WEEK 5, 2023

THE EPOCH TIMES IFFE & TRADITION

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Loneliness can lead to a lack of purpose, belonging, or support.

Happiness Is Friendship: 3 Elements to Fight Loneliness and Government Intrusion

In an era of increasing loneliness and unhappiness, good friendships hold the key to a more fulfilling life

ANNIE HOLMQUIST

That individual unhappiness is at unprecedented levels would probably surprise no one anymore. Combine the state of the world-rising crime rates, political fights, and a squelching of freedoms—with the increased atomization of everyone, and it's difficult for even the most happy-go-lucky among us to keep a smile on. But there is hope, as a recent CBS "Sunday Morning" segment addressing this issue of mass unhappiness explains. Citing a long-running Harvard study, CBS notes that the happiest individuals in life are those who have solid relationships and friendships. Such friendships give individuals a sense of meaning and purpose, a feeling of belonging, and a structure of support. Unfortunately, many of us don't really know how to do friendships anymore; the fast pace of life and the prevalence of technology have taken the place of these vital relationships in our life. Thus, a reminder of what makes a good friendship seems to be in order.



BIBA KAYEWICH

Generosity in Connection

Generosity is the first element of a good friendship. Twentiethcentury thinker Russell Kirk addressed this quality in his book, "Economics: Work and Prosperity," contrasting generosity with envy. The latter is a vice-like emotion that drives loneliness, Kirk notes, while, "Generosity is an emotion that attracts friends." Someone quick to give sincere praise and support the work of others has the marks of a generous person.

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RELATIONSHIPS

Building Bridges: Adults Young and Old Are Natural Allies

The older and younger generations have more in common than you might think

JEFF MINICK

n the 21st century, division has become as American as mom and apple pie.

Red states and blue states, left and right, black and white, male and female, rich and poor: Our culture teaches us to judge others by such criteria as skin color, where we went to school and the work we do, and the generation in which we were born. Instead of building bridges, some of our politicians, commentators, and academics work furiously to dig canyons.

The gulf between young and old receives less attention in the media than other issues, but it, too, is both real and unfortunate. At times, this generational misunderstanding can also be amusing. How many times have you heard folks 60 and older say, "I don't understand young people today"? At the same time, those 40 and under will complain, "Boomers just don't get us."

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THE EPOCH TIMES INTERVIEWS SHEN YUN AUDIENCES

Shen Yun: Beauty Against a Backdrop of Darkness

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



[The takeaway]: 'To never give up! No matter what's going on, there's a divine power behind everything. Regardless of what the circumstances are, just keep on going. JOSEPHINE ABBOUD,

vice president in marketing, Fairfax, Va.



The baritone's song is very meaningful and inspiring. He sang that we human beings came to the earth from heaven. I felt the writer of the lyrics must be a divine being.

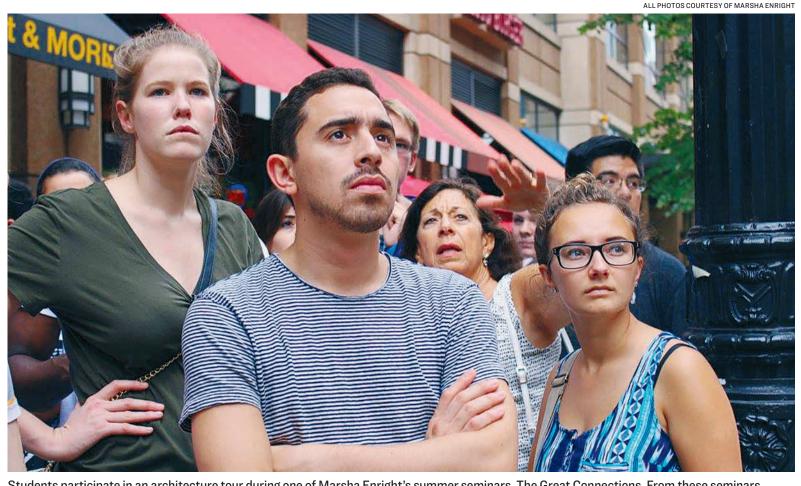
ANBO MITURU, IT company president, Tokyo



I loved it. I had tears in my eyes the whole time. It's so beautiful. MARCUS FELDMAN, composer, Folsom, Calif.

Shen Yun's Upcoming Performances					
Modesto Calif.	Feb. 1				
Evansville Ind.	Feb.1				
Sacramento Calif.	Feb. 2–4				
Nashville Tenn.	Feb. 3-4				
San Antonio Texas	Feb. 3–19				
Cleveland Ohio	Feb. 4–5				
For additional perf please visit ShenY					

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



Students participate in an architecture tour during one of Marsha Enright's summer seminars, The Great Connections. From these seminars, the idea of a college was born.

Montessori Goes to College

The Montessori method has been associated with primary education but Reliance College, inspired by its principles, is due to open in 2024

JEFF MINICK

We hear a lot of negative news these days about the state of our colleges and universities: low-bar requirements for admission, the abandonment of such survey courses as literature and U.S. history, grade inflation, professors with a leftist agenda, censorship, and of course, ever-rising tuition and fees. Less noted is the dramatic decline in liberal

arts majors. Fewer than one in 10 students now pursue a degree in the humanities. Lump together philosophy, history, English literature, and foreign languages, and in 2020, less than 4 percent earned their bachelor's in one of these fields.

Often neglected in this dismal news from academia are those institutions of higher learning, both secular and religious, that have remained bastions of liberty, free speech, and the liberal arts. Among these, we find schools such as Hillsdale College, Bob Jones University, Franciscan University of In the past few decades, other institutions, many of them quite small, have joined these ranks, colleges such as Christendom, Patrick Henry, and Wyoming Catholic. More recently, places such as North Carolina's Thales College and the University of Austin have opened their doors. In their mission statements, nearly all of these schools, old and new, advocate for tradition, freedom of inquiry and civil discourse, and the pursuit Maria and Marsha of truth as vital to a free society.

And if all goes well, in 2024 Chicago's Reliance College will be joining these robust institutions.

The Mission

From its website, Reliance College proclaims its mission, a proposal that promises "to provide a superior education that promotes the values of reason, individualism and a free society ... to instill the mores, the habits of thought and action, necessary for free, independent, self-reliant persons to be autonomous. We help young people become entrepreneurs of their own lives."

To achieve those goals, Reliance aims to combine a Great Books learning approach with training in business, finance, and fields

tion is summed up in this Reliance goal for the student: "Do you want to be your own Master? Learn how to be an entrepreneur in life, no matter what you do for a living."

Two other remarks on this website are equally significant. The first is delivered by founder Marsha Familaro Enright: "Achievement and success require the vision of the possible and the ability to weather the actual."

Enright and her board of directors hope to open **Reliance College in 2024** with at least 50 students.

The second quotation comes as a surprise, as it originates with Maria Monteseducation, which is usually associated with young children:

"Discipline must come through liberty. ... We do not consider an individual disciplined only when he has been rendered as artificially silent as a mute and as immoveable as a paralytic. He is an individual annihilated, not disciplined."

In her online essay "The Ordered Liberty of Montessori Education," Enright explains to readers the educational philosophy of Montessori and its practical application in the system of education named in her honor. Writing of such schools, Enright notes that "its fundamental principle is freedom in a structured environment," that children are treated with respect, and that the intention is always to cultivate the student's powers of reason and judgment.

