became an orphan.

As Liang, a virtuoso on the pipa, or the Chinese lute, sat in the orchestra pit, she would get chills as soon as the dance began.

"Because I myself had similar experiences," Liang said in a video posted on Shen Yun Performing Arts' new website, Shen Yun Creations.

"I had to watch my mom get arrested."

Persecuted for Their Faith

"I remember so clearly," Liang said. It was the fall of 1999, and she and her mother and some women in the neighborhood went to a local park to practice meditation together.

They were practicing Falun Dafa, a spiritual meditation discipline that teaches the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance, as well as five slow-moving exercises. In the early 1990s, Falun Dafa spread rapidly by word of mouth, attracting an estimated 70 million to 100 million practitioners in mainland China in less than a decade.

"At the time, they were doing the second exercise," Liang said. Then she saw something outside the park. "I saw a bunch of cars and vans coming closer, and the local security guards swarmed in on us. I was terrified. I remember tugging at my mom's elbow. I said, 'Mom, they're coming to arrest you!'"

"It all happened right in front of my eyes. Those people got closer and closer, and then they dragged them all away."

In 1999, Chinese Communist Party leader Jiang Zemin ordered the eradication of Falun Dafa, also known as Falun Gong. Almost overnight, practitioners began to be rounded up and illegally detained, sent to forced labor camps and reeducation centers, and tortured, many to death.

Because Liang was just a young child, the police made no move to arrest her.

Eventually, Liang's mother was released. But over the next two years, she was illegally imprisoned four times for her faith. As a person of faith living under the Party's regime, Liang's mother wanted her daughter to have a better future. Over the years, she encouraged Liang, a talented pipa virtuoso, to apply to ensembles.

As fate would have it, one major performing arts company founded in America specifically had need for highly skilled musicians of traditional Chinese instruments like the pipa.

"When I was studying in Beijing, my mom told me: 'I have good news! Shen Yun has accepted your application. You can go now,'" Liang said.

When her parents came to send her off at the airport, Liang knew she wouldn't see them again for a long time. They said little but exchanged much in those last looks and tearful moments.

"I felt like that one step might be like leaping into another world—a world apart. It was so hard to take that step, because some pieces in Shen Yun directly portray the persecution of Falun Gong," Liang said. For her, this was a reason to join the company—to use her talents to tell the world



SHEN YUN PERFORMING ARTS
Liang Yu, a virtuoso on the pipa, an ancient Chinese instrument.

the truth about the CCP's persecution of spiritual believers.

But this also put her family at some level of risk again.

"The CCP has countless ways to terrorize people and make their lives difficult, so I worried a lot for my parents' safety. I felt I might never see them again, unless the persecution ended and I could go back," Liang said.

In that moment, Liang drew from lessons from traditional Chinese culture.

"Many famous people in history, when they set off to do something, they never considered whether it would succeed or fail. They'd look at it from a moral perspective," she said.

"If it's morally justified, they'd take it on. If it's something that goes against their conscience or morals, even if it's full of advantages, they wouldn't do it. I always think of this when I think of the persecution."

“

Can you choose justice? Can you stand by your principles?

Liang Yu, pipa player

And, distressing as her experiences in China were, Liang says they deepened her understanding of her art and her ability to interpret music.

An Artist's Role

It was Liang's mother who paved the way for her to become a musician. One day, as a young child, her mother brought her to a musical instrument store and told her to take her pick.

Liang closed her eyes, spun around in circles, and stopped and pointed at the instrument in front of her. It was pear-shaped, and she decided this was it.

"I told my mom, 'That's the one. If you don't let me learn it, then I won't ever learn again,'" Liang said.

By middle school, she placed in national competitions, and her winning streak continued through high school and college.

At the time, music for Liang—as it is for many young professionals today—re-

olved around the world of competitions. It was like a sport.

"We'd compete for speed, strength, and difficulty," she said.

Since joining Shen Yun, her view has changed.

"Great art and great music shouldn't be judged by these standards alone. There's a saying, 'Mountains need not be high, but they are famous if immortals live there. Waters need not be deep, but they have spirit if dragons live there,'" Liang said. "Something is inspiring not because of its technique on the surface, but because of its heartfelt inner meaning.

"This is something I gradually realized only after joining Shen Yun," she said. When she used to play with a competitive mindset, she felt her music was restless.

"If I am restless, then whatever music I play will sound restless too. But if I can keep a calm and tranquil heart, then no matter how it's played, it will still sound pleasant."

Since joining the classical Chinese dance company, Liang has changed and matured as both an artist and a person. She attributes this to the atmosphere of traditional culture and the universal values of Shen Yun.

A Profound Mission

The company's tagline this year is one that many have called bold: "China before communism." The company's mission has been, since its inception, to revive 5,000 years of Chinese civilization, each year showing audiences through music and dance the beauty of what was once called the Celestial Empire. Ancient China was deeply spiritual, and for five millennia, it centered around the concept of harmony between heaven, earth, and humankind. Perhaps that undertaking has always been bold.

"I truly believe that Shen Yun is a unique group of artists," Liang said.

"Everything that Shen Yun does, Shen Yun's persistence, influence, and legacy, along with the stories Shen Yun is telling, are the essence of traditional Chinese culture. They're the most beautiful parts of the culture."

It's been an education for Liang as well; she has discovered many things about her heritage.

"In Shen Yun's dances, I have discovered many values from traditional culture: respect for the heavens and respect for the gods, compassion, integrity, respect, wisdom, trustworthiness, loyalty, filial piety, honesty, honor, courage," she said.

"These are the most basic values that people should have. Often, I feel that what Shen Yun expresses is like when you're faced with hardship under impossible circumstances, amid seemingly insurmountable difficulties, can you carry on?"

"Can you choose justice? Can you stand by your principles? The ancients have a saying, 'I desire to live, and I desire to be righteous.' When one cannot have both, one must 'forsake life for righteousness.'"

"My experiences growing up, and the experiences of Falun Gong practitioners, have shown me many examples of fighting for a just cause," she said. "Like Shen Yun's mission, like my mom's actions back then, these have all inspired me to stay steadfast in my faith, and to persevere in doing what's right."

In 2018, Liang and her family were able to be reunited in North America, but the CCP's persecution still continues.

After every performance, when the curtain goes up and Liang looks out at the audience, she remembers her reason for doing everything she does.

"No matter how much I have to suffer, no matter how much I have to endure, I would be willing to do it," she said. "I feel that everything is worth it."

The Epoch Times is a proud sponsor of Shen Yun Performing Arts. We have covered audience reactions since Shen Yun's inception in 2006.

Shen Yun's Upcoming Performances

New York City	New York	March 10-20
Sacramento	California	March 15-17
Portland	Oregon	March 18-20
Reno	Nevada	March 18-20
Worcester	Massachusetts	March 19
Houston	Texas	March 25-27

For additional performance dates, please visit ShenYun.com/tickets

Easy, Quick Pick-Me-Ups to Brighten Your Day

A change in mindset can be simple to achieve



Taking a small break can boost productivity.

VISIT ROOM/AMITHOCH SHUTTERSTOCK

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It's funny how a negative emotional state can make turning up the corners of your mouth challenging, but push through that and force a grin—bonus points if you giggle a bit. Keep smiling back at yourself until it becomes genuine. It's rather comical how well this works.

