

THE EPOCH TIMES

LIFE &

TRADITION

ALL PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES



A young girl smiles as she waves a flag and watches an Independence Day celebration parade in Brighton, Mich., on July 4, 2021.

JEFF MINICK

My Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines patriotism as "love for or devotion to one's country."

Note that this short definition states nothing about the government of a country. As Mark Twain so well stated, "Patriotism is supporting your country all the time, and your government when it deserves it."

Nor is patriotism identical to nationalism, which that same dictionary defines as "loyalty and devotion to a nation, esp: a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others." Comparisons of one country to another may be as natural as comparing a Honda to a Ford, but the true patriot rejects the extremes of jingoism, avoiding that dangerous descent into blind loyalty to flag and country.

Real patriotism, it seems to me, means treasuring our neighbors, the land where we live, the ideals and sacrifices that have shaped our nation, just laws, and the culture that all these elements have produced. It's the same sort of affection we might find in a family and a home. There the quirks of our spouse and children are as familiar to us as the living room furniture. We share customs and rituals, laughter and tears, and a common past that brings us hope and strength in times of trouble. Patriotism works the same way.

Sadly, many Americans these days are finding that patriotism is much diminished. Google "Is patriotism dead in the United States?" and you'll find numerous articles answering that question in the affirmative. Doomsayers from across the political spectrum tell us that love of country is a vanishing commodity in our public square.

What Happened?

This demise in patriotism didn't occur overnight. For several decades, termites have eaten away at the foundations of our country. Our public schools and universities all too often teach their students about U.S. wrongs and failures, leaving out the vast number of accomplishments and benefits that have accrued since the founding of our country. Even now, some commentators and politicians accuse the United States of racism, sexism, and inequality. Millions of immigrants, legal and illegal, belie those accusations by trudging across our border in search of freedom and opportunity. And some employees in our major institutions are openly anti-American or even communists.

If we want to resuscitate our moribund patriotism—if we want to instill a love of country in our young people—what can we do?

Continued on Page 2

Easy Ways to Instill Love of Country in Our Young People



Historical reenactor Dean Malissa, as George Washington, inspects troops at George Washington's Mount Vernon estate during Independence Day celebrations in Mount Vernon, Va., on July 4, 2018.



Union and Confederate reenactors skirmish during a reenactment of the Battle of Gettysburg, in this file photo.

Cyclist Left for Dead Forgives Driver Who Hit Him

E. S. ARMSTRONG

A cyclist in the UK was left with broken legs, a broken arm, a punctured and collapsed right lung, heart trauma, and bowel trauma after he was hit head-on by a drunk driver. After losing all memory of the accident and spending almost two weeks in the ICU, he shares

his amazing journey of recovery and how he made the admirable decision to forgive the driver who left him almost dead on the side of the road.

Jean-Pierre De Villiers, a coach, speaker, and writer, moved from Cape Town, South Africa, to the UK when he was 20. He began coaching at age 25, wanting to make a

difference in other people's lives, and over the decade that followed, he had not only become a well-known coach, but he had spoken in 17 countries and written six books. Amid all his success, his life was moving fast. He knew he needed to slow down.

Continued on Page 2

Throughout his physical recovery, Jean-Pierre De Villiers made it a point to stay mentally positive.

COURTESY OF JEAN-PIERRE DE VILLIERS





People fill the National Mall to watch the fireworks display during Independence Day celebrations in Washington on July 4, 2021.

Easy Ways to Instill LOVE OF COUNTRY in Our Young People

This summer, let's breathe some life into patriotism

Continued from Page 1

A Red, White, and Blue Summer
Summer vacation is just around the corner. The kids will stow their backpacks in the closet, stay up later at night, wake later in the morning, and have scads of free time. Summer is the perfect opportunity to fire up their patriotic sensibilities. Here are six easy ways to keep the flame of liberty burning in our children.

Museums and National Parks
Within a two-hour drive of my home in Front Royal, Virginia, are Washington, a dozen Civil War battlefields, Mount Vernon, Monticello, Staunton's Frontier Culture Museum, the Cyrus McCormick Farm, and a host of other such attractions. Although we're still coordinating plans, my daughter

and her husband, her children, and I will likely spend two or three days this summer roaming up and down the Shenandoah Valley visiting a few of these sites.

And if the high price of gasoline or a remote location prohibits some readers from such excursions? Simple. You can visit many of these museums online from the comfort of your den. The Museum of the American Revolution, the Smithsonian, and more all offer virtual tours and are just a click of the keyboard away. The same holds true for battlefields. Visit American Battlefield Trust, and you'll find yourself exploring places such as Gettysburg, Antietam, and Yorktown.

Listen to the Great American Songs
When my children were young and at home, we listened to a "Wee Sing America" cassette in the car and in the kitchen until we wore the tape out. This collection of music ranged from "The Star-Spangled Banner," "You're a Grand Old Flag," and "The Marines' Hymn" to folksongs such as "Goober Peas," "I've Been Working on the Railroad," and "Cape Cod Chantey." To this day, my children can

still sing many of these songs.

You can find similar collections all over the internet.

Such music is the water and sunshine that can grow young patriots and allow them to flourish.

Make It a Movie Night

A family movie night is a great way to introduce the younger crew to older films about America, such as "Johnny Treman," "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," "On the Waterfront," and "Young Mr. Lincoln." More recent productions such as "John Adams" and "Gods and Generals" also sweep us back into the past, bringing to the screen the heroes and heroines of U.S. history.

Pop some corn, hit the sofa, and let the entertainment—and the education—commence.

Celebrate the Holidays

Summer brings us several occasions when we might pause to honor and contemplate all those Americans, known and unknown, who helped build and defend our country. Memorial Day, Flag Day, and Independence Day—we can celebrate these special holidays by setting out some flags in our yard, reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, decorating a veteran's grave in our local cemetery, and watching a parade or a fireworks display.

Appreciate America the Beautiful

"Oh beautiful, for spacious skies
For amber waves of grain
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain."

The United States has it all: lovely seashores, sandy deserts, towering mountains, woodlands, fields, and glittering cities. Many of our national parks are gemstones of beauty and wonder. When we visit such places or even when we're simply driving down the road, we can find plenty of reasons to love this land that's our home.

Bring Together Young and Old

Bring the youngsters together with the oldsters with the express purpose of developing patriotism. Have that 11-year-old team up with the granddaddy who served in Vietnam or the Gulf War. Have that 15-year-old learn from her grandmother who immigrated from China what drew her to the United States and what she finds attractive even today in her adopted country. Have all the kids ask these same adults about their own grandparents, how they lived and how they felt about the country.

This is history come alive. When I was a boy and our family would visit relatives in Pennsylvania, my dad's uncle often sat in the evenings at a backyard picnic table telling me stories of our family's past that stretched back to the Civil War. His tales gave flesh and blood to the histories and biographies I had read about in school.

What's to Be Done

We can't love what we don't know, and we can't treasure what we don't love.

Abraham Lincoln once deemed the United States "the last best hope of earth." If we wish to keep that hope alive, if we wish to breathe new life into our American ideals—"Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," as our Declaration of Independence declares—we must revive our love for our country and pass those affections along to the next generation.

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.



Playing with kids not only creates great memories, but also aids their development, from muscle sense to neurological benefits.

Cyclist Left for Dead Forgives Driver Who Hit Him

Continued from Page 1

"I knew before the accident that for me to help and heal more people, I needed to slow myself down. I needed to go from more action to more spirituality, and speaking from a slower pace," De Villiers said.

'Life-Changing Experience'

In 2019, on day 7 of a 10-day bicycle challenge in Devon, De Villiers and his biking partner—who were both raising money for brain cancer charity the Addie Brady Foundation by completing 1,000 miles in 10 days—decided to change routes.

On day 8, before reaching the finish line, De Villiers's journey was cut short by a drunk driver, who was four times over the legal limit. After slamming into De Villiers, the driver sped off.

"So I was literally put on my back. And now I was forced to slow down," he said. "I had this accident, where somehow I have no memory of it. It's almost like God said, 'I'm going to give you this life-changing experience. But don't worry, you're not going to remember it.'"

Post-traumatic amnesia hid the memories of the accident from him, leaving him to rely on the accounts of others to understand what happened.

De Villiers was fortunate that the first person who stopped was a paramedic, followed by an off-duty police officer, and then someone from a rescue team, who luckily happened to have a tank of oxygen in their car.

He was airlifted to Derriford Hospital in Plymouth and immediately put in the ICU. It wasn't until day 10 or 11 in intensive care that he realized what had occurred. His doctor told him it was a miracle that he survived.

Remarkably, De Villiers's attitude was one of gratitude. He looked at his circumstances and the road before him as opportunities to give, rather than moments of self-pity or blame. He credits his positive attitude to two things: his skills and experience.