Enright knows whereof she speaks. In an interview with The Epoch Times, she related that several decades ago, when her son was 3, she enrolled him in a Montessori school in Chicago. When her son was in third grade and the school had to move, she and a group Marsha Enright's students work on a writing of parents started Council Oak Montessori

selected by individual students. This inten- School, which she managed for 27 years. Trained in the Montessori method, she instructed teachers employed there in addition to performing her administrative tasks.

Yet Enright's credentials and interests in education extend far beyond Council Oak.A graduate of Northwestern University, where she majored in biology, she then received further education in the field of social research at New York City's well-known New School. Over the years, she has written on subjects ranging from neuropsychology to the philosophy of biology to culture and literature.

The Next Step

More than 20 years ago, her reading, research, and passion for the well-being of young people led Enright to develop a deep interest in the field of higher education. Aware that many universities, most of them under the influence of the left, were moving away from the Great Books, studies in Western culture, and freedom of thought Steubenville, and Hampden-Sydney College. sori, creator of the Montessori method of and speech—"I'd seen this coming for a long time," she says—Enright devoted a year to researching colleges and universities, their histories, philosophies, and curricula.

In 2006, Enright founded the Reason, Individualism, Freedom Institute, an organization reflecting her interests in those areas, including entrepreneurship. Three years later, the Institute began sponsoring a sort of summer school, which became The Great Connections. Since then, this program has featured a mix of Western classics, inspirational speakers, Socratic discussion groups, and activities that include workshops in im-



exercise during a summer seminar

Happiness Is Friendship: 3 Elements to Fight Loneliness and Government Intrusion

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Strange as it may seem, Kirk also delineates generosity as an American trait, and one free from Marxist vitriol.

"In Marxist lands, envy is approved by the men in power," Kirk notes. "The Marxist indoctrinator deliberately preaches envy. By appealing to that strong vice, he may be able to pull down constitutions, classes, and religions."

Given the trend toward Marxism in our nation during the 30-some years after Kirk wrote these words, one has to wonder whether envy-producing Marxism is leading to the epidemic of loneliness we're facing today.

Alignment of Values

Common interests are the second element of friendship. C.S. Lewis famously noted in his book, "The Four Loves," that a good friendship begins with the words, "What? You too? I thought I was the only one," indicating that those who enjoy the same things find a connection they lack with others.

These common interests can revolve around activities, religion, studies, or professions, Lewis wrote, but the deepest

friendships are those that go beyond superficial commonalities. They are the ones in which "Do you love me? means Do you see the same truth?—Or at least, 'Do you care about the same truth?" Lewis wrote. This suggests another reason why today's society struggles with loneliness and a lack of friendship, namely, we can no longer have the conversations that lead us to discover the deep truths that others believe.

Your truth is yours and mine is mine and never the twain shall meet, runs today's woke mantra. To even verbalize your beliefs to another is considered a microaggression Until we are once again free to hold open and honest conversations, disagreeing

with one another or debating a certain issue, we will be condemned to the prison of superficiality, withdrawing from the world prov comedy to encourage student interaction and collaboration skills.

The young people ages 16 to 30 who have taken part in this program experienced all sorts of positive changes, both in their approach to their studies and in their personal lives.

"About 75 percent of the students told me their lives had been transformed," Enright says. The idea behind these summer gatherings was "to help them become entrepreneurs of their own lives."

From these summer seminars blossomed the idea of a college, an institution that would combine classic literature, philosophy, and history with hands-on, real life teaching tools and opportunities, all designed to increase a student's sense of independence, reasoning powers, and selfrespect.

In other words, a Montessori college.

Higher Ed, Higher Aims

Mention "Montessori college," and you may get some questioning looks. After all, isn't Montessori meant mostly for preschool and elementary school kids?

Yet the Montessori stages of development among the young—or planes, as they are called—are fourfold: ages birth to 6; 6 to 12; 12 to 18; and 18 to 24. Montessori schools in the United States are common for the first two planes, and about 150 high schools operate according to Montessori principles and practices. A few colleges offer teaching degrees or training in the Montessori method. But if Marsha Enright has anything to do with it, Reliance College will be the first institution in the United States to deliver an

education based on Montessori principles. Under "Benefits" on the school's website are listed independence, skills, mentoring, and portfolio. These four key features are designed to give students the chance to foster interpersonal and social skills; enhance their appreciation of their culture, history, and the ideals of liberty; provide real-life work experiences in areas that interest them; and assemble portfolios that act as tools for gaining employment as well as reflecting their

accomplishments. Enright and her board of directors, which includes her husband, poet and playwright John Joseph Enright, hope to open Reliance in 2024 with at least 50 students. Like a few other colleges in the United States, federal loans won't play a part in student tuition. Plans also are underway for the college to offer some type of continuing-education program for older adults.

A Last Word

Enright said: "I want to reiterate one point. I'm knowledgeable about positive psychology and am making sure to incorporate those principles into the program." She wants to see students and graduates flourishing, confident, and thriving in whatever they undertake.

Because of that training, the Great Connections, and her well-founded concerns about the mental and emotional trials faced by today's young people, Enright, therefore, intends a curriculum that imparts hope and optimism to students.

In her article "What Vision Do Young People Need?" Enright writes: "Vital are a hopeful view of the future, a vision that life can be an adventure worth the striving, and heroes that embody the highest reaches of human nature. Without these elements, the young are lost, adrift—only too susceptible to depression and even suicide."

That's the aim of Reliance College and some other independent schools: to provide the young with hope where there is despair, a spirit of quest and adventure, and a sense that their lives can be meaningful and worth living.

Jeff Minick lives and writes in Front Royal, Virginia. 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."

Building **Bridges**: **Adults Young** and Old Are **Natural Allies**

Continued from Page 1

RELATIONSHIPS

It's too bad, really, because with all the mess and muddle of our national misunderstandings, both groups are missing opportunities to gain wisdom, better health, and personal growth.

A Few Stats

A study from Columbia University reports that 1 in 3 adults over the age of 50 feels lonely. Caring for an infirm spouse, retirement, the deaths of friends, and other factors can lead these men and women to feel socially isolated. In turn, they may neglect their health, remove themselves from activities, and turn on the television for company rather than ringing up a friend or family member.

Meanwhile, millennials, those born between 1981 and 1996, and the Gen Z Americans who follow them, exhibit even higher rates of isolation and social disconnection. Search online for "Millennial loneliness" or "Generation Z loneliness," and articles, data, and polls appear declaring them "the loneliest generations." Social media clearly hasn't replaced face-to-face friendships.

Given these figures and this common sense of isolation across the generations, might not a merger of these lonely hearts produce some happiness for young and old alike?

Social media clearly hasn't replaced face-toface friendships.

And There's More

In addition to companionship, seniors and their younger counterparts can bring special gifts to each other.

"From my grandfather, [I learned] good morals and the government of my temper," wrote the Roman emperor and philosopher Marcus Aurelius.

emperor's gratitude. Like him, we may have ranging from mentoring in elementary and learned any number of lessons from our secondary schools to working with volunelders, from telling the truth to cooking family favorites to changing a tire on the car. We remember a teacher who steered us through a rough patch, or an employer who inspired us to push harder and strive for excellence.

Examples of such mentors abound in literature and film. In Mark Helprin's novel "A Soldier of the Great War," for example, an elderly professor of aesthetics shares the learning of a lifetime with a 20-something Italian mechanic. In the movie "Secondhand Lions," two crotchety old adventurers take a young nephew under their wing and raise him to manhood.