Record Gratitude

If things don't seem to be going your way, take pen to paper and begin to list everything that you can possibly think of that you're grateful for. You're reading this article, so perhaps you're thankful for your own literacy. Or perhaps you're grateful for the roof over your head, the abundance of food in your fridge, the friendly exchange you recently experi-

enced, the family you've been blessed with, or your freedom. When you set out to write as much as you can, you'll likely find that it's endless. And even if it's a struggle, there's always something to be thankful for.

Share a Hug

When you're feeling down, go find a loved one and offer a hug. Not only will you give them that warm, fuzzy feeling that any good hugger knows, but you'll reap health benefits. Hugs have been shown to reduce stress, boost immunity, and improve heart health. What's more, you'll share the benefits with someone else.

Clean Out a Drawer

Often the reason that we're feeling out of

sorts is because we're facing some level of chaos or uncertainty. It can be beneficial to step away from the issue at hand and tackle something that's sure to be an easy win, such as straightening a part of a room or cleaning out a drawer. The mental break can lead to inspiration, and the quick win can offer encouragement.

Take a Break

Sometimes when we're stressed, we confuse activity with productivity, which can be two different things entirely. What if you took a break, poured a cup of tea or lemonade, and just rested for a moment? It's OK to pause, breathe, and just be sometimes. In fact, it can boost your productivity and your state of mind.

DEAR JUNE *On Family and Relationships*

When a Family Wedding Invitation Is for the ‘Vaccinated Only’

Dear June,

This winter, we were invited to two family weddings. The invitations stated that “vaccinated only” are welcome to attend. The weddings were for a niece and a nephew on my husband’s side of the family, so they’re close family members, not distant cousins or long-lost relatives.

We asked if a negative COVID-19 test would be acceptable and that we would be willing to test in order to attend the weddings and wedding showers. We were told no and that only vaccinated guests may attend. The same thing happened to our Christmas plans in 2021. Emails went out stating that only fully vaccinated people could attend.

I’m really hurt about the situations that have occurred with close family members, and I’m not sure if I want to be a part of their lives at this point. I’ve read books about forgiveness and I still am angry. Can you tell me how I should proceed?

My husband spoke with his family about this, and he has stated that we aren’t vaccinated at this time because we have natural immunity. We have antibody tests that back up this claim, and the tests were taken within 90 days of the weddings.

Any suggestions? Advice? Thoughts? I’d love to hear them.

Disheartened Aunt

→ *Dear Disheartened Aunt,*

I understand your frustration. It doesn’t make sense to ignore the protection of natural immunity, and the addition of a negative COVID-19 test would probably make you the safest people at the wedding. But unfortunately, common sense and honest science don’t seem to be guiding people through this pandemic. Something else is.

I’ve been reflecting on what this something else is, and these reflections have helped me to find peace

and compassion amid what’s happening. I’ve heard what’s happening described as “mass psychosis,” and this is an apt description. This has been building for a while, with most people unaware, and it’s now exploding around us. But amid the pain and upheaval, we have a precious opportunity—an opportunity to awaken, and to exercise our constitutional rights to life and liberty.

So how should you proceed? I too have felt the pain, frustration, incredulity, and heartbreak. For me, it wasn’t so much close relations, but hearing stories of unvaccinated health care workers losing their jobs and a sad case of a COVID-recovered patient being denied an organ transplant because they didn’t want to be vaccinated.

I’ve also heard of parents being denied visitations with their children because they weren’t vaccinated, even though in some cases they, too, were

COVID-recovered. It seems to me that if all of the pandemic suffering could be added up, at least half would be man-made, and this is indeed a very sad state of affairs.

So on one level, our upset feelings are justified. But if we take a few steps back and look more deeply, I think those feelings naturally change. Here’s what I would suggest:

Step one, recognize and honor a grieving process. Being shunned by friends and family is a sort of betrayal, as the precious bonds we’ve nurtured all our lives are suddenly meaningless. As women, we pour a lot of ourselves into our relationships and draw strength from them, so to lose one leaves us with a wound.

The second step is to find our peace and strength again. You say you aren’t sure if you still want to be part of your family’s lives right now, so I would start by putting some distance. Take some time to focus on yourself. The process of finding strength is different for each of us, but can involve things such as diving deeper into spirituality, journaling, drawing closer to other friends and family, gardening, crafting, reading, volunteering, and renovating—whatever it is that brings you peace, joy, and distance from the situation.

The third step is to understand the feelings of those who hurt you. The fear that your niece and nephew have is real (even if it’s unjustified), and to live in fear is a great burden. And even if they don’t feel the burden at this time, it’s there shaping their lives. To be guided by fear instead of truth is certainly a sad state, and it ultimately won’t bring them joy or blessings. When we really see the suffering of others, our own suffering becomes much less, and love and forgiveness naturally follow.

*Sincerely,
June*



Do you have a family or relationship question for our advice columnist, Dear June? Send it to DearJune@EpochTimes.com or Attn: Dear June, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY, 10001

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



PUBLIC DOMAIN
Explorer Ernest Shackleton (1874–1922).

Real Men Wanted

ANNIE HOLMQUIST

Another wonder of technology was unveiled recently when marine archaeologists used undersea drones to locate and record the wreck of Ernest Shackleton’s ship, *Endurance*. Video footage shows a surprisingly well-preserved ship, its name still intact and clearly visible.

Digging up historical artifacts is always fascinating, particularly when those arti-

facts are tied to a thrilling event like Shackleton’s shipwreck and subsequent harrowing trek across miles of frozen Antarctica. But this discovery turns up more than just artifacts. It also brings reminders of the men involved with the event—a type of man that is quickly becoming extinct in our modern culture.

Following the discovery of the ship, I saw the clipping below, posted on social media. I was familiar with the little want ad that Shackleton had run when looking for comrades to accompany him on his expedition, but I looked at it more closely this time, pondering what a foreign concept each of these requirements is today, not only for men but for women also.

Think about how today’s young people would respond to this ad. The Q&A would probably shake out like this:

Hazardous journey? “No thanks,” many would say. “My apartment is pretty cozy, especially since I can work from home in my pajamas at a cushy job that only requires staring at a computer screen all day.”

Small wages? “I’d like a big salary, thank you! Something in the six-figure ballpark would work.” (Which, believe it or not, is what some students think the average American makes each year.)

Bitter cold? “Meh ... I prefer to do the beach circuit on my spring break, so ... no.”

Complete darkness? “Can’t skip that Vitamin D! I need it to fight COVID, after all. Besides, I get depressed enough in the winter with the shorter days—imagine what my depression levels would be if I had even more winter!”

Constant danger? “I mean, really? I hung out in my apartment for months in fear of getting COVID, and now when I do go out, I still wear my mask—just to make sure I don’t get that deadly virus.”

Safe return doubtful? “Whaaa? You mean there’s a chance I’ll die? Or I may come back maimed? No thanks! I’ll wait until artificial intelligence has figured out how to make us live forever before I take a risk like that!”

Honor and recognition? “Sure! I like that! In fact, I like honor and recognition so much that I have a room full of participation trophies—wouldn’t hurt to add a few more.”

This is all tongue-in-cheek, of course, but sadly, such cheekiness isn’t all that far off from reality.

Shackleton’s ship was named *Endurance*, which, according to Webster’s diction-

ary, is “the ability to withstand hardship or adversity” and especially “the ability to sustain a prolonged stressful effort or activity.” A good many of us have become soft in this decadent culture of ours. We’re unwilling to take even the risks that life naturally brings—in marriage, in family, in standing for truth—let alone the kind that Shackleton sought; and when difficulties do come, we take the easy way out in our jobs, in our families, in our friendships, and in our communities.