Having already experienced adversity in his life, De Villiers was adept at overcoming hardship and difficulty. As a child, he had moved around a lot and was bullied for his differences. His father was an ill man who took his own life, and this made De Villiers a bigger target for bullies. Drawing from his past experience, he reminded himself that he had grown through those hard times—and he could rise above new ones.

"All of these things I built up as evidence that I am strong. And this is just another challenge. I can get through this again," he said.

"I knew that I had the skills to cope with

this adversity. And I felt excited about what I was going to do next. And, even before I left intensive care, I lay in my bed and said, 'My recovery will not be about me. My recovery will be about everyone that I can share the story with.'"

A year and a half year after his accident, De Villiers had the opportunity to attend the sentencing of the drunk driver who had mowed him down.

Recovery

Seeing his recovery as an opportunity to do what he had originally set out to do—help others through their own challenges in life—De Villiers embarked on a new journey.

At first, his physical recovery was extremely limited.

"I knew that when I was in recovery for several weeks in hospital, physically there was not a lot that I could do," De Villiers said. "I could barely move my body onto my side."

He turned his attention to what he could work on: his mind.

"A big thing for me was never to blame the driver."

De Villiers said that blaming others for things in life, such as "our husband, our partner, the driver," results only in loss. "We

give our own power away," he said. "And when we give our power away to someone else through blame, we remain powerless."

In refusing to bestow blame, there were four specific aspects that helped him mentally.

First was personal responsibility. He never allowed himself to feel like a victim. Second, he surrounded himself with the right people in recovery. Supported primarily by his wife, he also kept himself near those who would propel him forward.

"I didn't allow myself to get around negative people, I didn't allow myself to be surrounded by people who felt sorry for me," he said. "I surrounded myself with inspirational friends and clients and family, people who gave me energy and motivation and inspiration to fuel my recovery, not hinder my recovery."

Third, he said that he found "meaning" along his journey, choosing to perceive that his recovery could be utilized for the benefit of others.

And fourth, he lived in a "positive directed focus." Rather than focusing on the things that he couldn't control, he looked to the things that he could.

About two weeks after the accident, in a recovery hospital, he said, "Let me try to move my ankle one inch from the bed." And that was his focus for the day.

He lifted his ankle five times that day, and then he celebrated. Soon he was being lifted to stand.

"When you feel like you're on a journey, as in, you're moving from one place to another place, and it's taking you closer to where you want to be, or who you want to be, or who you want to be with; when you acknowledge that progress, it feels very good," he said.

Every mark of progress for De Villiers resulted in a "flood of gratitude"—whether it was the first time sitting up, standing up, walking on crutches, or going down stairs. A year and a half after his accident, he ran for the first time.

"When I feel like something is happening that allows me to acknowledge that, hey, I'm better than I used to be, I just feel very grateful."

However, his journey to recovery was not always smooth, and there were challenging days, too.

De Villiers said he addresses hard days by relying on habits, which he calls "sacred rituals"—the things that help him to be his best every day; the practices he maintained on the good days, and that he clings to when the days are a little darker.

For him, these things are gratitude, meditation, keeping a journal, and daily movement; all help him pull through on tough days.

Forgiveness

A year and a half after his accident, De Villiers had the opportunity to attend the sentencing of the drunk driver who had mowed him down. He knew he needed to go and he would have the opportunity to give a "victim statement." So he went to the courtroom.

"When I saw him, I felt nothing but love and I felt sorry for him; I felt empathy," De Villiers said. "I didn't want an old man who clearly had a drinking problem and a life problem to go to jail."

In his statement, De Villiers publicly forgave the driver. He told the man: "I need you to know that I have no ill feelings toward you. I don't feel negatively toward

you. I love you."

What followed stunned the courtroom. After De Villiers's public demonstration of forgiveness, the driver stepped out of the defendant's box and put his hand to his heart. He and De Villiers then shared a meaningful conversation right in the middle of the courtroom, where apologies and "beautiful words" were exchanged. The two left each other at peace. The interaction so touched the onlookers that the defendant's lawyer even commented, saying he had never seen anything like that in his 25 years of practice. While facing and forgiving the man had helped De Villiers to heal, he didn't feel that offering forgiveness was for him alone.

"It's very important to understand forgiveness is not for you. It's not just for the other person that you're looking to forgive, even if you never tell them," De Villiers said. "Forgiveness is about you, the other person, and every single person that that forgiveness reaches."

Closing the Loop

Two years after his accident, De Villiers went out to cycle again, finishing what he started. He had recovered beyond expectations. Still, having been forced to leave the charity challenge unfinished, he felt an unclosed loop still lingering.

He then returned to the site of his accident where some people showed him where he and his bicycle had been smashed to pieces. Contrary to what he had expected to feel on returning to the site that changed his life, he felt peace, crediting it to all the work he had put into himself. Then the following morning, De Villiers got back on his bike and finished the challenge.

"I went one kilometer back so that I could drive past where I got hit by the car," De Villiers said. "I just said, 'Let's go and let's finish this.' And I just did it with a backpack and my bike."

This not only gave De Villiers closure in his own heart, but he said that sharing this "beautiful experience" online has also inspired others to finish their own uncompleted goals.

Today, he sees himself as a very different person. Even his wife finds that she is married to a different man.

He doesn't procrastinate as much as he used to; he looks for additional challenges to overcome; he has spent time in pursuit of greater understanding and self-development; and now, believing there is a true purpose to his life, De Villiers feels he has work to do.

"I'm going to live fully, without any fear," he said.

Reflecting back on the entire ordeal and the lessons learned, he said he wants to pass the message to others that they, too, can overcome traumas, challenges, and adversities—that it's possible to cross your own finish line.



De Villiers did not remember the accident, but fortunately the first person who stopped was a paramedic, and then an off-duty police officer.

A Sculptor's Journey

'Art should be bright in order to awaken people's kind side,' says Taiwanese sculptor

DAKSHA DEVNANI

Embracing the unique color, texture, and shape of every piece of wood, a Taiwanese sculptor has created hundreds of carvings that all have a story to tell.

For the past 30 years, Tsai Mingfeng, 49, has been crafting outstanding wood sculptures, chiseling and hammering conscientiously to express the righteous principles of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance in each of his works of art.

Tsai believes art can have a profound effect on people, and to achieve this desired purpose, it must express itself and connect to people in a righteous way. Referring to the many modern art forms prevalent today, Tsai said art has lost the traditional touch and instead seems to be infected by negative messages.

"Art is by no means incomprehensible, and it doesn't need to be explained," Tsai told *The Epoch Times*. "Coming across good art is like meeting an acquaintance, and everyone from children to the elderly will understand it and be moved or happy when they see it."

Tsai, who has won several accolades in his arena, said it's his faith that has guided him in each of his creations.

Faith Inspires Creativity

Growing up, Tsai was headstrong and had his own opinions about everything. He wanted to be different from the people around him and became a loner. At the age of 15, he left his home in Sanzhong to study woodcarving in a factory in Hsin-chu city, where he attended classes at night at a local art school.

After about a year, he dropped out because he wasn't learning many carving techniques. Almost two years later, Tsai met Huang Hongyan, a renowned local woodcarving artist, and rose to become one of his favorite students.

Tsai said each piece of artwork is a new creation. He doesn't want to create the same thing every time, and that also makes his job more difficult.

Sharing his secret to inspiration, Tsai said many of his carving skills and new ideas come from the self-cultivation discipline of Falun Gong, or Falun Dafa, which consists of five gentle exercises along with moral teachings based on the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance.

"I thought of many new ideas while meditating," he told *The Epoch Times*.

During the rainy season of 2004, Tsai, who was then in his 30s, came across an advertisement on television about mind-body health. Learning that the system was practiced by millions in more than 100 countries worldwide, he decided to learn Falun Gong. Tsai said that after reading the teachings, he felt that it was what he'd been looking for his whole life.

"After cultivating my inner self and living by the moral principles of Falun Dafa, my view of things completely changed," he said. "I no longer feel angry and have stopped being greedy, competitive, or calculating; the good changes in me have also led those around me to feel good."

The most noticeable improvement in Tsai's personality was his calm and composed demeanor. In the past, due to his irritable nature, he often found himself quarreling with others. Apart from developing a heart of



Tsai Mingfeng practices the fifth exercise of Falun Gong.

Pigs denote auspiciousness among the Taiwanese.



Artist Tsai Mingfeng gets many of his ideas while meditating.



Tsai Mingfeng has sculpted solemn subjects like General Guan Yu as well as adorable animals such as this one.

compassion, he also found himself caring less about his own self-interest and becoming humble. With this, he said, he stopped chasing unrealistic goals in life.

"The heaviness I used to experience has now disappeared, and I feel an uplifting sense of calm, both mentally and physically," he said.

Talent Rooted in Morality

With the transformation in his temperament came a breakthrough in his woodcarving career.

In 2013, Tsai set up a factory in New Taipei city. Having his own business, he found more time to work on his art.