And the young? They repay the old for their lessons and their friendship in a coin that can be had nowhere else. Beginning in my early 50s, for 12 years, I worked full time teaching liberal arts to seminars of homeschoolers. I found joy in hearing the laughter of my students, watching their friendships and flirtations, listening to their dreams, and helping them learn and grow. Many of them took classes with me for four



a middle school writing course to advanced placement English composition. During this time, I became well-acquainted with them and with their families. Those years of working with teenagers were the happiest and most exciting of my working life.

When making these connections, both young and old act as teachers and pupils. The young instruct by their innocence and idealism, the old by experience and wisdom. Put them together, and you might find you've built the best classroom in the world, even if it meets at a kitchen table or in a local coffee shop.

Coming Together: Some Notes for the Older Gang

Suppose you're looking for companionship, or you just want to enjoy the company of some young people. One way to begin is by searching online for "programs link-Most of us who are older can relate to the ing old to young," where you'll find sites teer outfits focused on intergenerational relationships.

Local organizations can also link you up with the young. One female acquaintance of mine, age 69, teaches a Sunday school for teens at a small church and finds that work a delight. A middle-aged college teacher mentors men in their 20s and 30s, mostly via the internet, on building stronger relationships with their peers.

Of course, such opportunities also lie closer to home. Teenage grandchildren, nephews and nieces in college, that 30-year-old you just hired in accounting, or that new guy on the construction crew who looks a little lost—befriending and guiding them can liven up your world.

It's All About Relationship

Interacting with a 5-year-old grandchild is usually pretty basic. You slip them some treats, you teach them to ride a bike, and you tell them you love them. It's sweet, easy, and enjoyable.

To engage teens and young adults reand five years, advancing, for instance, from quires a different skill set. You must first

earn their respect, and that only comes through relationship.

Suppose your granddaughter, a college junior home for the holidays, has hit the skids. Her grades are down, she looks as if she could use some sunshine, and at family gatherings she spends most of the time in a corner on the sofa, poking away at her phone. You might ask her if she's all right, but unless that relationship is strong, all you're likely to get in return is a shrug and a muttered, "I'm fine."

Discard that direct approach. Instead, invite that granddaughter into your kitchen to do some baking and cooking. Take her out shopping or out to supper at a restaurant. When she returns to school, give her a call on a regular basis.

This tactic of building trust and mutual respect applies across the board. If you're a supervisor, for example, and you want to have an impact on a younger employee, then show an interest in him. Ask about his aspirations and his life outside of work. When possible, collaborate rather than dictate

Presence is everything in building relationships. The confidences will come later and in a natural way.

Listening Comes First

A friend of mine discovered that all of her younger co-workers had friends who were in therapy. Now, some of those friends undoubtedly have deep-seated issues, but most of them are probably looking for a listener, someone who will hear them without judgment or dismissal. We may be living in the great age of communication, but given the scale of loneliness cited above, apparently, a whole lot of people, old as well as young, have no one to listen to them. So to reiterate: Be present. Listen. Don't

interrupt and don't judge. Ask questions. Think before you speak.

Our country has lots of walls right now. Seniors, millennials, and the Gen Z crew can knock down some of these barricades, learn and grow together, and have some fun in the bargain.

unless we want to spend our days talking about the weather.

Steady Commitment

Third, friendships require time and patience, a truth advanced by Aristotle in his "Nicomachean Ethics" that is especially important in our fast-paced technological world. We may meet a certain person and desire a friendship, Aristotle writes, but true friendship develops over time, and is impossible "until each [friend] has been proved loveable and trustworthy to the other." And proving, knowing, and building trust with a friend is only possible when we spend time with that person, having "consumed the proverbial salt together," Aristotle writes.

In recent years, social media has conditioned us to believe that friendship is as happiness that a mature simple as hitting a button and sending a friendship provides.

friend request. But in most cases, such "friendship" doesn't provide the companionship and fellowship we're craving. In fact, as friendship coach Danielle Bayard Jackson explains in the aforementioned CBS "Sunday Morning" clip, research tells us that "it takes about 50 hours to make an acquaintance, about 90 hours to make a good friend, and 200 hours to make a best

friend." In other words, if we're not willing to put in the time and have patience to cultivate a friendship over many hours, then we can't expect to enjoy the bloom of

The Government's Hand Loneliness and its accompanying unhappi-

ness are becoming such an epidemic, Gallup CEO John Clifton tells CBS, that "leaders should make their citizens' happiness a top political priority." Many would likely shudder at such a

thought. Who wants more government involvement in their lives? But perhaps government is

> Good friendships require time and patience to build rust and cultivate true connection.

one of the keys to happiness-not more of it, but less. After all, less government promises to minimize Marxism, the source of envy-driven loneliness. Less government interference also promises more freedom of speech, opening channels of communication which foster deeper friendships. And the more time we spend building and surrounding ourselves with solid friendships, the less we will need to fall back on government for support and help in our times of need.

That alone is enough to make even the glummest among us happy.

Annie Holmquist is a cultural commentator hailing from America's heartland who loves classic books, architecture, music, and values. Her writings can be found at Annie's Attic on Substack.

LIFE & TRADITION 3

DEAR JUNE On Family and Relationships



Gentleness Is a Balm

Women who embody gentleness are a blessing to everyone around them, including themselves

➔ To My Lady Readers,

This week, I'd like to share some reflections on gentleness in the hope that these thoughts help and inspire you as much as they've helped and inspired me.

One of my ongoing questions to myself is how I can do better with life. Recently, part of the answer has been to be more gentle. When I say gentle, I'm speaking of a quintessential feminine trait, different from being a gentleman.

In her book "Fascinating Womanhood for the Timeless Woman," Dixie Andelin Forsyth defines gentleness thus: "Gentleness: This is a hallmark of our sex. It can be beautiful and inspiring. It involves the actions we often take to uplift and preserve others' feelings."

I would add that gentleness is a balm to the souls of husbands and children. When it comes to children, I have found that a gentle touch on the back and a soft voice are far more effective at changing unwanted behavior than yelling, lecturing, nagging, or giving consequences. Nagging and yelling are the opposite of gentleness; I have learned through experience that they leave me feeling frustrated and spent and don't help my children grow or behave well, nor do they contribute to happiness or harmony in the family. Even if reproof or consequences are needed, giving them gently, along with explanations of my reasoning, much better respects the tender feelings of the child.

I'm not saying I'm a perfectly gentle mother, but only that I see the benefits of it. I recall once standing in line at Target and watching the mother in front of me berating her son for fidgeting and bumping into things. How much nicer it would be for everyone, I to be calm in the store. It would probably do a lot more to help him actually calm down. At the same time, I had to admit to myself that I often used that exact same tone with my son and that I was being shown this scene so that I could see how my behavior looks from the outside.

A massage therapist once told me that the gentlest touch can be the most powerful because the body relaxes into it instead of tensing. I've certainly found that gentle touch and movements are powerful, and the same principle applies to relationships—gentleness allows people to relax, trust, reflect, grow, and connect with their hearts. It allows children to trust you and helps instill in them a desire to be good.

I have some friends who inspire me in this realm, and from literature, I've taken inspiration from Ma in the books written by Laura Ingalls Wilder and from Marmee in "Little Women." Both of these women are adored and respected by their husbands and daughters, which is one effect of gentleness.

When it comes to husbands and sons, gentleness in women brings forth love and admiration. For many a man, his mother and wife might be the only ones who care deeply about his feelings.

In the memoir "All Things Wise and Wonderful," the author and English veterinarian James Herriot tells one story that is a great example of a wife being gentle with her husband during a tense time.