And that’s probably why many of us are also unhappy.

The good news is that times are changing, and the soft lifestyle we’ve grown accustomed to likely won’t be around much longer. How can that be good, you ask? Simple. Those hardships will force us into being more like the courageous, strong, and determined men that weathered the storm with Ernest Shackleton—and like those who crossed the ocean, fought a war for independence, and settled the West in the generations before the men of *Endurance*.

Men like that are still wanted.

Annie Holmquist is the editor of Intellectual Takeout and the online editor of Chronicles Magazine, both projects of the Charlemagne Institute. This article was originally published on Intellectual Takeout.

Driven by Faith, a Texas Family Grows

The Mills welcomed the three siblings they were fostering into their family

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF MICAH SCHMIDT/DOUBLE KNOT PHOTOGRAPHY VIA JAKE MILLS

LOUISE BEVAN

Driven by faith, a Texas couple with three biological children adopted three siblings out of foster care, growing from a family of five to a family of eight.

However, amid all the moments of the chaos of a six-child household, the Mills family home in Abilene, Texas, is filled to the rafters with love.

Siblings Xavier, 10, Marie, 9, and Cristian, 8, joined the family of five—consisting of parents Jake and Erin Mills and their three biological kids, Kennedy, 13, Joshua, 8, and Hannah, 6—after they were officially adopted on Dec. 23, 2021. The couple say they knew it was forever, even before they had met the siblings they fondly call “the trio.”

The Mills couple were still in the process of becoming licensed foster parents in the state of Texas when they got the call from their foster care agency.

“Their birth mother’s rights had just been terminated,” Jake explained to *The Epoch Times*, “and the agency knew it would be very difficult to find a family who would want to adopt a sibling group of three older kids. They thought we might be a good fit.”

Time was tight, but Jake, a missionary and pastor for 17 years, and Erin, a teacher, missionary, and stay-at-home mom, had time to pray and seek counsel from friends and mentors before making their life-changing decision.

Xavier, Marie, and Cristian had been in and out of foster homes their whole lives. Their birth father was absent, and their birth mother struggled with mental illness and drug addiction. She passed away from an overdose a few weeks after losing her parental rights in the summer of 2021.

Yet despite their trauma—memories of living in an RV with their birth mom, being left home alone for days at a time, having attended seven different schools, and numerous foster homes—the trio was “miraculously, remarkably healthy,” said Jake.

“We were committed to not causing more rejection in these precious kids’ lives, so we knew we would have to be fully committed before they ever heard we were interested in adopting them,” the couple explained. “Our agency organized a ‘respite care’ weekend where we took the kids, to give the other foster family a break. Honestly, we had already decided that God wanted us to adopt them by that time.”

As to Jake and Erin’s biological kids; Kennedy, Joshua, and Hannah, they were over the moon on hearing about the adoption. Joshua, in particular, was desperate for brothers.

“We’ve tried to raise them to live open-handed and share their lives with those in the greatest need,” said Jake, “so when we told them about the trio’s situation, they teared up and said, ‘We have to adopt them!’”

A couple of weeks later, the family broke the news to the trio that they had found their forever home. Erin, who herself was adopted as an infant into an amazing family, shared photos of the official adoption proceedings on Facebook, writing, “We feel unbelievably blessed ... children are a gift from the Lord, no matter the path they take to your home.”

All eight were very emotional on their day in court, said Jake, and it was a “big deal” for the happy trio to have their names changed to Mills. Next came the task of integrating the adopted siblings into their family home.

“Some of the most memorably amazing moments have been the things the kids have said throughout the process,” Jake explained to *The Epoch Times*. “When we told them we were going to adopt them, and explained what that meant, Xavier



The Mills family with Judge Paul Rotenberry.

cried and said, ‘I’m just so happy I don’t have to be a foster kid without a family anymore!’”

“On the day they moved in, at dinner when we were doing ‘highs and lows,’ Cristian said, ‘My high is that we came here, and it’s not for a week or a weekend; it’s forever. I’m proud that I was patient, because I’ve been really patient to come here!’”

Jake was equally touched with some of the first moments together, such as the first time Marie asked if she could sit on his lap during a movie, the first time each child said they loved their adoptive parents, and the first time they told him he was the “best dad ever.” However, he admits that adoption is “not all rainbows and cotton candy,” while grace abounds, there are many challenges, too.

Out of frustration or anger, the adopted siblings have lashed out with harsh words toward their new sisters and brother, have sometimes told lies, and have struggled to overcome the coping and survival mechanisms they’ve had their entire lives.

The Millses reasoned: “With a history of abuse behind them, you can imagine why they would default to doing everything in their power to avoid conflict and confrontation. These precious kids haven’t been in a family like ours before; it’s taken some time for them to get used to having rules and boundaries, even though they’ve never faltered in their desire to be in our family.”

The couple claims that the old adage is true: it takes a village. With immense support from their parents and their church, they have found routines that work for



(L-R): Marie, Xavier, Kennedy, Joshua, Cristian, and Hannah Mills.



“Our faith is what drives us to take this risk, and it’s what gives us the strength to see it through.”

Jake Mills

them, in which the input of the kids themselves—who all pitch in with chores—is integral.

With their shared Christian faith, the eight-strong Mills family also keeps God at the center of their home and all that they do. They read the Bible together every night, taking turns praying at dinner, and attend church on Sundays and Wednesdays.

Firm believers in what they call “connected parenting,” Jake and Erin work to build trust with all their kids, conceding that it’s “just a little easier with the kids that have been in your house their whole lives ... with the adopted ones, you have to work harder.”

One way in which the couple build trust is by taking turns to escort their three boys, or three girls, on a monthly outing to a favorite eatery for some crucial “one-on-one time.” It’s a chance to spend quality time listening and asking questions, Jake explained.

After having lived in three different places over 13 years—China, Wisconsin (where their interest in fostering was born), and Illinois—Erin and Jake moved back to Abilene in 2021. Jake serves on staff at Beltway Park Church, and Erin is Director of Engagement for Beltway’s Foster and Adoption Ministry, as well as a new ministry called Foster325.

They have fostered six children to date. After such a rich and rewarding experience, the Millses urge others to consider becoming foster parents. “Our world is full of kids that need homes, it’s a crisis of epic proportions,” they said, claiming their own journey into adoption would never have happened without God.

“Our faith is what drives us to take this risk, and it’s what gives us the strength to see it through,” Jake explained. “God is with us at every turn, good days and bad, when we succeed and when we fail, when we feel like experts and when we feel like utter amateurs.”

“We don’t expect God to lead us around the difficult times,” the father of six reflected; “we expect him to lead us through them, as a family, together.”

Share your stories with us at emg-inspired@epochtimes.com, and get your daily dose of inspiration by signing up for the Bright newsletter at TheEpochTimes.com/newsletter



(L-R, front) Cristian, Xavier, and Marie. (Back) Hannah and Kennedy.



The Mills received a great deal of support from their church and community.



A ceremony in Vaduz honors Liechtenstein's national holiday on Aug. 15, 2017.

MICHAEL ZANGHELLINI/LIECHTENSTEIN MARKETING

HISTORY

Russia Almost Sold Alaska to This Tiny European Country Instead of the US

The Liechtenstein family has ‘ruled’ the microstate of Liechtenstein since purchasing it more than 300 years ago. Its economy, however, is among the freest in the world.

LAWRENCE W. REED

What conclusions might you draw from the following statistics?