Besides sparking the breakthrough in his career, Falun Dafa has deepened his wisdom, he said, which has in turn led to him making inroads in his woodcarving skills. He believes that the way artists behave in daily life affects their artwork.

"When my temperament improved, my woodcarving skills improved too," he said.

As an example, Tsai said that when he outlined General Guan Yu's posture, he got stuck and didn't know how to carve the eyes in a way that would embody righteousness and majesty. Similarly, when he worked on a piece depicting three pigs, he faced the challenge of how to carve their adorable faces. He said it was while meditating that he got the inspiration for how to carve the sculptures.

Coming across good art is like meeting an acquaintance, and everyone from children to the elderly will understand it and be moved or happy when they see it.

Tsai Mingfeng



Tsai Mingfeng at work in his studio.

'Use Wisdom to Create Righteous Influence'

The talented artist especially excels at carving animals. He said the Taiwanese people enjoy woodcarvings of pigs, as they symbolize auspiciousness.

Tsai said that as an artist, he has a responsibility to contribute positively to society and understands that works of art must influence people in the right way. He believes he mustn't be impatient while working on his sculptures, because if an artist's emotions are unhealthy, that can "cause the opposite effect and destroy the harmonious energy."

"I have to use wisdom to create righteous influence," he said.

"The more an artist's thoughts are focused on fame and fortune, the more warped the expression of art is. The morality in this depraved era has been deteriorating quickly, and the artwork is getting darker. Art should be bright in order to awaken people's kind side. I hope my art can express kindness, as kindness can change people's thoughts."

In 2021, Tsai and his teacher Huang Hongyan participated in a teacher-student joint exhibition held by the Taoyuan Department of Cultural Affairs.

"I personally think it's very meaningful for teachers and students to exhibit together," he said. "It not only represents inheritance, but also a kind of respect the student has for the teacher. The greatest achievement of a person is not fame and fortune, but the ability to appreciate and cherish."

Evil Cannot Prevail

Over the course of his career, Tsai has pro-

duced many pieces depicting the persecution that Falun Gong adherents face in China, representing various themes such as "freedom," "longing," and "evil cannot prevail."

Falun Gong was first introduced in China in 1992, and by the late '90s, around 70 million to 100 million Chinese people were practicing it, according to official estimates. However, in July 1999, then-Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leader Jiang Zemin launched a nationwide propaganda campaign and persecution of the spiritual practice. In the past nearly 23 years of suppression, countless Falun Gong adherents have been detained, imprisoned, tortured, and even killed for their organs.

Tsai said that in witnessing such a crime against humanity, his heart is pained.

"Chinese people suffer the most directly from the CCP's persecution of faith and its abuse of human rights," he said. "These kindhearted people who can't defend themselves are persecuted to death, and this deeply pains my heart."

Tsai said people should remember that evil cannot win over righteousness and that it's important to stand with goodness and justice.

The artist said he wants to further sharpen his skills with the wisdom gained from following the principles of truth, compassion, and tolerance. "If life is a work of art, the most important element is self-cultivation," he said. "Cultivating oneself is like hammering wood before it can be given the final desired shape. Without cultivation, our lives would lack substance, and we could never achieve our true purpose."

Jocelyn Neo and Arshdeep Sarao contributed to this report.

No Limits for 10-Year-Old Boy, Blind From Birth

E. S. ARMSTRONG

Although at first glance it would seem unlikely, Ashton Dunford has no limits. The 10-year-old is blind from birth, and yet he has done all of the same things—perhaps even more—than most kids his age.

Ashton is Tyler and Hilda Dunford's second of three children. He rides bicycles, skis downhill, and dreams of future accomplishments such as becoming a writer, a marine biologist, and a downhill skier in the Paralympics. At a young age, he has already learned to play the piano, performed in a children's choir, auditioned for movies and television, and won awards for writing in Braille. And every feat, every milestone passed along the way, has been an inspiration to others—perhaps most of all, to his mother.

"He has changed our lives and is teaching so many others that blindness does not get in the way of doing all the things he wants to do in life," Hilda said. "We are both so proud of him for being fearless and so determined to show everyone how much he can do without sight."

"I just want him to know how much I admire him for taking on challenges with so much courage and teaching me that there are no limits. The only limits are the ones we create ourselves in our heads. He is blind, but nothing stops him from being just as independent as any other 10-year-old."

When Ashton was about 2 months old, his older sister, who was then 4 years old, startled him as he lay on their parents' bed. The baby boy reacted by lifting his arms to the sound of his sister, but his face never turned to look for the source of the sound. Hilda, finding this odd, obtained a referral for an MRI with an ophthalmologist.

Ashton was first diagnosed with optic nerve hypoplasia, and then later with

septo-optic dysplasia. His optic nerves and some parts of his brain failed to develop in utero, leaving him blind at birth. He also lacks the corpus callosum—a nerve-fiber bridge that connects the left and right halves of the brain—and needs hormone replacement therapy to produce thyroid, growth hormone, and hydrocortisone.

Recalling the time that they received his diagnosis, Hilda said: "I remember being heartbroken and feeling like our world was falling apart. I had never been around a blind child before and I knew nothing about raising one. I had so much to learn from all of his therapists, doctors, and the school of the blind."

And learn she did.

Above all, Hilda has learned that her son has tenacity and hunger for life that spurs him to charge forward.

Ashton struggled as a young child. Fine and gross motor skills eluded him; things like nursing were challenges, as were holding up his head and taking his first steps.

"Every single milestone took so much



Tyler and Hilda Dunford, with their children Jordan, Ashton (2nd L), and Ocean.

He has changed our lives and is teaching so many others that blindness does not get in the way of doing all the things he wants to do in life.

Hilda Dunford

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF OUR BLIND SIB



Ashton Dunford first learned to ride a bike at the age of 7.

effort and lots of work from physical therapy and developmental specialists, but he always reached them at his own time," Hilda said.

As he passed each milestone with vigor, Hilda looked on, carefully storing her memories like precious gems.

"He took his first steps in our kitchen. He was around 18 months, and it was beautiful to watch him walking with his arms stretched out to reach his big sister. He smiled the whole way and then fell into her arms," she recalled.

Then, at age 7, Ashton learned to ride a bicycle. He had been practicing with a balance bike for some time, but he soon learned that other kids had pedals. He mentioned his desire to try riding a pedal bike like the other kids.

Shortly after that, his father brought home a bicycle with pedals. They took the bike outside and, within 10 minutes, Ashton had figured it out. He ran into the house pronouncing victory to his family.

Even skiing was no exception.

When Ashton was 5, the family registered for an adaptive ski family camp in Park City, Utah. Although Hilda was nervous about the idea of her son zooming down a snowy hill, Ashton was eager to learn. With the help of his instructors, he brought tears to his mother's eyes as he skied down the mountain holding onto a bamboo pole. Now, skiing is one of Ashton's favorite sports, and the whole family has learned to ski as a way of supporting him.

"I always tell my kids that they can do hard things. And we are always rooting for them and supporting them in any way we can," his mother said.

"Being Ashton's mom taught me to change my perspective from seeing with my eyes to seeing with my heart. Witnessing his growth the last 10 years has been more beautiful than I ever could've imagined."

Couple in Their 90s Share Secret to Long-Lasting Marriage

'Divorce has never been an option for them. They just work through everything that they can.'

LOUISE CHAMBERS

The loving devotion of a Texan couple in their 90s is inspiring others to build life-long relationships—and even pop the question.

Jalee Nicole, 39, of East Texas, told *The Epoch Times* that her grandparents Kenneth and Faye Babin inspire her entire family.

"Seeing how close they are just really sets an example for all of us, and how we want to live our lives and our marriages," Nicole said. "It's just so heartwarming to see them love on each other so much."

"People will give up too quickly sometimes. So to see someone in their 90s who have been through 72 years together is not super common."

Kenneth, 95, first met Faye, 93, back in 1949. Having left her home in Fred, Texas, to study nursing in Beaumont, Faye rented a room in Kenneth's family home.

"I thought Faye was beautiful," Kenneth told *The Epoch Times*.

Faye added: "Kenneth was good-looking, played the guitar and sang, and was real funny. Kenneth got jealous when I dated the next-door neighbor. He decided to ask the neighbor guy what his intentions were, and basically stole me from him!"

The couple married at St. Anthony Catholic Church in Beaumont on Jan. 7, 1950. Kenneth became a fitter welder, and Faye worked as a registered nurse. They started a family. Despite working hard, they always made time to enjoy life.

Their love for life and their resolve to stay together through thick and thin haven't faded away, even today. When Nicole's aunt, the couple's caretaker, started filming adorable moments between the elderly pair, Nicole decided the footage was too good not to share.

"My memaw had recently had a fall," Nicole said. "We thought she might have broken her tailbone or her hip, but it was actually her pelvic bone. She was on pain medication, she was having an anxiety attack, and the thing that calmed her was sitting in [my grandfather's] lap that day."