Herriot and his wife, Helen, are being taken to dinner by his colleague Granville Bennett and his wife, Zoe. Bennett is a good-hearted, generous man, but in this situation, a bit overconfident:

"Outside the fog was thicker than ever. My colleague backed his enormous Bentley from the garage and began to usher us inside with great ceremony. He installed Helen and Zoe in the back, clucking solicitously over them, then he helped me into the passenger seat in front as though I were a disabled old man, tucking my coat in, adjusting the angle of the seat for maximum thought, if she gently reminded her son | comfort, showing me how the cigar A gentle touch on the back and a soft voice are far more effective at changing unwanted behavior than yelling or lecturing.

Also, gentleness brings with it a great relaxation of mind and spirit, helping us manifest our best and highest potential.

lighter worked, lighting up the glove compartment, enquiring which radio program I desired."

Ahead of them is a very steep, grassy hill, and Bennett, unable to see in the fog, proceeds to drive up it:

"He didn't seem to notice as the nose of the great car rose steadily higher, but when we had achieved an angle of forty-five degrees, Zoe broke in gently from the back.

"Granville, dear, you're on the grass." "My colleague looked round in some surprise. 'Not at all, my love. The road slopes a little here if you remember.' He kept his foot on the throttle.

"I said nothing as my feet rose and my head went back. There was a point when the Bentley was almost perpendicular and I thought we were going over backwards, then I heard Zoe again

"Granville, darling.' There was a hint of urgency in her tone. 'You're going up the bank.'"

This time, it seemed her husband was prepared to concede a little. Bennett takes his foot off the brake, the car shoots backward, stopping with a crunch as it hits something behind. Zoe says:

"You've hit Mrs. Thompson's wall, dear."

To which Bennett replied: "Have I, sweetheart? Ah, one mo-

ment. We'll soon be on our way." He drives forward briefly before

there's a dull crash in the front and the sound of breaking glass and metal: "Darling,' Zoe piped. 'That was the thirty miles an hour sign.'

"'Was it really, my angel?' Granville rubbed his hand on the window."

At this point, he concedes that the trip to the restaurant had better wait.

Now, some of you may be wondering whether gentleness means being submissive or a "doormat." My answer to this is that part of the role of a wife and mother is to help our family members become the best they can be, and central to this is good moral character. So we need to keep the big picture in mind and there will be things we choose to forbear, but we also need to be firm about what matters and address harmful situations appropriately. And in this, gentleness is a great asset because it's wonderful for helping minds to open and hearts to change.

And it most certainly isn't a sign of weakness. Gentleness actually requires great strength, like in the story above, where Zoe remained calm and loving in a tense situation.

Another important facet of gentleness is its effect on the emotional well-being of us women. Being gentle means that we're in control of ourselves and that, like Zoe, we're able to handle tense situations with grace and without undue stress and emotions. This certainly isn't easy, but it's essential for our wellbeing. Our relationships will always bring challenges—this is an inevitable fact of life—and sometimes, the only and best thing we can do is to learn to handle these well.

Also, gentleness brings with it a great relaxation of mind and spirit, helping us manifest our best and highest potential. So in my estimation, it's one of the most powerful and empowering habits we can cultivate. 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.

Russell Kirk Founder of Modern Conservatism

ANDREW BENSON BROWN

A recent New York Times article claimed that poetry is "dead." The argument is not new, but since last month marked the 100th anniversary of T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land," the modernists thought they would reiterate themselves. "We stopped writing good poetry because we are now incapable of doing so," wrote the article's author, Matthew Walther.

Science and technology, Walther argues, have made it impossible to have a holistic relationship with nature. Since "The Waste Land," poets have only described "the fragmentation of human experience."

This is, of course, nonsense. Robert Frost and Dylan Thomas wrote inspiring poetry, and Eliot's later "Four Quartets" is, in

Waste Land." Speaking from experience, I can testify that formal poetry is undergoing a revival today. Thanks to the internet, its practitioners have circumvented gatekeepers in academia and legacy media to bring average people the kind of poetry they like to read. At the forefront of this movement, the Society of Classical Poets is promoting new, original works, the likes of which have not been seen since the 19th century.

"Good literature and bad literature exert powerful influences upon private character and upon the polity of the commonwealth," Russell Kirk once wrote in "Enemies of The Permanent Things" (Arlington House, New York, 1969). Those who take a morbid view of poetry (and other art forms) are not likely to see humanity at large in a much better light. The result is, inevitably, the debasement of moral imagination.

As one of the 20th century's most significant men of letters, Kirk had a good deal to say about the way thought and high culture affect society.

Grandfather's

Cane-Crafting

Has Kept

After a lifetime of

struggling with

in helping others

Him Sober

addiction, Dana Frazier

has found a new purpose

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF TREVOR MICHAUE

Desert Monk Born in 1918, Russell Amos Kirk grew up in poverty. He would walk down train tracks as a child, hunting for bottles to sell to the local grocer for pennies. He had immaterial riches, though, in the form of books. His mother instilled in him a taste for classic literature that bore fruit when, in 1942, he was drafted into the Army and stationed in the Great Salt Desert of Utah. Isolated at a chemical weapons testing camp through the war, he found himself with abundant leisure time to turn toward "the higher things."

As Bradley Birzer notes in his biography, "Russell Kirk: American Conservative," Kirk compared himself to St. Anthony, the monk in the desert, and struggled against the

demon of depression by readmy opinion, a much better poem than "The ing everything he could. Kirk's disgust for military bureaucracy, as well as his horror of the internment of Japanese Americans and the dropping of the atomic bombs, fundamentally shaped his belief in a minimalist government

After the war, he taught at Michigan State University but loathed the activist faculty and decline in educational standards. He then attended graduate school at the University of St Andrews, arriving in Scotland with everything he owned packed in a suitcase. He wrote a dissertation on the intellectual history of conservatism while exploring ancient destinations around Europe.

6 Rules for Life

This dissertation became his most famous book, "The Conservative Mind." Published in 1953, it became an unexpected bestseller. In it, Kirk identified the canonical conservative thinkers in Britain and America, beginning with Edmund Burke, and summarized their key ideas in a clear and distinct way. For this reason, he is considered the founder of the postwar conservative tradition. Kirk selected figures to include in this canon based on how well he felt they preserved "the ancient moral traditions of humanity." He extracted six principles from Burke that these authors expressed:

- Every person is a divine being, and society
- should conform itself to a body of natural law. ("Political problems are, at bottom, religious and moral problems," Kirk wrote.)
- Human life is mysterious and shouldn't be homogenized through logical systems.
- Social order: Equality of opportunity is good, but equality of condition results in "servitude and boredom."
- Personal freedom can't exist if people can't own things. Reason can't guide us through every prob-
- lem. We must rely on tradition and feelings to navigate circumstances.
- Change is inevitable, but hasty innovations usually result in destruction rather than progress. Cautious adaptation is more stable.

Kirk also identified five schools of thought that pose a threat to society:

- In the 18th century, French philosophers such as Voltaire and Diderot believed in shaping a new world according to reason. Rationalism terminated in the "emancipations" of Rousseau and the French
- Revolution. • Jeremy Bentham theorized that actions are right if they benefit a majority.
- Positivism (or Scientism): Auguste Comte thought everything in the world could be verified through logical and mathematical proofs.
- Collectivistic materialism: Karl Marx thought private property should be abolished and society leveled.