At about 1,000 people per square mile, the population densities of Haiti in the Caribbean and Burundi in Africa are virtually identical. Yet, Haiti's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is four times that of Burundi (\$1,100 vs. \$264). Still, both are among the very poorest nations in the world and, not coincidentally, they are among the least economically free.

This compares to density in the United States of 87 people per square mile and a per capita GDP that is a whopping 60 times bigger than Haiti's, at \$63,600. The U.S. economy is the 25th freest in the world.

Now consider two of Europe's so-called micro-states, tiny but sovereign countries that are considerably smaller in area than New York City.

Monaco, for example, is less than a square mile in size but both its population density (approximately 20,000 per square mile) and per capita GDP (\$174,000) are sky-high. Liechtenstein's population density (614 per square mile) is a fraction of Monaco's and even less than that of Burundi and Haiti but its per capita GDP beats Monaco's, at an astounding \$180,000, according to United Nations figures for 2020. Monaco and Liechtenstein are two of the world's freest and richest economies.

Meanwhile, on the subcontinent of Asia, Bangladesh packs in almost 3,000 people per square mile while producing an annual per capita GDP of just \$6,700. Only 40 countries rank below Bangladesh in economic freedom.

DEAR NEXT GENERATION

‘Seek to Improve’

→ Advice from our readers to our young people

Having read Dottie Gomez's “Mottos to Live by,” I felt the urge to contribute to the next generation the two mottos that have made my life into an adventure worth experiencing.

Several years ago, I adopted the motto “seek to improve.” These three words account for all of the successes that I've found in my personal relationships, as well as my ability to function efficiently in the world, and they've mainly provided a means to get

myself out of any difficult situation. For instance, I've been overweight and burdened by a lack of discipline where health was concerned, particularly related to diet and exercise, which I knew was important, but was seemingly unable to get into the habit of taking them seriously.

My motto of “seek to improve” has helped me get myself into a mindset of positivity related to functional discipline. For several years, I've engaged in healthy habits that have given my mind, body, and spirit a huge boost of self-esteem, physical ease, and radiant energy, which, for someone who's 74 years old, is a very rare and cherished gift.

The second motto was given to me, unknowingly, by one of my former yoga teachers. At the endpoint of a particular asana (yoga pose), she would say “any amount more,” so that one would give the movement an additional squeeze or push. I'm reminded of this during my daily yoga practice, and I feel it's a won-



A panoramic view in Liechtenstein.

KENNY VOOT/LIECHTENSTEIN MARKETING

derful addition to “seek to improve.” Both are positive affirmations that invite me to strive just a wee bit more—“any amount more,” as a matter of fact! I incorporate this in almost any challenging (or not challenging) situation. It's very helpful indeed.

I don't have a motto for staying out of debt, but if I could influence even one person to spend only to their income level and not exceed it, I would die happy. Debt is one of the

principality to have a beer in the garden of Vaduz Castle, the princely ancestral residence.” That smallness helps explain why Liechtenstein, the fourth-smallest country in Europe and nestled between Switzerland and Austria, produces wealth estimated at \$180,000 per person in a year—164 times more than the average Haitian and 682 times more than the average Burundian. Certainly, many less important factors are involved too—from weather to culture to proximity to wealthy neighbors.

Liechtenstein may be the only nation in the world whose entire population (presently 39,000) is invited annually to the same party.

Liechtenstein's relative economic freedom looms large in its success. Transplant a Haitian or Burundian to Liechtenstein and you'll likely find that person a decade later producing and earning far more than if he had stayed home. As we've seen time and time again, free people are far more productive and prosperous than unfree people. Private property, small government, low taxes, and entrepreneurship comprise a remarkably reliable formula for prosperity. Liechtenstein possesses all those factors in abundance; Haiti and Burundi do not.

Liechtenstein is the only country in Europe named after the family of its monarchy. The Liechtenstein family has “ruled” the country since it literally purchased it more than 300 years ago. It has an elected parliament and a written constitution.

This last surviving remnant of the old Holy Roman Empire is the world's largest producer of dentures, and Russia offered Alaska to Liechtenstein before the Czar sold it to Amer-

ica in 1867 (no kidding).

Alaska, incidentally, is about 11,000 times larger than Liechtenstein and 4,600 miles away. The principality had the money but decided to pass on the deal; otherwise, Alaskans might be speaking German today and sending their income taxes to Vaduz instead of Washington.

Here are some important things Liechtenstein has in its favor (drawn verbatim from the Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom):

- Flexibility and openness to global commerce
- Minimal barriers to trade and investment
- Straightforward, transparent, and streamlined regulatory system
- High levels of political and social stability
- Sound and transparent judicial system
- Secure property and contract rights
- A maximum personal income tax rate of just 8 percent (add in the retirement tax and local income taxes yields a maximum of less than 30 percent)
- A flat corporate income tax rate of only 12.5 percent
- Minimal non-tariff barriers (except in agriculture)
- A welcoming environment for foreign investment
- No restrictions on repatriation of profits or currency transfers

Additionally, gift and estate taxes in Liechtenstein are less than 1 percent for spouses and children and no higher than 27 percent for non-relatives (compared to rates as high as 40 percent in America).

Liechtenstein's economy is, by all accounts, among the freest in Europe and the world, while in the Heritage Foundation's Index, Haiti's ranks 145th and Burundi's lies close to the bottom at No. 172.

Liechtenstein's prosperity cannot be attributed to an abundance of natural resources because it simply does not possess much in that regard. But human capital is abundant in Liechtenstein because there is freedom to accumulate and develop it, invest in it, and put it to work however and wherever you want, with minimal political barriers (unlike Haiti and Burundi).

A very wise observation of the 18th-century French political philosopher Montesquieu sums all this up in a single sentence, “Countries are well cultivated, not as they are fertile, but as they are free.” That ought to be the first lesson taught to economics students everywhere.

For Additional Information:

“The Gorgeous European Microstate That Boasts One of the Best Tax Climates in the World” by Lawrence W. Reed

“The World's Oldest Republic Reveals the Secret to Peace and Prosperity” by Lawrence W. Reed

“What We Can Learn from Liechtenstein” by Titus Gebel

“Freedom and Prosperity in Liechtenstein: A Hoppean Analysis” by Andrew Young

“Liechtenstein: Europe's Last Absolute Monarchy” (video)

“Secrets of the Seven Smallest States of Europe” by Thomas Eccardt

“8 Things To Do In Liechtenstein” (video)

“Is Liechtenstein a Libertarian Utopia?” (video)

“How One of the Smallest Countries in the World Nearly Bought Alaska” by Calin Aneculaeaei

“13 Fascinating Little Facts About Liechtenstein” by Meg Van Huygen

Lawrence W. Reed is president emeritus of the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE), Humphreys family senior fellow, and Ron Manners global ambassador for liberty, having served for nearly 11 years as FEE's president (2008–2019). He is author of the 2020 book “Was Jesus a Socialist?” as well as “Real Heroes: Incredible True Stories of Courage, Character, and Conviction” and “Excuse Me, Professor: Challenging the Myths of Progressivism.” His website is LawrenceWReed.com. This article was originally published on FEE.org



WUNDERVISUALS/GETTY IMAGES

derful addition to “seek to improve.” Both are positive affirmations that invite me to strive just a wee bit more—“any amount more,” as a matter of fact! I incorporate this in almost any challenging (or not challenging) situation. It's very helpful indeed.