Nicole posted the sweet clip of Kenneth comforting Faye on TikTok, with her family's approval. The video went viral, amassing over 8.8 million views to date. She has since shared many videos of her grandparents, and the public has shown huge support.

She marveled at how one person commented that watching the couple was "so inspiring" that it made him want to ask his girlfriend to marry him. "I thought that was really cool. Their love inspired him to settle down!" Nicole said.

Kenneth and Faye say the secret to their long-lasting, happy marriage is "respecting one another and doing things together."

"We would take our kids on a vacation each year, and go on a vacation alone," the couple said. "We took our kids to church every Sunday, and always remained faithful to each other."

"The wise couple advises others: 'Put God first, then family, then it seems to work itself out. Never keep secrets, always forgive, never go to sleep mad!'"



The couple married in January 1950 in Beaumont, Texas.

Do not forget to have fun and truly enjoy each other. Make the time!

Kenneth and Faye Babin



The Babins have been through thick and thin together.

bed angry, and thank God for each other, even when you don't feel like it. Do not forget to have fun and truly enjoy each other. Make the time!"

The couple also enjoyed regular Friday night poker with friends, flea markets, and yard sales in their free time, and cite some of their best memories as driving cross-country in an RV and seeing every state but Alaska and North Dakota over 45 years. They would sing Willie Nelson's "On the Road Again" at the beginning of every cherished trip.

For Kenneth and Faye, who share four children, an adopted niece, 10 grandkids, and 22 great-grandkids, life is slowing down now that they're in their 90s. But their role within the family is as strong as ever.

Nicole praised her grandfather for being a "big jokester," but also for being there for his wife through thick and thin. When Faye got into a car wreck on her way home from nursing school with a friend, young and pregnant at the time, Kenneth was there.

"She actually flew out of the windshield and hit her head really badly," Nicole said. "She was in a coma for a little bit. ... The baby survived, so that was really amazing. That was a pretty big challenge: God was holding her hand, right there through all of it."

Recently, life has thrown further challenges in the couple's way, and both have been placed in a nursing home. Faye lost her sister and has been diagnosed with dementia, which is "getting worse quickly," while Kenneth underwent emergency surgery and is "recovering and doing better now," said Nicole.

"Cherish your grandparents, because time is so fleeting," she said. "Ask them questions, ask them about your ancestry, get to know your background, because it's so important. Snuggle with your grandparents, love on them and hug them. Don't take them for granted."

Nicole said that many believe a love like Kenneth and Faye's no longer exists, which is why she's sharing their sweet moments online to give hope to others. It just depends on finding "that person," she said.

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

EDUCATIONAL INSIGHTS

A Better Way to Discipline Kids? The Results Suggest ‘Yes’

By teaching children the tools and skills to adjust their behavior, disciplinary referrals can be cut by 80 percent or better—and a lot more learning takes place. *(Part 1 of 2)*

MATTHEW JOHN

Pretty much everything under the sun has been tried.

In the olden days, corporal punishment seems to have been the approach de rigueur.

“Full of blows” was how celebrated Roman poet Horace described his teacher.

“Racks, claws, and various instruments of torture” were the tools of discipline used to straighten out a young and rebellious, not-yet-saintly St. Augustine.

Rulers applied to the knuckles with startling force at the hands of an old nun were my father’s sharpest school-day recollections.

In recent decades, a bevy of newer, spare-the-rod-inspired approaches has come about—ranging from sparkly sticker rewards to punishingly ponderous detentions.

But nearly 2,000 years later, educators and parents alike are still trying to figure out just what exactly is the best way to rein in bad behavior.

If the data are any indicator, we’ve still got a ways to go.

In the most recent set of national figures available from the U.S. Department of Education (dating from the 2017–2018 school year), a rather sobering picture emerges.

More than 2.6 million students were given one or more in-school suspensions during the academic year, with nearly just as many (2.5 million) serving time in one or more out-of-school suspensions—the more serious type. To put it into perspective, that’s an alarming 1 out of every 9 students receiving suspensions.

Educators and parents alike are still trying to figure out just what exactly is the best way to rein in bad behavior.

(And that’s to say nothing of the 101,652 students that year who were given the heave-ho: outright expulsions.)

It’s a host of unsettling proportions, and one expected to only grow in upcoming decades, what with the steady uptick in childhood behavioral disorders.

While most approaches used in the educational world, and (most likely, even if not self-consciously) at home, trace back to the “behavioral conditioning” school of psychology, pioneered by B.F. Skinner, other approaches have emerged in recent years shaped by different lines of thinking.

One that came to my attention nearly a decade ago stands out for its effectiveness. Yet in my conversations with fellow educa-

tors, I’ve been surprised by how few have heard of it—much less been trained in it and able to reap its fruits. In many ways, it’s still one of those “best-kept secrets.”

Here’s what it is and how it works.

The approach can be traced back to the work of psychologist Ross W. Greene. He calls his model “Collaborative & Proactive Solutions” (or CPS), and describes it in his 2012 book “Lost at School.” The approach was born over the course of Greene’s two decades on the faculty at Harvard Medical School and while working with legions of schools, educators, and parents to try to find a better way to elicit better behavior. His approach, in a word, is solid.

Three things stand out for me about the CPS approach.

First, it makes no assumptions about why a student is misbehaving or not complying. Typically, we attribute it to failings on the child’s part that need to be curbed through disincentives—or less pleasantly put, punishment. Phrasings like “a bad attitude,” “not being cooperative,” “acting out,” or “disruptive” are common descriptors for the outward manifestation at hand. But they tell little about the why behind it.

As we’ll see in a moment, CPS doesn’t just chalk those issues up to naughtiness or ill intentions that need to be curbed. It’s not about simply snuffing out the problem in the instant. It seeks to probe deeper and find the source of it—which could be very different for two different students, even if outwardly their actions look the same. Kids are different, after all.

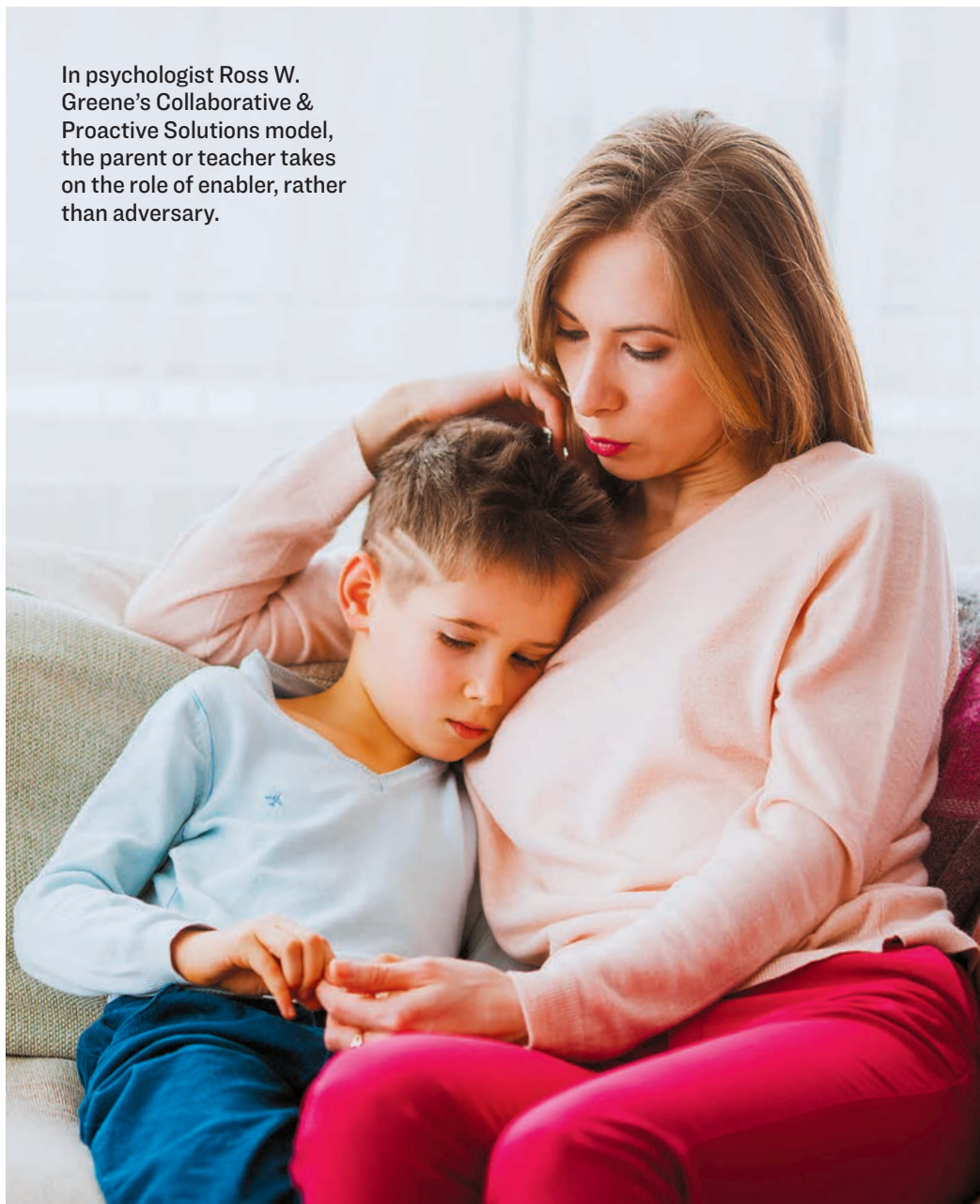
Second, it has a wonderfully life-affirming presupposition to it (though I’m not sure if it’s ever been stated this way). Namely, it seems to believe that kids are inherently inclined toward doing good. It’s just that they might not know how. That is, how to control their impulses and act in a way that’s not antagonistic, disruptive, hurtful, and so on.