In comparing the six principles to the five threats, one notices something. The former, though occasionally defended by individuals, are rooted in the wisdom of the species. The latter are the inventions of specific intellectuals. Since Kirk's time, it's possible to update his list. A sixth threat, postmodernism—the brainchild of Jacques Derrida that "deconstructs" binary categories, which has culminated in the transgender craze has several points in common with the first five. They all fly in the face of natural law,

ignore reality, and seek to sweep away the past through radical egalitarianism.

The greatest error perpetuated by these paradigms is that humanity has no limits, that each person is a wax tablet who can be molded into anything. The belief in human perfectibility always seems to coincide with a disdain for the imperfect average person. In application, these ideas betray a lack of respect for individual dignity and give rise to inhumane systems.

A New Conservative Renaissance?

Conservatives "prefer the devil they know to the devil they don't know," as Kirk says. Conservatism isn't an ideology itself, but a disposition toward renouncing ideology. Its dilemma lies in reconciling individualism with community, and preventing its alliance with capitalism (such as communism, a materialistic system) from degenerating spirit and character.

Today's conservatives often look back to the 1950s as a golden age of American values. Kirk himself helped self-consciously create that image in a society that was emerging from the New Deal and contending with the specter of international communism. This prompts reflections upon our own time: In an era when the left's fanaticism and "internecine ferocity" (as Kirk put it) is leading many moderate liberals to go over to the right, the balance of talent is shifting. There is some indication that we are seeing the beginning of a conservative renaissance today. A number of artistic movements, such as that occurring within poetry, are once again applying norms of truth, beauty, and goodness to combat the malaise of low aesthetic standards being promoted by elitist mainstream institutions.

Progressive ideologies, by the very fact that they erase the past, timestamp their own obsolescence. Just as hardly anyone calls themselves utilitarian or positivist anymore, the current proliferation of fashionable "isms" is sure to dissolve. All conservatives, though, (whether or not they realize it) remain Burkeans-and Kirkians.

Andrew Benson Brown is a Missouri-based poet, journalist, and writing coach. He is an editor at Bard Owl Publishing and Communications and the author of "Legends of Liberty," an epic poem about the American Revolution. For more information, visit Apollogist.wordpress.com

LOUISE CHAMBERS

A former alcoholic has found peace and focus working in nature by crafting unique, natural wooden canes and walking sticks from branches sourced from the woods behind his home in Maine. He credits his craft with keeping him five years sober and counting. Dana Frazier, 60, runs Walk With Us Woodworking alongside his grandson Trevor Michaud in their hometown of Poland, Maine. Originally from Massachusetts, Frazier was a confessed belligerent alcoholic for decades before finding sobriety and, a little later, a reason to stay sober.

"Once I started making the canes, that's when I really became sober, because I felt good," Frazier told The Epoch Times. "I felt good about myself, I felt good that I was doing something for somebody else, besides myself. Now today, I can talk without arguing. I go out in the woods and it's nice and peaceful, there's nobody there but me and nature."

Frazier's humble-looking, lovingly crafted wooden canes have been featured in the news media nationwide, and examples will be showcased at the Maine State Museum in Augusta this year.

The Life-Transforming Passion

Frazier made his first-ever wooden cane for his fiancée, Val Ritchie, while newly sober, after realizing a store-bought cane would cost about \$40-more than they could afford.

"I went out to the woods and got me a stick. I shaved it down and I sanded it," he said. "I've actually still got the very first cane I made ... for her, and it's got the Serenity Prayer [engraved].'

Frazier recalls taking his first drink at the age of 15, claiming that the peak of his addiction was "horrible," when he consumed more than two 12-pack beers a day. When he moved into a Maine trailer park 22 years ago, he met Val, his soulmate, and the pair worked for the park's landlord together.

"She got me sober," Frazier said. "She made me realize that my landlord was taking advantage of me; he was keeping me drinking just to get free work. She woke me up. Since then, I fought with [my addiction] for 20 years."

About 10 years into his struggle, Frazier had kicked the alcohol but got into a severe car accident and was prescribed painkillers for a fractured back and shattered ankle. He spiraled "deeper with the drugs" once his prescription ran out, finding the strength to quit completely in 2017.

Over the years, Michaud has seen immense changes in his grandfather. He has "calmed down a lot," he said.

"He was very belligerent, violent, loud, unsaid. "He started looking toward sobriety [but] never really found it. ... He needed something else to do. He started to notice that it felt good to be able to give somebody something that could help them."

'There's Always Another Way'

A retired property maintenance manager, Frazier now sells his canes at local craft fairs and boutiques for between \$20 and \$25 to recoup expenses. He donates half of his proceeds and half of his inventory to people in need, elderly care homes, and addiction treatment centers such as Maine's Blue Sky Counseling, which have helped him maintain his sobriety.

Frazier said that when someone comes to him expressing that they can't afford to buy the cane, he doesn't shy away from giving it to them. "I know in my heart that they can't afford it, so most likely I'll give it to them," he said.

Watching his grandfather find his flair for making canes, Michaud decided to help by dreaming up the business name—Walk With Us Woodworking—and launching a website and social media to share Frazier's inventory and receive donation requests. Frazier, who cannot read or write, is the sole craftsman and handles the finances.

"Our slogan is, 'We'll make you a custom walking stick or cane right from your backyard,' because it's true," Michaud said. "We go right into the woods, right back of our house or somebody else's house, as long as we have permission, we'll find one that looks good enough and we'll make it beautiful.'

Talking about the feedback and people's reactions so far, Michaud said: "They love the work. They love the story. They love the idea. They love the concept of everything. We've never had a single negative feedback."

Frazier's most recent happy customer was a woman who gave a single specification for her cane: It must measure 33 inches long. Inspired by two design ideas, Frazier made two canes and the woman bought both,

planning to return with a friend.

The family have received orders from as far afield as South Carolina and California and their business is growing with each passing day.

Frazier has found purpose and a sense of achievement, plus relief in knowing that he cooperative. He was a ball of fire," Michaud doesn't need alcohol to alter his mindset. As for his ongoing sobriety, he reminds himself every day that alcohol isn't a fix-all solution for his problems.

"There's always another way," he said. "Don't be scared of judgment or neglect. If you relapse, just keep trying; all you can do is try, and if there are people out there who put you down about it, just don't listen."

Michaud said: "Don't be afraid to ask for help, and don't be afraid to be creative. You never know where it can take you."



The walking stick Frazier made for his grandson.



Walk With Us Woodworking takes wood straight out of the backyard and gives it a new purpose.



Dana Frazier found a sense of achievement in making canes to help others.



Frazier's handcrafted birdhouses and mailboxes.

Russell Kirk, an American political theorist, historian, and literary and social critic, was particularly influential in shaping 20th-century American conservatism. KIRKCENTER.ORG CC BY 2.5

Can We No Longer Trust the Keepers of Past?

The political biases of modern historians threaten to erode the discipline's credibility

DUSTIN BASS

When Michael Bellesiles's book "Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture" came out in 2000, it was widely praised as groundbreaking and a corrective to how Americans viewed the Second Amendment. Bellesiles's career was launched to critical acclaim and was awarded the Bancroft Prize, the prestigious prize awarded for works on American history.

But soon, the prize was retracted and the historian's career cratered after his work proved groundbreaking for the sole reason that it was based on falsified information.

This was a time when the history industry was far less politicized and far more respected. The fact that the Bancroft Prize, awarded by trustees of Columbia University, was rescinded is enough to note that the profession was then more about scholarship and less about politics. According to Phillip W. Magness, an economic historian, author, and director of research and education at the American Institute for Economic Research, the response to shoddy scholarship and politically motivated narratives in historical works would be very different now.