I don't have a motto for staying out of debt, but if I could influence even one person to spend only to their income level and not exceed it, I would die happy. Debt is one of the

top 10 destroyers of lives, right there under alcohol and gambling. I've been in debt such that it brought me to my knees. Fortunately, I was able to make it into retirement debt and mortgage-free, which makes every day stress free! Cut up those credit cards!

—Marilyn Clute, Arizona

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*

BOOK REVIEW

‘The Breakdown of Higher Education: How It Happened, the Damage It Does, & What Can Be Done’

How campuses have become hostile to learning

DUSTIN BASS

There's no doubt there's plenty wrong with higher education today. From the lack of free speech on campuses to far-left indoctrination to an abysmal ratio of conservative-to-liberal professors to the exemption of U.S. and military history in universities, one easily runs out of fingers when pointing out all of the things that have gone awry at the institutions created to better the next generation.

But how did it get this bad?

John M. Ellis, who has taught at the University of California–Santa Cruz for more than 50 years, has put together a book that identifies the moments when U.S. campuses for higher education became campuses for political activism.

“The Breakdown of Higher Education: How It Happened, the Damage It Does, & What Can Be Done” isn't a sobering book; it's a downright upsetting one. Sobering would be to identify a problem that's still in its early stages. This book is utterly upsetting because it places before the reader the fact that this problem has matured into a catastrophe: It truly is too late to make the necessary adjustments within universities to turn the ship around. The ship is aground!

Ellis breaks down how university administrators across the country—from the prestigious to the not-so-prestigious universities have acquiesced to the demands of radical students, whether in violent protests or shout-downs of guest speakers (typically conservative).

His argument isn't that there's a fear of the students, but rather that these administrators “have the same judgments and attitudes” as the students. Conservative faculty and staff who may feel an inkling to stand up against such actions are threatened with disciplinary action and are at times, as demonstrated in the book, intimidated to the point of resignation.

How It Got This Bad

The news media sometimes broaches the topics of universities (that is, students) out of control. Shouting at teachers, taking over classrooms, and outright radical foolishness that, as Ellis suggests, “we expect universities to remedy.”

However, the breakthrough into this breakdown didn't start with the turn of the 21st century. Ellis pinpoints a culmi-



SEAN DE BURCA/GETTY IMAGES

nation of three things that took place in the 1970s that have led America's intellectual pillars to the point of crumbling. Those three things are the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights movement, and the massive expansion of colleges and universities across the country.

The debate over U.S. involvement in Vietnam—or at least the extent to which the United States prolonged its involvement—is still debated. But the Civil Rights movement and the expansion of higher learning institutions are viewed (accurately) as positive moments. The unfortunate part of each of these three moments is that they swung the door wide open to allow radicals in, according to Ellis's book.

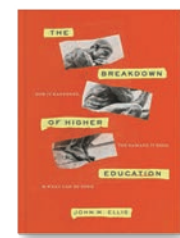
It wasn't enough to be against the war in Vietnam: One was encouraged (demanded by some radicals) to protest it, which primarily took place on college campuses. It brought about a strong anti-American sentiment that was ultimately taken out on weary soldiers coming home from the war.

The Civil Rights movement, for all its positive outcomes, provided far-left radicals and radical groups a way to engage students and plant the seeds of resentment against their own country. Despite the major steps that were taken in the quest for equality, radical ideologies proclaimed by Marxist teachers and intellectuals sought to undermine any actual progress made in race relations, continually reverting to and focusing on the negatives of the past.

Then there was the massive growth

Will this be the future of higher education?

The slow indoctrination has increased dramatically over the decades.



‘The Breakdown of Higher Education: How It Happened, the Damage It Does, & What Can Be Done’

Author
John M. Ellis

Publisher
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Pages
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of colleges and universities across the country, which created a vacuum of faculty and administrative staff. These professors, intellectuals, and radicals helped fill that vacuum. From there, students were slowly indoctrinated with Marxist thought, anti-American sentiment, and socialist tendencies.

That slow indoctrination has increased dramatically over the decades, as the ratio of liberal to conservative professors has become extremely lopsided. Ellis points out that the ratio went from nearly two to one in 1969 to five to one in 1999, to an astonishingly high eight to one in 2006, and now more than 12 to one.

The author makes it clear that faculty lounges and classrooms have become nothing more than echo chambers, respectively, for professors to bounce ideas off each other and for professors to force those ideas onto the students.

What Can Be Done

Ellis does provide a way for the United States to alleviate the problem. It isn't an easy solution. Universities are required by law to ensure that their campuses aren't used for political propaganda, specifically in the classroom. Administrators simply need to have their feet held to the fire to ensure that these instances no longer occur. Doing that would require the threat of legal ramifications coming from students, citizens, and elected officials.

Another method is one that seems rather obvious. Stop sending students to college, at least those students who are aiming toward a career that doesn't require a degree. Ellis notes that there has been a significant drop in students going to college. He senses that many Americans have awakened to the issues at hand and that the financial burden young people are saddled with has assisted in opening people's eyes.

A Must-Read for Parents of High School Students

America's higher learning institutions sadly must be bled in order to eliminate the poison that has infected them, and if that means bankrupting many institutions, then Ellis is on board. When it comes to citizens, I hardly think he's alone in that regard, although he may be one of the few believers who are in the faculty lounge.

Dustin Bass is the host of Epoch TV's “About the Book: A Show about New Books With the Authors Who Wrote Them.” He is an author and co-host of “The Sons of History” podcast.

BOOK REVIEW

Intellectual Vigor and Humility

An exposition of political thought and how to think

DUSTIN BASS

If one is to win an argument, one must be able to think clearly and sensibly. In many ways, it appears that this is why Glenn Ellmers wrote his new book, “The Soul of Politics: Harry V. Jaffa and the Fight for America.”

Yes, the book is about Harry Jaffa, and political philosopher of the mid- to late-20th century, but it's hardly a biography. The book does touch slightly on his personal life, but it's primarily an exposition on how Jaffa thought or how he came to think the way he did and how that thinking has influenced so many now.

Classical Philosophy Versus Modern Philosophy

Jaffa, along with his predecessor and teacher Leo Strauss, worked to bring back classical political philosophy to the forefront, where modern political philosophy had reigned for decades, if not centuries. Ellmers identified early in the book a significant moment in Jaffa's education when he ran across the Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas debates in a used bookstore. During this time, in 1946, he had been learning about the debate between Socrates and Thrasymachus and made a direct paral-

lel between the two debates, despite being separated by more than 2,000 years. It was this moment that truly connected the universality of classical political philosophy for Jaffa.

Jaffa was influenced by more than just Strauss, although he was the leading influence. The works of the Greek philosophers, Enlightenment philosophers, Lincoln, and even Winston Churchill greatly influenced the inner workings of Jaffa, and those political philosophers and philosophies are discussed thoroughly in the book.

Along with the works of those political philosophers, Ellmers draws from countless correspondences between Jaffa and other professors, as well as critics of Jaffa's writings. These letters show the many sides of Jaffa's personality and belief system, and it was a belief system that he had no issue adjusting over time. His adjustments, and in some cases complete changes in perspectives, are displayed by Ellmers through the comparisons of Jaffa's two great works: “Crisis of the House Divided” and “A New Birth of Freedom.”

The two works were published more than 40 years apart, therefore changes in perspectives shouldn't be surprising (at least for honest thinkers). Ellmers gives a very honest look at Jaffa who, although

strong-willed, was hardly too stubborn to change his views.