Those are learned abilities. And like any other ability, some kids learn better than others; some need a helping hand if they’re to pick up the same skills that the next child might intuitively, on his own, early on.

In other words, CPS encourages us to view the child’s breakdown as a sign that there’s work to be done, something to be learned. You could think of the episode at hand—the shoving of another kid, the refusal to take a test—as an invitation, even, to dig a little deeper and find out what tools or skills the child is lacking and needs to develop. Your help is needed. Not just a dose of discipline.

In this capacity, the parent or teacher shifts from adversary to enabler—a much happier, and certainly more fulfilling, role.

Third, the true genius of Green’s CPS approach is that it focuses not so much on the immediate resolution—the cessation of bad behavior—but on long-term solutions. It trades a quick fix (silence, compliance, regret) for a more permanent resolution (new



In psychologist Ross W. Greene’s Collaborative & Proactive Solutions model, the parent or teacher takes on the role of enabler, rather than adversary.

OLENA CHUKHIL/SHUTTERSTOCK

problem-solving skills, self-awareness, and so on).

This is quite a departure from the usual response to classroom disruptions or childly outbursts, where we seek to “put out” the fire as quickly as possible. Our main focus is typically on damage control. We seek to suppress and contain the behavior. A time out or a demerit is meant to act as a future deterrent to said behavior.

The assumption at work goes back to the behavioral school of thought: that you must condition the child to do otherwise. Hence, you create a punishment (for example, off to the principal’s) that exceeds the rewards of the errant behavior (the satisfaction of getting attention, letting off steam, and so on).

It’s a calculus of sorts.

While the behavioral approach certainly has its merits, and when done fairly and consistently, with a good system in place, can work wonders in one’s classroom, it comes with a trade-off that has long haunted me: What happens when my kids go off to the next class, or the next year, and perhaps someone less skilled with discipline or less strict inherits them? How will

they act without my stern stares or hearty approbations raining down on them? Will they really be apt to do the right thing?

The research has me worried. It’s been shown that there’s one potentially big flaw: What happens when you remove the system, absent all the rewards and punishments? What incentive is there for a child to “behave” if the impetus was always external?

(Interesting aside: A parallel finding in literacy research involves the use of reward systems such as stars and stickers to motivate young readers. Studies have found that kids actually read less than before once such systems are no longer in place—as when summer break rolls around or next year’s teacher doesn’t do the same.)

So, given all its merits, how does one go about implementing CPS exactly?

It involves a few fascinating, and perhaps counterintuitive moves. Stay tuned for part 2 to find out.

Matthew John is a veteran teacher and writer who is passionate about history, culture, and good literature. He lives in New York.

BOOK REVIEW

Great Leaders, Not Perfect Men

A brief analysis of 6 great statesmen

DUSTIN BASS

Daniel J. Mahoney has written a timely book. As the American public on both ends of the political spectrum seem to be weary of politicians’ wayward rhetoric and actions, Mahoney has given readers, and hopefully present and future politicians, a recollection of honorable statesmen of the past three centuries.

“The Statesman as Thinker” reads like a modern version of “Plutarch’s Lives,” discussing the lives, works, and political philosophies of great statesmen. In the same vein as Plutarch, most of Mahoney’s selected statesmen are expected, but not all. The author utilizes statesmen of the West: America, Great Britain, and France, and, one influenced greatly by the West, then: Czechoslovakia, now the Czech Republic.

It’s the Czech Republic choice, and the final statesman, that makes the book even more intriguing. The author discusses what some may consider “The Usual Suspects” with Edmund Burke, Alexis de Tocqueville, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, and Charles de Gaulle, and their impact on political thought and their contributions to their particular countries and civilization in general.

Vaclav Havel, the Eastern European writer-turned-president, seems to be a slight pivot from the typical formula found in the book. As the other statesmen had their political upbringings influenced by Christian and/or Enlightenment thinking, Havel grew up behind the Iron Curtain where communist thought was predominant. It may be the author’s intent to prove that rational political thought can grow even

in less-than-fertile ground.

Great Men, Not Perfect Men

Mahoney makes clear that each great man had their flaws, as all individuals do. The strength and virtues of these statesmen, and their ability to think clearly and to convey their thoughts clearly to their audience, provide aspiration for today’s leaders. But it’s their flaws, and their incorrect perspectives at times, that should provide today’s leaders hope that not all is lost when they fail or prove to be shortsighted.

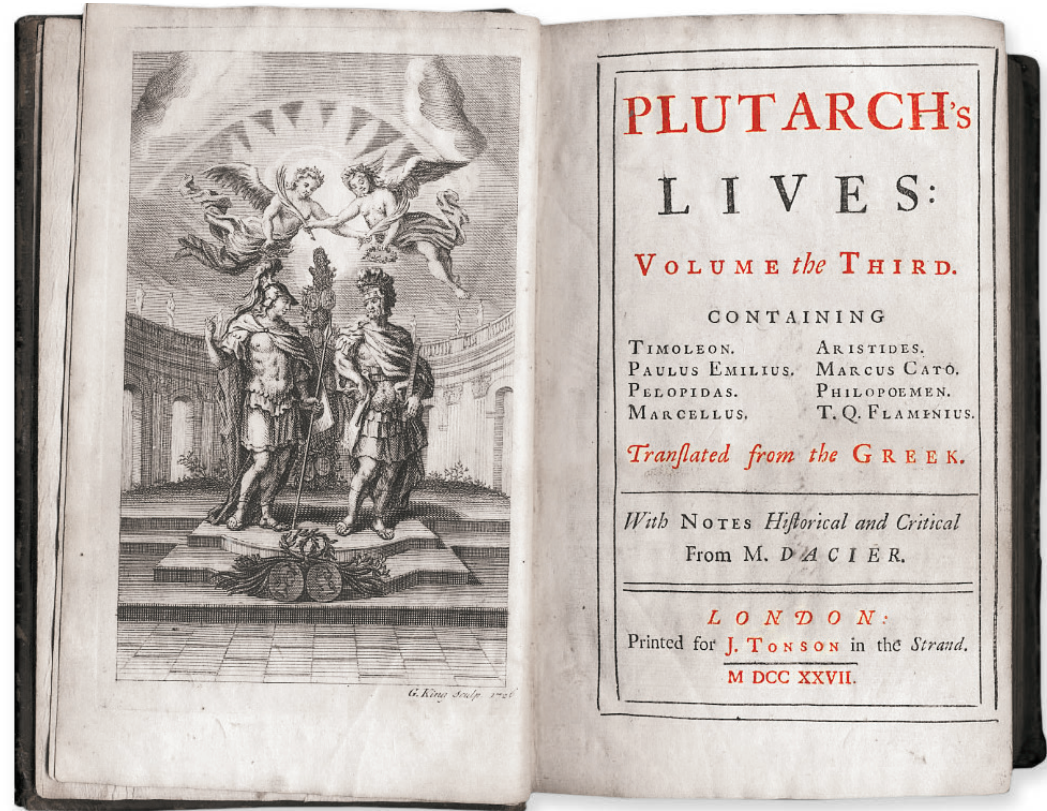
Furthermore, the author touches occasionally on combating the current trend that demands perfection from their former leaders, who are otherwise “canceled” or threatened to be. This demand for perfection not only eliminates aspiration, but also hope. Mahoney’s examples of great statesmen are a course in common sense when considering what makes great people great.

A Modern Plutarch Work

As aforementioned, “The Statesman as Thinker” plays up to the idea of Plutarch. The subtitle of the book proves as much: “Portraits of Greatness, Courage and Moderation.”

Just as with Plutarch’s subjects, none of these individuals were without trial and difficulty, some more than others. Those challenges helped form their perspectives on the world. It’s these challenges and their ability to adapt and overcome that facilitated their ability to be a thinker. As the author suggests, it is the ability to think, and think outside of the norm, that made them exceptional leaders.