A Shift in Perspective

Magness points to the critically acclaimed and Pulitzer Prize-winning work of "The 1619 Project" as a prime example. The brainchild of The New York Times Magazine's editor Nikole Hannah-Jones was **Of all the primary majors.** an attempt to "reframe" the American founding as one built upon slavery rather than liberty. It came under attack from historians across the political spectrum, including from one of its own fact-checking historians. As Magness pointed out during an interview on "The Sons of History" podcast, the accolades continued o pour in, including the Pulitzer, while the multi-essay work was being heavily scrutinized.

The economic historian, who wrote "The 1619 Project: A Critique," pointed out how this shift from historical scholarship to on," he said. political narratives over a 20-year period happened. Magness said that in the 1960s, the political disparity in the academic history industry was about 45 percent libthat these numbers hardly changed into cal motives in historical works. Magness



A mural depicts President George Washington as he lays the cornerstone of the U.S. Capitol on Sept. 18, 1793.

the 1990s, but in the early 2000s, the political leanings of history academics became more disparate with liberal professors accounting for anywhere between 80 to 90 percent of a given college's history department.

"It creates an intellectual laziness among historians," he said. "They no longer have to defend their positions with evidence or articulate their beliefs."

Magness said there has been a shift away from rigorous fact-based scholarship and toward historical narratives that serve a political purpose. He said these narratives, which are merely polemics, utilize evidence to either prop up a political or social position to destroy an opposing narrative.

history over the past 10 years has lost more students as a percentage than any other major.

Phillip W. Magness, director of research and education, American Institute for Economic Research

"The political goal drives everything, which means evidence is strictly a weap-

A firestorm started last year when the president of the American Historical Association (AHA), James H. Sweet, went against the prevailing narrative. His AHA eral with moderates and conservatives column "Is History History?" warned sharing the other 55 percent. He added against the use of presentism and politi-

stated that "it was a very reasonable and very mild column that called historians to task," critiquing both the left and the right. But no sooner had the column been posted on Twitter by the association, than the Twitter mob attacked in seemingly coordinated fashion, condemning Sweet and his column, as well as demanding his resignation. In less than 24 hours, Sweet had issued an apology.

"I was surprised at how quickly the apology occurred," Magness said. "It was like a Maoist struggle session apology letter. It was appalling to read."

There were plenty who came out in defense of Sweet but also to condemn his apology letter, so much so that the AHA decided to suspend their own Twitter account till the storm passed. Sweet's initial column remains, but it's prefaced with his apology.

A Historical Silver Lining

With the success of "The 1619 Project," the immediate condemnation of Sweet's sensible column, and the instant arousal of the Twitter mob to defend politically motivated historical works from academia, Magness points to a silver lining.

"When the general public sees commentary from historians who are supexperts, they no longer trust them," he said. "Tax dollars are used to sustain this entire system and it becomes a matter of public finance if the academic world is not actually delivering reliable information to the public. Suddenly the public may awaken and decide to turn off the tax spigot.

Magness pointed out that the profession is already witnessing a decline in student participation. He stated that the academic discipline is imploding, while the interest in history has never had a higher demand.

"Of all the primary majors, history over the past 10 years has lost more students as a percentage than any other major, including English or poetry and other degrees that are not known for their job market. It's unable to attract students anymore," he said.

"The odd thing about that is that it is happening at the same time that public interest in the past has never been stronger. We have a continuous stream of historical books that are constantly on the bestseller lists. Popular historynot academic history—is continuously among the bestsellers. People plan entire vacations going to historical tourist sites. It's a major part of the tourist economy. People are thirsty for information about the past."

The contrast between academic history and popular history is worth noting, as it means that average Americans are becoming more self-reliant on discovering the facts of history and less reliant on blindly following academia. After the praise from historians and academia for "The 1619 Project" and the condemnation of Sweet's column, Magness believes the AHA and academia have killed their posed to be weighing in on the past as reputation, a reputation that can only be restored by doing what it did with Bellesiles, which is to restore its integrity by revoking its embrace of polemics and returning to rigorous scholarship, regardless of the demands of the Twitter mob.

> *Dustin Bass is the host of EpochTV'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.

DEAR NEXT GENERATION Advice from our readers to our young people

Insight From the Ages

I have eight grandkids, all younger than the age of 5. Two pieces of wisdom:

If what you do today shows up on the front of the newspaper tomorrow morning, would your mother be proud or disap-

pointed? It isn't the things we do in life that we egret on our deathbed, it's the things we don't.

—Jack Gerblick, Georgia

Do unto others as you would nave others do unto you. eaching your children or grandkids to think about their actions and reactions. Being calm and entle in teaching them discipline, manners, and chores. Allowing them to speak their truths, listening and learning from them. Playing, singing, reading, and laughing

with them. And that you love them with all your heart and soul! —Maggi Bruch, North Carolina

My wife and I were given a plaque on our 25th anniversary that has several thoughts on it and bits of advice to live by. Living Life

Life is not a race—but indeed a journey. Be honest. Work hard. Be choosy. Say "thank you," "I love you," and "great job" to someone each day. Go to church and take time for prayer. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh. Let your handshake mean more than pen and paper. Love your life and what you've been given, it is not accidental—search for your purpose and do it as best as you can. Dreaming does matter. It allows you to become that which you desire to be. Laugh often. Appreciate the little things in life and enjoy them. Some of the best things really are free. Do not worry, less wrinkles are more becoming. Forgive, it frees the soul. Take time for yourself—plan for longevity. Recognize the special people you've been blessed to know. Live for today. Enjoy the moment.

-Bonnie L Mohr and Steven Eckhoff

"Know thyself," most often attributed to Socrates, is the advice all young people should hear. As Ben Franklin wrote, "Observe all men, thyself most."

A few pearls of wisdom to pass along are the following: Pray and work on a closer relationship with God, read the Bible and the classics, first know yourself and then be yourself, know your responsibility to your creator, give all you have to give, and be courageous. If possible try and get a good liberal arts education in history and literature and another language.

-Karen Proctor, South Dakota

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.

LIFE & TRADITION 7



LARGER THAN LIFE: ART THAT INSPIRES US THROUGH THE AGES Hofburg Palace A CITY WITHIN A CITY

ARIANE TRIEBSWETTER

ith more than 700 years of history, the Hofburg Palace in the center of Vienna turns many pages of history. Once the home and seat of the Habsburg dynasty, the origins of the Imperial Palace date back to the 13th century.

One of the largest palace complexes of the complex. The opulence of the bain the world, the Hofburg Palace almost feels like a city within a city, with its 18 buildings, 19 courtyards, and 2,600 rooms. Originally a medieval castle built by King Ottokar II of Bohemia in 1275, it grew into

a massive complex that would become the beth ("Sisi"), their children, and court residence and seat of power of Austrian rulers up to 1918 Today, the complex features official state-

rooms, museums, art galleries, gardens, a Spanish riding school, and a church. The palace's architecture ranges from

gothic to neoclassical to baroque. The baroque elements are undoubtedly the most impressive architectural features roque combines with the playfulness of the late-baroque rococo decorative style, as can be admired in the majestic Imperial apartments

Emperor Franz Joseph, Empress Eliza-

lived there during the winter months. Rich furnishings decorate the ornate baroque rooms where the famous Austrian couple lived, blending some light touches of rococo such as the Bohemian crystal used in the crystal chandeliers. Other decorative highlights include the dining room decorated with Flemish artwork, the circle room with intricate tapestries, and the large salon decorated with Louis XIVstyle furniture.