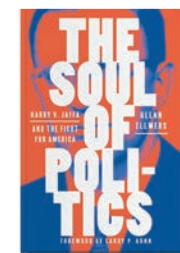
The Way to Think

In “The Soul of Politics,” the reader is shown how one should think. This isn't to say that one should be a Straussian, a Jaffaite, or even a conservative. However, it's to say that study, reflection, debate, and the humility to adjust beliefs and ideas when necessary are required to be a good thinker. Along with that humility is the need to be able to stand for one's beliefs and ideas, despite who or how many disagree or suggest an alternative.

Jaffa's necessary combativeness is a display of intellectual strength, and it's displayed in this book. As aforementioned, this book isn't a biography, but an exposition into a brilliant man's thought processes. Regarding biography, it can be used to help guide our own autobiography by understanding how best to think and utilize the method of intellectual combat to push back against political or philosophical opponents.

In a time of ideologies, this is a book worth reading. No doubt, there's a fight for America going on, and those interested in fighting for their country must first fight the battle for their own minds before getting onto the battlefield of thought. “The Soul of Politics” is a great place to start.

Dustin Bass is the host of Epoch TV's “About the Book: A Show about New Books With the Authors Who Wrote Them.” He is an author and co-host of “The Sons of History” podcast.



‘The Soul of Politics: Harry V. Jaffa and the Fight for America’

Author
Glenn Ellmers

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TOMSIKOVA TATYANA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Whether it's birdwatching or playing with Legos, there are various ways that kids can experience being "in the zone," where true learning happens.

HOMESCHOOL

Boost Motivation by Turning Homeschool Into an Artistic Endeavor

BARBARA DANZA

Marketing expert Seth Godin once made this observation about motivation: "If it's work, we try to figure out how to do less; if it's art, we try to figure out how to do more." This concept can be beautifully applied to many areas of life, including homeschool. In fact, if we think of much of the drudgery or busy work that we might associate with school—like comprehension questions, multiple-choice tests, watered-down textbook synopses of otherwise great literature—we can see that those things feel like work. The same (or better) learning objectives can be achieved with an approach that feels more like art.

When homeschool feels like art, the student is more engaged, their curiosity is sparked, their talents and skills are employed, and their motivation to dive deeper and go further arises, leading to true learning that lasts a lifetime.

Making your homeschool an artistic endeavor means more focus, more joy, and

more actual education. Here are a few simple and practical ways to make homeschool work more like art.

Choose Your Own Report

In school, a teacher may have students write out answers to "reading comprehension" questions to prove that they've read and understood, say, a book. In homeschool, it may be more enjoyable to have the student write a book report. To make it even more like art, however, why not share your objective with your child: "I want you to communicate what the book was about to the rest of the family so that we understand." Then allow them to choose the way in which they present that to you. They might paint a picture, create an infographic, record a song, create a video, or have their favorite stuffed animals reenact the main ideas of the plot. A medium of their choosing will motivate them to make it great and have fun while doing so.

Maintain a Scrapbook

As part of regular homeschool practice, maintain an ongoing scrapbook of the

things you've studied and places you've been. Not only will you create a treasured childhood keepsake, you'll encourage a creative way to summarize the education that's taking place.

On an even deeper level, it is only when we still our minds that we can hear the anxieties and fears of a loved one talking with us.

Travel Down the Rabbit Hole

While curriculum and structure can be helpful in homeschool, so too can loosening the reins and allowing ample time to explore and tinker with different areas of genuine interest. A luxury homeschoolers can uniquely enjoy is the freedom to dive

deep into topics that a student genuinely wishes to explore. Whether that's birdwatching or oil painting, cars or calligraphy, Legos or ballet, the ability to take the time and space to understand and even master a concept or skill is priceless. It's in doing so that time stands still and the student can experience being "in the zone." It feels very much like art, and it's where true learning and development happen.

Create an Art Gallery

Encourage creativity by displaying creations prominently and keeping art supplies of all kinds within reach. The impetus to doodle while listening to a story read aloud, the inspiration to trace and label a map of newly discovered places, and the wish to dabble in watercolors, pastels, clay, or other media can all be encouraged and supported fully in homeschool. A willingness on the part of the parent to toss aside plans to make way for such inspiration to bloom is key. Though so many adults lose sight of it, everyone has an artist inside waiting to come out.

Encourage Play

Hold on to the importance of play even as your kids get older. Incorporating games into your homeschool is a simple way to do that and enhances the creative mind. What's more, you can get everyone outside to engage in a sport or simple game of, say, kickball just for fun. Younger children will need little encouragement to play and should be given the space and opportunity needed to do so daily. A key element to fostering a sense of free, creative play that engages the mind and imagination is reducing the amount of time spent on screens as much as possible.

Incorporate Journaling

Rather than fully prescribed writing assignments at all times, ensure that your children are free to write and doodle whatever they wish regularly. One way to do this is to encourage regular engagement with a personal journal. Encourage kids to make it all their own and allow them to put whatever they want in there. Stickers, fun pens, and other art supplies can further encourage creativity and engagement. Establishing the habit of journaling is something that can be of benefit for a lifetime.

Let Freedom Ring

Ultimately, when your children display the motivation to create or to dive deep, let them. Remember why you've chosen this path and maintain the wisdom to recognize the educational benefits of tinkering, exploring, playing, doodling, making, creating, and sometimes what looks like goofing around. You'll continually grow in wisdom about where to draw the line between fostering helpful structure and personal responsibility while allowing the freedom to let that beautiful spirit inside your child to dream, dawdle, think, and become.

Reading, Writing, and Listening

PENELOPE BURR

Speaking well seems to far outweigh listening well in our culture. Perhaps if we weren't so intent on "being heard" and if we all practiced better listening skills, we might find more cordial conversations, and people jump to conclusions less.

There's a multitude of categories for types of listening, including active listening, therapeutic listening, deep listening, full listening, critical listening—and the list goes on. Some schools place value on teaching listening skills, including business and health care programs.

Of note, in a 2017 article in the Harvard Business Review, "Making Time to Listen to Your Patients," Dr. Rana Awdish and Dr. Leonard Berry advocate for communications curriculum to be taught to clinical and non-clinical staff in health care organizations.

"Actively listening to patients conveys respect for their self-knowledge and builds trust." The authors wrote. "We must listen generously so that we nurture authentic, bidirectional relationships that give clinicians and patients a sense of mutual purpose." Most of us have felt at one time or another that health care practitioners have failed to listen to our needs and concerns. I can say this unequivocally, as I've been on both sides of the fence—as a patient and as a nurse—and have failed miserably at times as a palliative nurse. Part of my role in the ICU was to provide emotional support, and that takes time and patience. Sometimes in a hurry, knowing I had four or five more families to see, I would obtain whatever piecemeal information that I needed and move on. Shame on me.

Those practitioners who do actively listen to patients and families generate the highest regard and favor in their practices. People appreciate being heard.

Social Situations

How are these listening skills translated into social situations or personal relationships with friends? Have you ever been to a gathering and heard a conversation that goes something like this:

First speaker: "We're tired this evening. My family just got back from a trip to Washington, D.C."

Second speaker: "Oh, we took our children there when they were in fifth and sixth grades. Wonderful experience!"

First speaker: "Where did you visit?"

Second speaker: "Of course, the mall area, including the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial..."

Look how the focus shifted. Who's the better listener? Instead of asking any probing questions, the second speaker immediately jumps to his or her own experience. It happens all the time. Maybe saying, "What interested you the most?" would have allowed the first speaker to share some thoughts.