There is a legitimate worry that today’s politicians have hardly become statesmen and are even further from being thinkers. For Mahoney, his examples prove necessary to help steer leaders of every age and



The “Statesman as Thinker” is reminiscent of “Plutarch’s Lives.” The third Volume of a 1727 edition of “Plutarch’s Lives.” Private Collection of S. Whitehead.

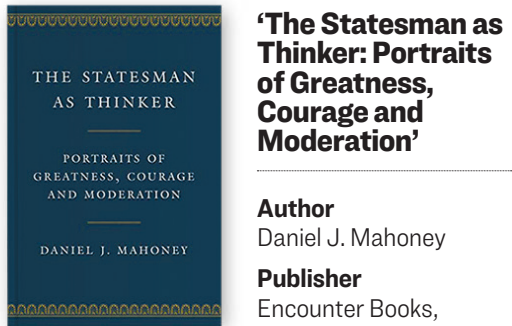
geographic locale more toward statesmanship and less toward ideologies.

A Book for Future Leaders

This is a quick read covering the ideas of “the great and the good” and what makes a statesman. Readers will briefly get a sense of the subjects presented and what made them great. The author understands that these are brief presentations of wise, influential, and complex statesmen, which is why he provides “suggested readings” at the end of each chapter. Truly, each subject is worth discovering and dissecting at a deeper level.

“The Statesman as Thinker” is an enjoyable read full of great information about each person. It also provides the reader with a sense of gratitude for those who came before and a hope that a replication of sorts can be accomplished.

As is made clear with the six historical figures, they were all separated from each other by either time or space. This fact should be



‘The Statesman as Thinker: Portraits of Greatness, Courage and Moderation’

Author

Daniel J. Mahoney

Publisher

Encounter Books,

Pages

232 pages

an indication that just because all six are no longer alive doesn’t mean their influence on present and future statesmen has died.

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.

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

Director Marc Webb’s Uplifting Family Drama

MICHAEL CLARK

Even though the popularity and profitability of family-oriented films have always been strong, the variety offered is woefully thin. Superhero action, animation, and musicals comprise the vanilla-chocolate-strawberry choices, yet they almost always make for hefty returns because those are the only things offered. It isn’t often when something else that doesn’t fit neatly into any of these compartments comes out, and even rarer when it’s something as magnificent and mint pistachio as “Gifted.”

Echoes of ‘Good Will Hunting’

Starting out like “Good Will Hunting” with a younger female lead, “Gifted” at various times takes on traits of “Kramer vs. Kramer,” “Little Man Tate,” and “I Am Sam.” These are all movies with heady subject matter that are frequently unsettling and dramatically tense, but screenwriter Tom Flynn and veteran video director Marc Webb (“500 Days of Summer,” two installments of the “Spider-man” franchise, the upcoming live-action remake of “Snow White”) regularly infuse the plot with deft bits of knowing humor that kids will actually get because it is coming from one of them.

Mckenna Grace (“I, Tonya”) plays Mary, a 7-year-old girl who has lived with her Uncle Frank (Chris Evans) her entire life. Frank is a bachelor originally from New England, who decided years ago to give up his “sensible” career as an attorney, move to Florida, and become a freelance boat mechanic.

A Self-Taught Genius

The movie opens as Mary is getting ready for her first day of school, and she is trying hard as she can to get out of it. Technically, Frank has been homeschooling her, but as we are soon to find out, that’s probably not the case, as Mary is a self-taught math genius. It would be easy for Frank to enroll Mary in an advanced school for whiz kids, but he wants her to have normal life, perhaps join the Girl Scouts, and interact with children her own age. As it is now, Mary’s only friend is neighbor and landlord Roberta (Octavia Spencer) who in many ways is her surrogate mother.

Bad Grandma

As soon as it becomes clear to Mary’s teacher Bonnie (Jenny Slate) that she is beyond



(Left) Chris Evans and McKenna Grace in “Gifted.”

(Right) McKenna Grace stars in “Gifted.”



‘Gifted’

Director

Marc Webb

Starring

Chris Evans, Mckenna Grace, Octavia Spencer, Jenny Slate, Lindsay Duncan

Running Time

1 hour, 41 minutes

MPPA Rating:

PG-13

Release Date

April 30, 2022

★★★★★

brilliant, Frank’s plan gets shot down in flames, led by the arrival of Mary’s grandmother Evelyn. Played by the sublime veteran English actress Lindsay Duncan (“Mansfield Park”), Evelyn is a cold and exacting woman who believes Mary is destined for greater things and decides to challenge Frank for full custody for the purpose of moving the child to Boston.

As is often the case with grandparents, Evelyn showers Mary with pricey gifts to soften her up and, for the briefest time, earns the child’s trust. Evelyn is thrown multiple curves during the trial by Frank’s attorney Greg (Glenn Plummer, “Frankie and Johnny”) whose mild, unassuming manner cloaks a cunning killer strategist.

What will draw you and your own children in immediately is Mary’s genuine, heart-melting charm and approachability. All too often in movies with juvenile leads, children are portrayed as precocious brats, spoiled whiners, class clowns, rich snobs, or mere props. Mary has none of those traits, and the filmmakers should be commended for creating such a deep and multi-layered character that on the page is so boringly normal. Grace is an actress that at the ripe age of 10 already had more than 40 feature film and TV series credits. Pay attention to the career trajectory of this young lady; she’s going to crush it.

The Anti-Captain America

Evans, having spent the better part of the 2010s as Captain America in the Marvel franchise, must have received the role of Frank like a godsend. Instead of prancing around in spandex in front of green screens and play-fighting, he gets the chance to really act, and he more than proves he’s not just a pretty boy matinee idol.



FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

Nonreligious and Apolitical

Parents always and rightfully complain of the limited choices for family films, a situation made slightly better thanks to a recent uptick in the number of Christian-themed releases. However, many folks don’t want faith mixed in with their entertainment.

“Gifted” is nonreligious and apolitical and offers almost everything parents and children could possibly want: a spunky yet grounded child, a rugged and morally grounded father figure, a great villain, a little romance, and an ending that doesn’t come wrapped with a big predictable bow.

Language Warning

The only thing that could be an issue is the inclusion of a single “F-bomb” which, under the ratings guidelines for PG-13 movies, may be used just once. Usually, filmmakers employ this option at a most critical (usually comic) passage in the movie, but that’s not the case here. It comes across as clunky, forced, out of place, and totally unnecessary. If you want to prepare, it takes place in the third act when Frank and Bonnie are on a docked boat at nighttime.

“Gifted” isn’t just a great family film, it offers insight and lessons for a lifetime and might actually make you and your children better people. That’s far more than you can expect to take away from any movie.

Originally from Washington, D.C., Michael Clark has provided film content to over 30 print and online media outlets. He co-founded the Atlanta Film Critics Circle in 2017 and is a weekly contributor to the Shamon Burke Show on FloridaManRadio.com. Since 1995, Mr. Clark has written over 4,000 movie reviews and film-related articles. He favors dark comedy, thrillers, and documentaries.

PLANNING AHEAD

Block Scheduling: An Easy Way to Organize Your Day

BARBARA DANZA

More people than ever are free to manage their time the best way they see fit. They’ve ditched the 9 to 5 in favor of freelance or entrepreneurship, untethered themselves from the school calendar in favor of homeschooling, or simply found themselves enjoying flexibility with a work-from-home arrangement.

As they say, with great freedom comes great responsibility. While this freedom is wonderful, it also poses unique challenges. When you can do whatever you want, everything you could possibly do seems to race to the forefront of your mind, leading to overwhelm and stress. One simple strategy I’ve found to tame the overwhelm and ensure I’m getting around to all that I should is the block schedule.

A block schedule is an easy way to organize the flow of a routine day. By breaking up your day into a handful of time blocks, you create a simple guide to follow each day. Furthermore, when you run out of time working on something, you can rest assured you’ll return to the task at hand tomorrow during the same

block. A typical day might be divided into five to seven blocks, and days off or weak ends likely have different or no blocks.

To determine the best strategy for dividing your day, think through your current routines, how your mental and physical energy tends to ebb and flow throughout the day, and your key priorities in life.

The first and last blocks of the day are likely the easiest to

define, as you probably already follow some sort of routine to begin and end your day. Let’s call them the early morning and late-night blocks. Routine tasks like waking up, getting ready, exercising, and making breakfast may be part of your early morning block. Tidying, reading, and setting out tomorrow’s clothes may be part of the late-night block. While these seem obvious, defining blocks of time will help you stay on track as well as free you from the nagging worry that you should be doing something else.

The blocks that make up the bulk of the day will, of course, vary widely from person to person. Set up blocks that allow you to focus on what’s most important and do so at the most opportune time of day. For example, I need to dedicate a portion of my day to writing. I know that my creative energy and mental clarity tend to

be strongest in the morning. So I’ve defined a block of time early in the day for deep work. Having this time dedicated to work that would otherwise be easy to set aside in favor of more seemingly urgent tasks is immensely helpful to me.