Ariane Triebswetter is an international freelance journalist, with a background in modern literature and classical music.



The conference room, also located in the Imperial apartments, is a more discreet approach to the baroque style. A gold crystal chandelier hangs down the ceiling and stucco work and gilding ornate the walls and door frames. Blue is the central color here, present throughout the elegant blue-and-silver carpet, wall tapestry, and chairs.



(Left) The majestic Hofburg Palace, also known as the Imperial Palace, is located right at the heart of Vienna. Here, we have St. Michael's Wing, as designed by Joseph Emanuel Fischer von Erlach. This elegant facade was inspired by Roman architecture and was first meant to resemble a Roman forum. The U-shape follows the square, emphasizing the middle section, which is the entrance to the Imperial apartments

(**Right**) Built in 1552, the Swiss gate serves as an entrance to the Swiss wing, the oldest part of the complex, which now houses the Imperial Treasury. Most of the facade was reworked in the 16th century, following the renaissance style (white color, symmetric windows). However, some medieval aspects remained such as the rollers for a drawbridge within the red gate.

An example of a neoclassical building within the palace complex is the Theseus temple in the Volksgarten. Built between 1819 and 1823 by architect Peter von Nobile, it's a smaller version of the ancient Theseus temple in Athens: the Theseion. The temple now hosts a Canova sculpture and temporary art exhibitions.

This room offers a deeper insight into the life of Emperor Franz Joseph. He used this room as a study and drawing room. Behind the desk is the famous portrait of Empress Elizabeth by Franz Xaver Winterhalter.



gilding. Crowned by a dome, this impressive two-story wooden hall is decorated with frescoes by court painter Daniel Gran and bull's eye windows that allow light to enter the library.

Helping Moms Go After Their Goals and Dreams

Nikki Oden, founder of Your Ideal Mom Life, shares advice for busy moms

BARBARA DANZA

t's no secret that moms wear many hats. Keeping it all together can feel like a mere pipe dream at times. Nikki Oden seems to be figuring it

L out. She is the founder of Your Ideal Mom Life, host of the Love Your Mom Life podcast, and author of the new book, "But Definitely Wear Mascara: Hacks to Help You Love Your Mom Life (and Yourself) a Little More." I asked Oden for her advice for busy moms. Here's what she said.

The Epoch Times: Your new book aims to teach moms how to love their mom life. Have you always loved your mom life? Nikki Oden: Although I love my life now, that wasn't always the case. When I became a mom, I walked away from a lucrative career as a lawyer to settle into raising my children. In the beginning, I had two under 2 and, aside from keeping my toddler from accidentally murdering my infant, had no idea what I was doing. Most days, I didn't even brush my teeth. I completely lost myself in being "mommy" and "wife."

Eventually, I had to admit to myself that I wasn't happy. Like so many moms, I discovered I wanted to have an impact on the world outside of my family—but without forsaking them. It was through that process of trying to integrate what I wanted out of life as a woman with who I wanted to be as a mother (and dropping a lot of balls in the process) that I became

Nikki Oden is the author of "But **Definitely Wear** Mascara: Hacks to Help You Love Your Mom Life (and Yourself) a Little More." COURTESY OF NIKKI ODE





passionate about helping other moms battle burnout, crush their goals, and lose the mom guilt.

The Epoch Times: How does loving your mom life differ throughout the different stages of childhood? Ms. Oden: As your children get older,

certain things become easier. For example, it's not difficult for me to get a few minutes to myself now that my children are able to read on their own and entertain each other. But there are new challenges, too, like nurturing your children's interests, which may require them to be driven to a football field or a tennis court after school, while still juggling the demands of your career and your own personal interests.

The key is to get crystal clear on your priorities, so that even if you aren't getting it all done (and you won't!), you're doing the most important things on your list. And remind yourself often that you are doing your very best.

The Epoch Times: For many moms who wish they had their lives more together, guilt plays a big role. Why do you believe

Most of us are so caught up with the busyness of adulting that we never stop to think about what we want out of life.

Nikki Oden

66

Ms. Oden: I believe mothers often hold themselves to an impossible standard. No mother is perfect, but so many of us strive for perfection-which is a definition we've each invented in our own heads. Inevitably, however, we will make mistakes that affect our children like forgetting to send money for picture day or book fair, and so often our knee-jerk response is to berate ourselves.

But guilt doesn't make anything better. It certainly doesn't change an outcome that's already occurred. When I began to understand that truth, I realized that guilt is a choice. And although we can't always control our first thought (which is when guilt usually hijacks our brains),

we can take responsibility for our second thought. I tell moms, "Speak to yourself the way you would speak to someone you love." Decide what you would do differently the next time, and let it go.

The Epoch Times: What are some of the key strategies you've employed to feel great about your "mom life?" Ms. Oden: I make myself a priority. I choose to wake up before my children so I can meditate, journal, and exercise. I also make my days easier by intentionally performing small but very impactful rituals, like preparing my breakfast the night before and planning my outfit for the next day down to the accessories. The 10-to-15 minutes I spend each night before bed to plan my morning ensures I start each day smoothly, so I'm better equipped to handle the unpredictable chaos that will most definitely ensue at some point with my kiddos.

The Epoch Times: What are some ways in which moms trip themselves up when it comes to achieving satisfaction in their lives?

Ms. Oden: The first is by not giving themselves permission to think about what they truly want their lives to look like. Most of us are so caught up with the busyness of adulting that we never stop to think about what we want out of life. But once we do, we can start living intentionally. We can choose not to feel inadequate or guilty about where we aren't spending our time, because we are now focused on using our days to do things and achieve milestones that get us to where we actually want to go.

Another way moms often trip themselves up is by taking action to change their lives that are too big to be sustainable. Although our goals should be big (and hairy and audacious), the steps we take toward achieving those goals should be tiny at first. I teach moms how to break gigantic annual goals into daily, bitesized activities that, when done consistently over time, help them create more of what they want to experience, whether that's with weight loss, starting a podcast, or getting organized with their time.

The Epoch Times: If a mom reading this is feeling like she's stuck on "the hot mess express" as you say, what's the first thing you'd advise her to do?

Ms. Oden: A mental dump! Every Sunday afternoon, when things tend to be quieter, sit down, put pen to paper, and just start listing all the things that are weighing on you. It doesn't matter what area of your life it pertains to, or how big or small. It doesn't even matter if you believe you'll never have time to do it. If it's on your mind, dump it onto the paper. Once everything is out, even if you do nothing else with the list, you'll feel so

much better. And if you want to take it a step further, you can prioritize the list and determine which items are most important, which can wait, and which can be done by someone other than you. There are people in your life who want to help you. Most people just need to be asked. So ask.

The Gift of Reading Aloud to Your Children

How to set the stage for your children's life-long love of books

KAREN DOLL

Jim Trelease, author of "Jim Trelease's Read-Aloud Handbook," reads: "Every time we read to a child, we're sending a 'pleasure' message to the child's brain. You could even call it a commercial, conditioning the child to associate books and print with pleasure."

Reading aloud to your kids is truly a gift you give to them, and this association with pleasure is key. It sets the stage for helping your kids develop a love of books, reading, and learning. It's pure, joy-filled quality time as you snuggle up with your child and travel to fascinating new places, meet interesting new characters and people, and immerse yourselves in timeless stories of adventure and discovery.

For inspiration, here are some of the amazing benefits of reading aloud to your kids and, to help get you started, some tried-andtrue strategies to create the best experiences.