Listening well takes practice—a lot of practice, in fact. Compare it to playing tennis. There are many times on the court when you know you should "follow the ball" or "move your feet," but instead the body just doesn't budge. You know intellectually that you should "go to the net," but instead begin backing up.

find out more about what our friend was trying to convey.

Being Present

Then there may be a time when words become meaningless and empty verbiage takes over. Sitting with a friend whose spouse is in the hospital may mean just being at his side and listening to him pour out his grief and fear about his wife's impending death. Offering a tissue or a cup of water or coffee may be the best response. In these circumstances, one's presence is perhaps the best form of listening.

Many years ago, I was sitting with a woman in the hospital whose husband had just died about an hour prior. As a hospice nurse, I had visited her for several days. Her husband had been unresponsive for two or three days, then died on their 50th wedding anniversary day. We were holding hands and she said, "Everyone keeps saying how sad that he died on our anniversary, but I am happy. I knew he wanted to make it to that day, then let go."

I was thankful that she shared this thought and affirmed what she said. If I had gone to her and not listened, this conversation wouldn't have occurred. I might have been asking, "Do you need a chaplain? Should we call the funeral home?" These are important questions that need to be asked, but sometimes just being present opens doors that we never expect.

Good Listening

On an even deeper level, it's only when we still our minds that we can hear the anxieties and fears of a loved one talking with us. By focusing on their need, we can forget our own—at least for a moment. My husband and I each recently confessed that we're sometimes guilty of "hearing but not listening." If he has that blank stare or I'm looking at my phone, then there's no real listening going on.

To reiterate one point: Good listening is a goal. We trip, fall, and fumble more frequently



10000HOURS/GETTY IMAGES

Through truly listening to others, we grow in compassion.

than not. Impatient to complete another's sentence or move on to another topic, we interrupt (guiltily), thinking that we know what the other person is about to say.

Listening is a taught skill. Our schools teach reading and composition. They focus on oral presentations. Our media is talk, talk, talk. There are some excellent interviewers who do probe and listen, and I'm grateful for them.

Years ago, a common philosophy about listening was that "children should be seen and not heard," along with "be quiet and listen." A great deal of progress has been made by altering the teacher talks/student listens model to variations that allow student participation and engagement. Parents and teachers can enable children to become active listeners, ask thoughtful questions, and learn empathy. Even role-playing with children can teach them to take an interest in others.

Indeed, every person wants to be heard when conveying an experience, feeling, goal, or dream. No one wants to play the role of good listener all of the time and never be heard. There can be no "we" without an "I" and "I." When we do take time to listen, it allows us to learn what someone else is truly trying to express. We then grow by learning about someone else's experience, especially when it's different from our own and offer a compassionate response.

Penelope Burr resides with her husband in Jacksonville, Florida. A lifelong seeker, she finds fulfillment through church, family, friends, and tennis.



FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

By William Butler Yeats

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.



MICHAEL FELMEY/GETTY IMAGES



HOW CAN YOU TELL AN IRISHMAN IS HAVING A GOOD TIME?

ANDREY ABOLIN/SHUTTERSTOCK



DULEBENETS/SHUTTERSTOCK

Life is like a cup of tea; it's all in how you make it

IRISH PROVERB



THE BIRTH OF BACH



Bach's seal (center), used throughout his Leipzig years.

On March 21, 1685 (in the old Julian calendar), the great German composer Johann Sebastian Bach was born. Bach had seven siblings and grew up in a family of musicians. He became one of the most famous composers of all time during the late Baroque period. You'd likely recognize some of his best-known works, such as the Brandenburg Concertos, "Air on the G String" from Ochestral Suite No. 3 in D major, and "Sheep May Safely Graze," among many others.



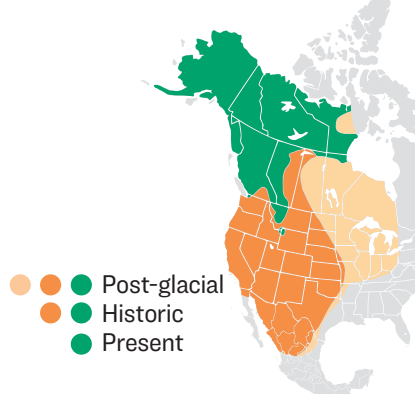
SINUSWELLE/SHUTTERSTOCK

By Aidan Danza, age 15

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

THE LIFE OF A GRIZZLY BEAR

The grizzly bear has an interesting life from the very moment a baby bear comes into the world, because its mother is asleep, or half-asleep, at the time of the cubs' winter birth. Grizzly bears are born deaf, blind, hairless, and absolutely helpless in the cave.



DE WILDCOURT/REUTERS

Post-glacial
Historic
Present



Female bears teach their cubs all that they need to know to survive.

The female grizzly bear cares for her young for two years, teaching them all that they need to know to be an adult bear: how to hunt and gather food, how to climb, and so on. Importantly, she also protects them from larger bears. Bears are solitary animals as adults, and they will behave with aggression toward any other bear if they happen to have a grievance over food or anything else.

The mother knows, and teaches her cubs, that nearly anything is edible for a bear. They eat fruits, nuts, berries, grasses, roots, mosses, and bulbs, and small animals such as insects and rodents. Grizzlies are also perfectly capable of taking down large ruminant animals, such as moose, elk, and cattle, and are

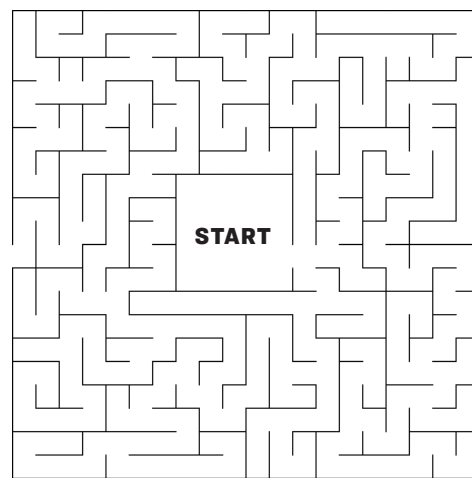


A grizzly bear's front claws measure about 2 to 4 inches in length.

also known to eat bighorn sheep and mountain goats. Though the grizzly is a large animal, it can sprint at 35 miles per hour for short distances. It is also quite strong, with the ability to kill a cow with just one blow. Its sense of smell is so refined that it can smell a carcass two miles away.

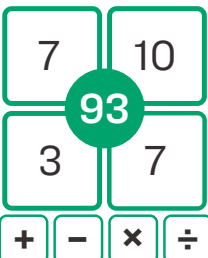
The grizzly bear is no longer common in the lower 48 states outside of preserves and parks, where it's common practice to carry bear spray (bear repellent). In the remote areas of Alaska and Canada, grizzly bears are still quite common.

AMAZING ESCAPES!