On the other hand, I also need to take care of less mentally taxing tasks such as feeding my family and taking care of my home. I know that my energy tends to dip in the afternoon, so that’s when I’ve blocked off time for things like laundry, cleaning, and preparing dinner.

As you think about your day, you’ll likely be able to identify common tasks and activities that are best handled as a group or during a particular portion of the day. You might create a block for running errands, homeschool basket time, clearing out your inbox, or going for a walk.

You might create a block for running errands or going for a walk.



LJUPCO SMOKOVSKI/SHUTTERSTOCK



Most are titles you've probably never heard of; few make their way into curricula.

BOOKS

Riveting Reads to Help Your Child Understand Communism's Evils

MATTHEW JOHN

With the American Library Association's recent announcement of a Marxist as its next president, there's never been a better time to hunker down and educate your children on the evils of communism.

While there's a wealth of exceptional non-fiction works (meant for adults) taking communism to task, there remains much less out there for young readers. (Publishers, that's your cue!)

Fortunately, a small but extremely compelling body of children's literature, aimed primarily at middle-grade readers, exists that can serve just this purpose. Most are titles you've probably never heard of; few make their way into curricula.

All have in common that they thrust you into the shoes of their narrators, and—as the saying goes—have you walk a mile. A tough, even terrifying, mile. Each makes for a remarkably eye-opening experience.

(If your kid thinks an hour or two of weekend chores count as hardship, they're in for a much-due reality check.)

These are memoirs as well as real-life, real-event-inspired stories that capture powerfully the pain, the betrayals, the turmoil, the violence, and the crushing oppression that accompany life under communist rule. Wherever it may be, whenever it may be.

Here's a careful selection of four books to get you started. I've found these to be particularly compelling for my middle school readers (and many high schoolers,

as well—even if not the intended audience). Together, they provide a sweeping and unforgettable picture of what's wrong with Marxism and its political offspring, communism. They amount to a far-reaching indictment, all told, as they span four different countries and roughly a century of history. Lots of fodder for discussion with your young readers here.

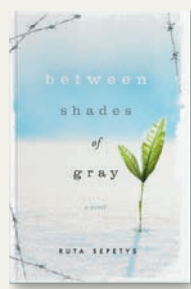
All have in common that they thrust you into the shoes of their narrators, and—as the saying goes—have you walk a mile. A tough, even terrifying, mile.

And if you happen to find any titles particularly meaningful to your family or child, don't forget to do your part and recommend them to your school board, teachers, library, or even bookstore.

Your voice counts! There's no reason not to expect curricular units, days of commemoration, and library displays on the legacy of communism—just as we do on the Holocaust. And given that it's a doctrine still alive, and with startlingly wide appeal, we might even say it's urgent.

Matthew John is a veteran teacher and writer who is passionate about history, culture, and good literature. He lives in New York.

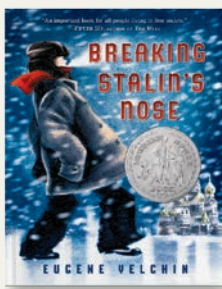
ART BY LINDA HINTERSTOCK



'Between Shades of Gray' by Ruta Sepetys
A moving and haunting tale of one Lithuanian family's ordeal under Soviet communism, this story sets itself apart with its beautiful prose, narrated from the point of view of its imagined 15-year-old female protagonist, who is an aspiring artist.

From the opening scene, we feel the pain and terror of separation that so many families went through at the hands of Stalin's NKVD. "They took me in my nightgown," the tale begins, eventually following the family all the way to Siberia, where they are subjected to the horrors of Stalin's notorious gulag system.

It's a deeply emotional story, filled with love, separation, and longing, alongside inhuman cruelty, and an eye-opening experience that readers won't soon forget. The book has deservedly won several awards, has a superbly narrated audiobook edition, and was adapted in 2018 for the silver screen under the title of "Ashes in the Snow."



'Breaking Stalin's Nose' by Eugene Yelchin
Yelchin's story also involves Soviet communism, but through a very different—and personal—lens. The events in this tale are based on the author's own experiences growing up behind the Iron Curtain. It captures well the euphoria of the day in which everyone—from innocent children, like our young narrator, Sasha to adults, like his communist father—was so easily swept up.

Told in almost real-time, and spanning just two days' events, Sasha's long-awaited chance to join the Young Pioneers takes a calamitous twist when he accidentally damages a bust of Stalin (hence the title) and breaks a peer's glasses with a snowball.

The book features graphite illustrations that help to convey the work's mood, while making the tale accessible to even younger readers. It was honored with a Newbery Medal in 2012.



'A Night Divided' by Jennifer A. Nielsen
Nielsen—who is better known for her blockbuster fantasy works—here brings her trademark pacing and plotting to Germany in the aftermath of World War II, where life under communism is anything but the rosy utopia Marx made it out to be.

Reading more like a thriller than historical fiction, "Night" tells the tale of a family divided—quite literally—by the Berlin Wall and the daring, heroic lengths that they will go to (tunneling, even!) in order to escape Soviet communism.

A very convincing depiction of communism's evils in a chapter of history often overlooked. Readers will learn in particular about how communism breeds suspicion, paranoia, and distrust through the likes of the Stasi—who force people to spy on their friends and neighbors, and commit acts as unspeakable as murder.



'Red Scarf Girl' by Ji-li Jiang
Finally re-issued with the attractive cover art it deserves, Jiang's memoir (this one's autobiographical) provides a heartbreaking look at the madness that was Mao's Cultural Revolution (1966–76) in China.

"Red Scarf Girl" dramatically portrays the constant terrors of arrest and imprisonment that an entire generation faced, as well as the heart-rending tests of loyalty to loved ones that many children were put through. Ultimately, a message of hope and courage is offered—even as China continues to suffer under Mao's legacy of tyranny.

Jiang's book has rightly been likened to "The Diary of Anne Frank." Let us hope that it and its kin herein one day enjoy equally broad appeal.

Stay tuned for more recommendations along these lines, including picks for high school readers.

HOMESCHOOLING

Preparing for the High School Years

BARBARA DANZA

Many homeschooling parents are not only in the process of wrapping up their family's homeschooling year, if they follow a traditional school year schedule, but also preparing for next year's school year. The most frightened of them—besides perhaps those preparing for their first homeschooling year—are very likely those about to begin the high school years. While elementary education and even those middle school years seem to allow for delightful, interest-led learning and lots of fun, high school looms as a serious endeavor—or so we may think.

To gain clarity and advice about planning to homeschool high school, I asked Leigh Bortins, a homeschooling expert and founder of the curriculum company Classical Conversations, for her insights.

The Epoch Times: What are some common misconceptions homeschooling parents hold about homeschooling high school?

Leigh Bortins: One of the major misconceptions homeschooling parents hold is that they do not have what it takes to teach a high school curriculum. Some homeschooling parents

may be concerned that complex subjects such as physics, calculus, or some mathematics are out of their wheelhouse and that they won't know the material themselves. Parents should encourage their older students by helping them research subjects they don't understand rather than teaching content.

The Epoch Times: How does homeschooling high school differ from homeschooling in the younger years?
Ms. Bortins: Homeschooling high school students is less about teaching and more about providing opportunities. Allowing your older students to experience real-life opportunities can be more beneficial than just sitting in a classroom. High schoolers should have the ability and discipline to follow instructions and schedules laid out for them without much of the hand-holding that may be required in younger years. This fosters a learning environment with more freedom, such as field trips and hands-on learning opportunities.

The Epoch Times: What are the first things parents should consider when beginning to plan their homeschooler's high school journey?
Ms. Bortins: Don't keep school at home! High school students need to serve their community while learning. Employment, travel, service work, and clubs are as important as traditional academics. Homeschooling can be difficult for high schoolers if they do not have a good sense of discipline and responsibility. Having a plan and

schedule is key to keep not only the students but the parents on a path to success. Additionally, it's important to allow time for fun, experimentation, and creativity.

The Epoch Times: How can homeschooling parents adequately prepare their high schoolers for college while avoiding the trap of imitating public school or doing things for the sake of checking boxes?
Ms. Bortins: Remember that industrial education is a very artificial form of education designed to find the best employees and ignore the best innovators—so be innovative! Also, transcripts and credits are a reduced way to assess your child. Collate all your child's activities and accomplishments and then arrange them into the form that college admissions offices typically see. One of the best things a parent

High school homeschooled students can take advantage of field trips and hands-on learning opportunities.



BRAY/SHUTTERSTOCK

can do is partner with their children in looking for schools and considering careers. Parents can and should lend their assistance and wisdom but should also allow the student to make decisions on their own. Most importantly, parents should provide counsel and guidance to ensure their children are aware of the outcomes of their decisions.