Benefits of Reading Aloud

Read-aloud time is one of those warm and fuzzy moments you and your kids will cherish forever while also fostering a love of books and reading.

When you read to your children, you give them opportunities to explore different emotions, such as sadness, anger, fear, and anxiety, enabling your kids to take cues from the ways in which the characters cope with those feelings.

Reading aloud is also the pathway to literacy. This simple act of reading to your kids improves vocabulary, strengthens memory, builds thinking and comprehension skills, and encourages active listening. Listening to stories also helps to increase your child's attention span. These benefits are especially helpful if you have a struggling reader.

Stories can also help teach your kids the importance of character traits such as compassion, patience, tolerance, gratitude, kindness, and empathy.

Strategies for Read-Aloud Time

Maria Montessori, Italian-born physician and renowned educator, believed that the period between birth and age 6 is the most critical time for language development in children. Montessori encouraged parents to begin reading to their children as babies. Read slower than you would typically read and speak, giving your kids ample time to process what they hear. Read to your kids every day, even if it's

just for 15 to 20 minutes. Kids thrive on routine and consistency, and they'll surely appreciate those special moments. And if you have less time on some days, you can make it up to them on others. Have a read-a-thon on a less busy day or on the weekend. Suggest an earlier bedtime and cuddle up in bed together and read a longer book, a few all-time favorites, or several books in a series.

Encourage your kids to get actively involved in the story by choosing books that match their interests and by acting out the story as you read. Ask them open-ended questions to get them thinking: Why do you think the mother did that? What are those boys doing?



OKSANA KUZMINA/SHUTTERSTOCI

Why is that little girl crying? Prompt them to predict what will happen next.

Read from a variety of genres. Choose fiction books such as fairy tales, historical fiction, poetry, fables and folk tales, Shakespeare's plays and classics such as "Treasure Island." Read nonfiction books such as biographies, books about other countries and cultures, how-to books, stories about service animals, and any topics they want to learn more about.

Feel free to read stories that are above your child's reading level or grade level. You might be surprised at how much they absorb.

Allow your wiggly kids to move. Let them play with a yo-yo or bounce on an exercise ball. Or they can doodle, work on a craft, or quietly build with blocks.

Also, don't stop reading to your kids once they're reading independently. In fact, continue reading to them when they're tweens and all the way through high school, because it's still so beneficial. It's an emotional time as your teens are growing, changing, and maturing, so this read-aloud time is a comforting constant in their lives. Choose books that will spark conversation and explore different perspectives and points of view.

Karen Doll is a freelance writer and homeschooling consultant based in the small village of Wassergass, Pa. She enjoys writing about homeschooling, gardening, food and culture, family life, and the joys of chicken keeping. Visit her at AtHomeWithKarenDoll.wordpress.com



By Aidan Danza

MATHEMATICIAN

ARCHIMEDES (287-212 B.C.), GREEK



ost **Americans are** familiar with pigeons, and if you live in a city, you definitely are.

WANY PROBLEMS.

BECAUSE IT HAD SO

These ubiquitous birds are called rock pigeons, and they are found all over the world, especially in cities and developed areas. However, the rock pigeon isn't the world's only species of pigeon or even America's only species of pigeon. In fact, the world's pigeons often look more like parrots than pigeons and can even reach the size of a large rooster.



explanatory, as it's a bright-green pigeon with a pink neck. The bird enjoys its tropical rainforest home, eating mostly fruits, but it also adapts readily to civilization and is quite at home in the dense city-state of Singapore

THICK-BILLED GREEN PIGEON

EFTERIS PAPAULAKIS/SHUTTERSTOC

Also from Southeast Asia is the thickbilled green pigeon. Like the pinknecked green pigeon, this pigeon primarily feeds on fruits and lives in rainforests. However, it's a bit less tolerant of human activity, which is why it's thought to be less common. It's green all over, except for the wings, which are a deep-burgundy color with yellow flecks, and the head, which has yellow spectacles. They are named so for their resemblance to a pair of glasses.

VICTORIA **CROWNED** PIGEON

The Victoria crowned pigeon is the world's largest pigeon. It's also from Southeast Asia, but it lives not in Singapore or Thailand, but in New Guinea. Given their enormous size (30 inches at largest) they stay mostly on the ground, foraging on fallen fruits, berries, and grains, They are fully capable of flight, and they fly up

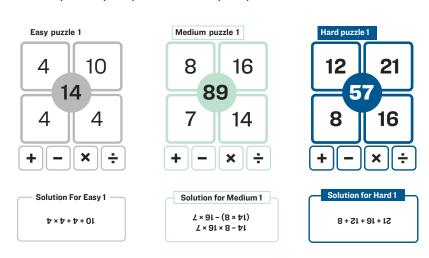
> night, as well as to escape predators.

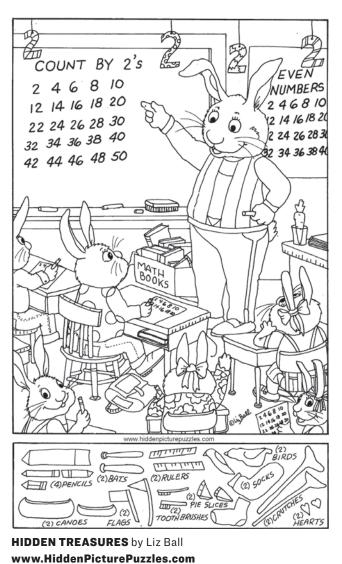
into trees to roost at

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCI



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





WORD SEARCH: Let's Do Math!

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Coins	Hour	
Cone	Last	
Cube	Least	
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Divide	Money	
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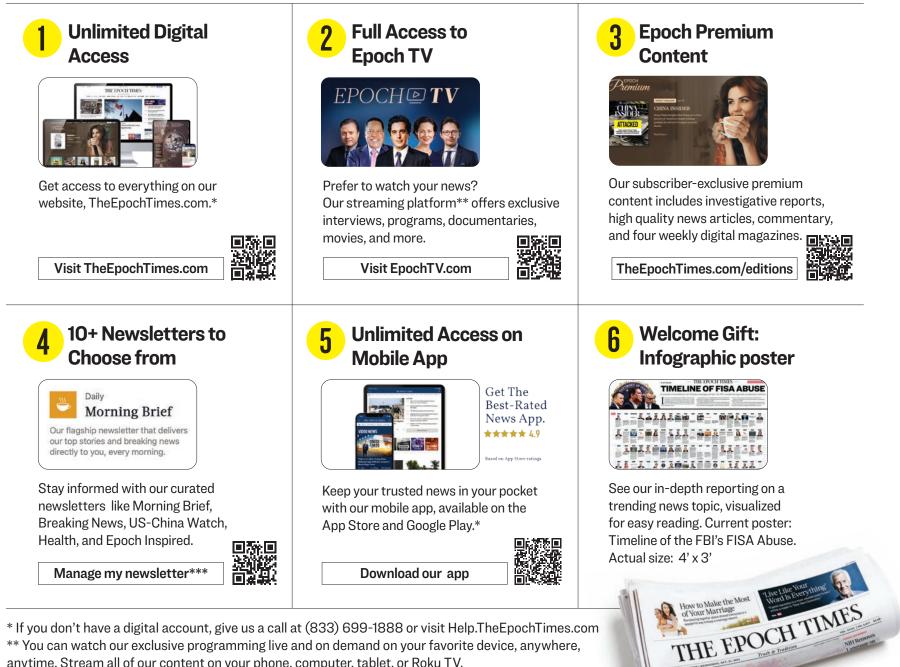
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Few

First

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