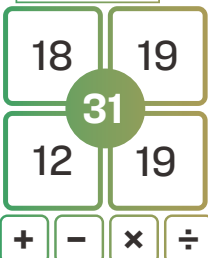
USE THE FOUR NUMBERS IN THE CORNERS, AND THE OPERANDS (+, - AND X) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one "unique" solution but, there may also be "equivalent" solutions. For example: 6 + (7 X 3) + 1 = 28 and 1 + (7 X 3) + 6 = 28

Easy puzzle 1



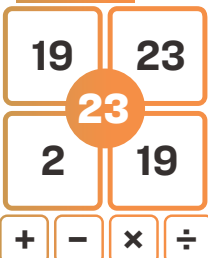
Solution For Easy 1
7 - 01 + (0 + 7)

Medium puzzle 1

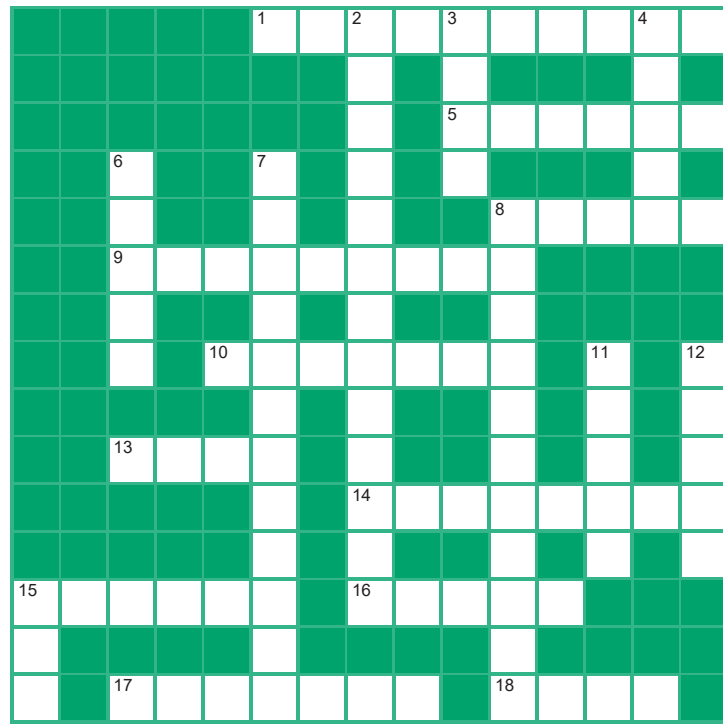


Solution for Medium 1
(81 - 61) = (21 + 61)

Hard puzzle 1



Solution for Hard 1
02 + 2 + (61 - 61)



Across

- 1 Leprechaun's staff (10)
- 5 "Lucky" four-leaf find (6)
- 8 Peter, Paul or Mary (5)
- 9 Have a party, say (9)
- 10 3/17 music maker (7)
- 13 There's a pot of this at the end

Down

- 2 Onetime government of the Emerald Isle (13)
- 3 What a four-leaf clover brings (4)
- 4 Color of Ireland (5)
- 6 "Aren't I the ___ one?!" (5)
- 7 Color for March 17th (12)
- 8 The day St. Patrick passed (11)
- 11 Leprechaun's power (5)
- 12 Difficult to find in Ireland (5)
- 15 Mass of soft stuff (3)
- of the rainbow (4)
- 14 It often starts "There once was a..." (8)
- 15 Irish accent (6)
- 16 Nickels and dimes (5)
- 17 Arc of the covenant? (7)
- 18 Zither's cousin (4)



THE EPOCH TIMES

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



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National Reporter
Full-Time

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- five years of experience as a professional reporter

To Apply

Send a cover letter, resume, and three samples of your news writing to careers@epochtimes.com

Breaking News Reporter
Full-Time

Cover breaking news in the United States and around the world. Follow breaking news as it unfolds on social media and other platforms and cover the news in a timely fashion for The Epoch Times' website.

Requirements

- At least 2 years of experience in news reporting
- Very familiar with the news cycle

To Apply

Send your resume, a cover letter, 2+ samples of your work (URLs and/or attachments, please include links to any relevant photo or videos samples) and 3 references to DJYEditor@epochtimes.com

Political News Reporter
Full-Time

Cover DOJ, FBI, Department of State, Pentagon, DHS, HHS and related institutions, EPA and Energy Department, Treasury Department.

Requirements

- At least 2 years of experience in news reporting
- Very familiar with the news cycle

To Apply

Send your resume, a cover letter, 2+ samples of your work (URLs and/or attachments, please include links to any relevant photo or videos samples) and 3 references to DJYEditor@epochtimes.com

China News Reporter
Freelance

Cover topics related to China. The publication's China news section is a flagship feature, at the forefront of covering the Chinese regime's global ambitions, the latest issues affecting Chinese society and economy, and China-U.S. competition.

The ideal candidate would develop feature articles and pitch shorter-length pieces pegged to the latest happenings in the news cycle.

Requirements

- At least two years of journalism experience.

To Apply

Send your resume, cover letter and writing samples to DJYEditor@epochtimes.com and pitch an idea for the article you would like to write for us.

Business News Reporter
Full-Time and Part-time

Cover Business and Economy, with an initial focus on either economic policies that affect businesses, stock market news, or market research analysis.

Requirements

- A four-year degree in journalism, communications, or finance
- Two years of experience as a professional reporter

To Apply

Send a cover letter, resume, and three samples of your news writing to careers@epochtimes.com

NEW

Education Features Writer
Freelance

Contribute Education-related feature stories. This may include, but is not limited to, stories about specific educational schools or programs, education methods, homeschool, or lifelong learning.

Requirements

- Experience in writing on education
- Excellent communication skills

To Apply

Send your author bio, 2+ samples of your work (URLs and/or attachments, please include links to any relevant photo or videos samples), and pitch an idea for the article you would like to write for us to editor@americanessence.net

Health Reporter

Contribute articles that give health-related practical tips, philosophical insights, research-backed findings, and expert advice. You will work remotely with a health editor.

Requirements

- Bachelor's degree or 2 years of combined experience in news reporting or health-related reporting
- Knowledge and interest in a wide range of health-related topics, trends and methods
- Knowledge of how to interpret and report on scientific studies

To Apply

Send your resume, a cover letter, 2+ unedited and edited samples of your work (URLs and/or attachments; please include links to any relevant photo or videos samples), and 3 references to chrisy.trudeau@epochtimes.com

Remote Copy Editor, News and Features

We are looking for experienced copy editors to join our dedicated print team.

Requirements

- A bachelor's degree in a writing-intensive major, or equivalent on-the-job training and experience
- Strong editorial and grammar skills, with an excellent command of the English language
- Proficiency in AP style preferred

To Apply

Along with your résumé and references, please include a cover letter explaining your interest in working for The Epoch Times, sent via email to careers@epochtimes.com

Assistant Food Editor
Full-Time

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.

Requirements

- 4+ years journalism experience, with at least 2 years' experience editing food, including developing and editing recipes
- Professional cooking experience preferred (culinary school, restaurant/catering jobs, test kitchen work, etc.)
- A passion for food and home cooking
- Enthusiasm for growing the Epoch Times brand

To Apply

To apply, please send your resume, a cover letter, 3-5 samples of your work (URLs and/or attachments, please include links to any relevant photo or video samples), and 3 references to food@epochtimes.com

Food Reporter

Contribute feature articles about time-honored culinary traditions and recipes, from across the U.S. and around the world. Cover profiles of inspiring people dedicated to keeping these culinary traditions alive—whether chefs, artisans, entrepreneurs, family business owners, farmers, or home cooks.

Requirements

- 2+ years journalism experience, preferably with a focus on food/drink
- Professional cooking and/or recipe development experience a plus
- A passion for food, people, and storytelling

To Apply

Send your author bio or resume, 3-5 samples of previously published work (URLs and/or attachments, please include links to any relevant photo samples), and 1-3 story pitches you think would be a great fit for us to food@epochtimes.com



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