The Epoch Times: What strategies do you recommend parents employ to foster a high schooler's motivation and love of learning?
Ms. Bortins: The word "amateur" means "lover." Encourage your older students in the activities they love like photography, construction, drama, music, and politics. In turn, they will be more likely to study the history, processes, and science behind the subjects they love. Parents should find out what makes their children excited and what piques their interest and then use that to teach them. Also, it's important to learn how they learn (visual, oral, audio, hands-on, etc.).
The Epoch Times: What do you believe are the greatest advantages of homeschooling high school?
Ms. Bortins: Removing the water-tight lines between subjects. Don't you wish doctors were better economists and politicians better historians? Homeschooling also provides a space for them to learn and progress at their own pace, while learning how to think for themselves without the influence of a secular and complex school system.



FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

Week 19, 2022

Chorus of Fairies

By William Allingham

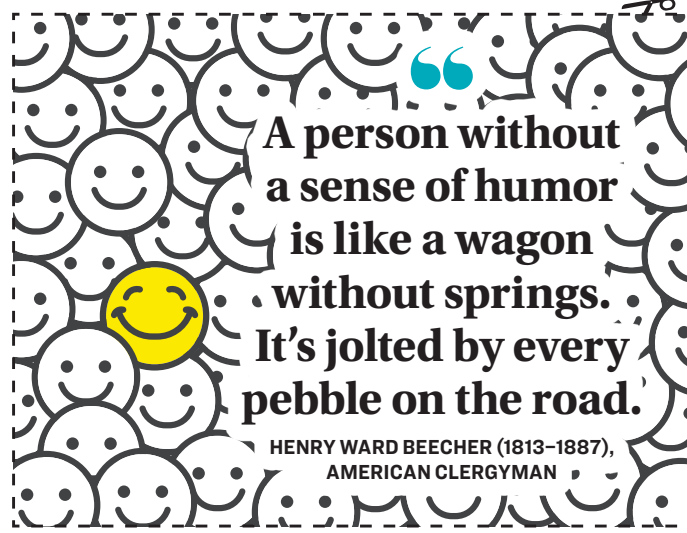
Golden, golden,
Light unfolding,
Busily, merrily, work and play,
In flowery meadows,
And forest shadows,
All the length of a Summer day!
All the length of a Summer day!

Sprightly, lightly,
Sing we rightly,
Moments brightly hurry away;
Fruit-tree blossoms,
And roses' bosoms,—
Clear blue sky of a Summer day!
Dear blue sky of a Summer day!

Springlets, brooklets,
Greeny nooklets,
Hill and Valley, and salt sea-spray,
Comrade rovers,
Fairy lovers,—
All the length of a Summer day
All the livelong Summer day!



ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK



A person without
a sense of humor
is like a wagon
without springs.
It's jolted by every
pebble on the road.

HENRY WARD BEECHER (1813-1887),
AMERICAN CLERGYMAN

SENGOOL/SHUTTERSTOCK



WHAT KIND OF
SHOES
DID THE
ROBBER
PREFER?

SNAKES

ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK

By Aidan Danza, age 15

FROM WOOL TO FABRIC

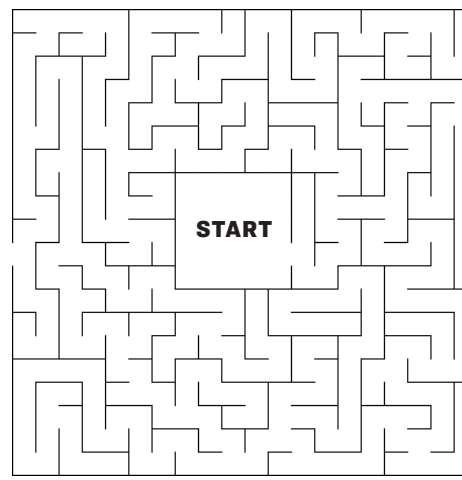
Sheep's wool is one of the more common animal fibers used today, and it can be used to make any type of garment, including hats and coats.

The process of using wool starts on a sheep farm. Sheep are raised all over the world, but the United States is actually not a top producer or consumer of wool (or any sheep product, for that matter). The market is led by Australia, followed by China and Russia. Throughout the year, the sheep have been growing their wool out, and their coats are shorn, or shaved, once a year. This can be done with a hand shearer, or by machine, with electric clippers. Done right, the process of sheep shearing is as painless as a haircut for a human, although the sheep can be nicked by an inexperienced shearer. However, the difference between sheep wool and human hair is that sheep wool will actually stay in one contiguous body,

called a fleece. After that, the fleece is "skirted," meaning that waste areas will be discarded. If any area is matted, or contains manure or sweat, it's removed. Then it goes through an extensive cleaning process to remove all remaining dirt. This process can vary, depending on who is performing it. Industrial wool spinners might scour the wool with sulfuric acid, while a home spinner might just use a washing machine and laundry detergent. After this, the wool must be carded, so as to separate the fibers. This process is similar to brushing hair, in that it aligns, separates, and straightens the fibers that make up fleece. This is done with carding brushes or a carding machine. Then, the carded wool is spun, on a spindle, a spinning wheel, or an industrial spinning machine. All these machines, be they simple or complicated, accomplish the task of twisting the wool together into thread. After spinning, the threads are made into cloth, either by knitting (again, by hand or machine). Weaving is quite simple in principle: Woven cloth is simply many small threads that have been interlaced at right angles a nearly countless number of times. However, because of the sheer amounts of thread involved, it's difficult to do this without a machine, although of course it was done for millennia before the invention of modern equipment.

GLOBAL/GETTY IMAGES

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

1	10		
62			
1	7		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Easy 1
1 - 2 x (1 - 0)

Medium puzzle 1

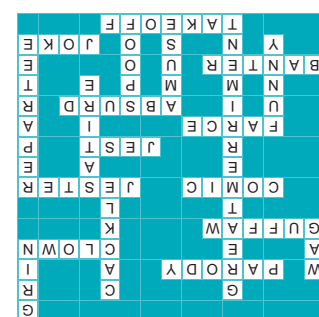
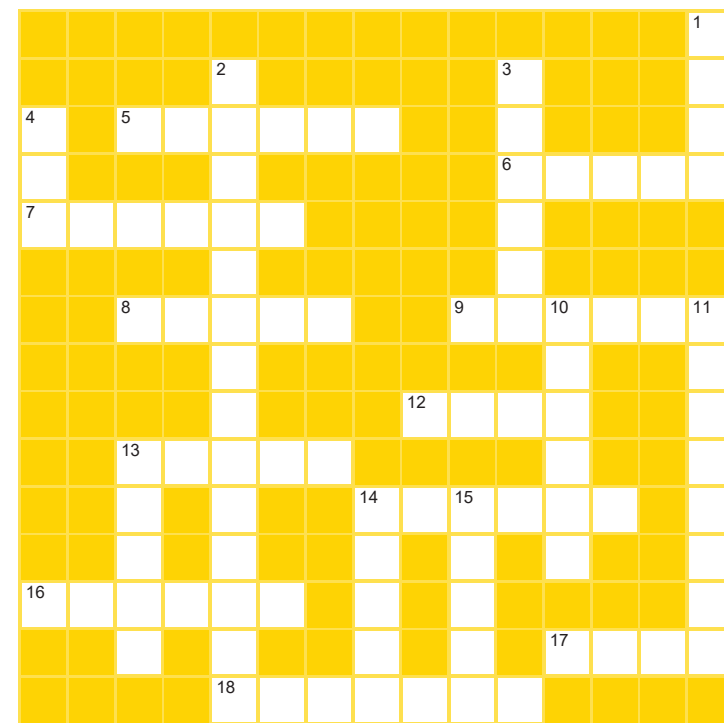
4	20		
94			
1	18		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Medium 1
81 + 13 x (1 - 0)

Hard puzzle 1

16	27		
25			
1	18		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Hard 1
1 x (81 - 91 + 2)



Across

- 5 Make fun of (6)
- 6 Circus performer (5)
- 7 Belly laugh (6)
- 8 He/she tells jokes (5)
- 9 Cap and bells wearer (6)
- 12 Joke (4)

Down

- 1 Beam (4)
- 2 A really good time (5,9)
- 3 Witch's laugh (6)
- 4 Spot's smile (3)
- 10 It's funny, but not (6)
- 11 Comeback (8)
- 13 Odd (5)
- 14 Charm (5)
- 15 Weird AI song (5)

- 13 Madcap comedy (5)
- 14 Laughable (6)
- 16 Repartee (6)
- 17 One-liner, e.g. (4)
- 18 Leave (7)

(Above) The Shield nickel was designed by James B. Longacre.

(Left) James Barton Longacre (Aug. 11, 1794-Jan. 1, 1869) was an American portraitist and engraver, and the fourth chief engraver of the United States Mint.

ALL PHOTOS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

Seek the Truth.

Become a reporter
with The Epoch Times

Apply now:
ept.ms/JOBS

THE
EPOCH
TIMES