

THE EPOCH TIMES

LIFE &

TRADITION

BIBA KAYEWICH



There are opportunities for connection everywhere, whether it's at work, a book club, or bumping into your next-door neighbor.

The Power of Connection

Close relationships are the key to health and happiness

GREGORY JANTZ

Every week at the mental health clinic I lead, I hear people say things like this: "I know lots of people, but I don't feel truly connected to anyone."

"I wish I felt close to someone—just one person—but I don't."

"To be honest, I feel lonely most of the time."

Among the many crises currently facing our society, here's one that's often ignored but shouldn't be: Mil-

lions of people in our country feel chronically lonely, isolated, and disconnected from others. And that lack of connection with others contributes significantly to the mental and physical health problems on display in countless harmful ways.

Because close relationships are so vital to our healthy functioning, concerned experts have been sounding the alarm that chronic loneliness has reached epidemic levels in modern society. A 2020 large-scale report by health service company Cigna shows that America's loneliness epidemic is

getting worse, with 3 in 5 adults (61 percent) reporting that they're lonely, a 7 percent increase from 2018. The study also found that 1 in 4 Americans "rarely" or "never" feel that there are people who understand them.

Another study published in February 2021 by Harvard University's Making Caring Common project reported that 36 percent of respondents reported feeling serious loneliness "frequently" or "almost all the time or all the time."

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Social Media's Harmful Impact on Teenage Girls Is Undeniable

JEAN TWENGE

A recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which found that nearly 1 out of 3 teen girls seriously considered suicide in 2021, is the last straw.

It's the last straw for researchers like me who have been sounding the alarm about teen mental health for years and often found ourselves dismissed. In data I analyzed for my upcoming book, "Generations," teen depression doubled between 2011 and 2019, even before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and emergency room admissions for self-harm quadrupled between 2010 and 2021 among 10- to 14-year-old girls.

But more importantly, it's the last straw for teen girls and their parents, who have been suffering for years but seeing little change. The CDC report has pushed several points to the forefront that are crucial for families to understand. As the mother of three girls, two of them teenagers, I have a personal interest in this topic as well as a professional one.

First, we need to listen to teen girls, whose concerns

are too often pushed aside. It's true that verbal and social bullying, insults, and body image concerns

are more common among girls and more common during adolescence. But that doesn't make them any less real or any less upsetting. It's tempting to dismiss sadness or tears in a teenage girl as "hormones" or "girl drama," but these emotions can sometimes lead to more severe issues and this needs to be taken seriously.

Even if they're just "normal" teen ups and downs, they still hurt and still deserve the empathy—not the derision or denial—of adults. In a Washington Post story on the CDC report, one teen girl specifically said, "I want adults to believe young girls." Right now, that means acknowledging that teen girls are suffering.

Second, we should acknowledge that social media must have something to do with why so many teen girls are miserable. The growth of social media and other technologies in the 2010s radically changed teens' lives:



Social media sites' algorithms are designed to keep users on the apps as long as possible.

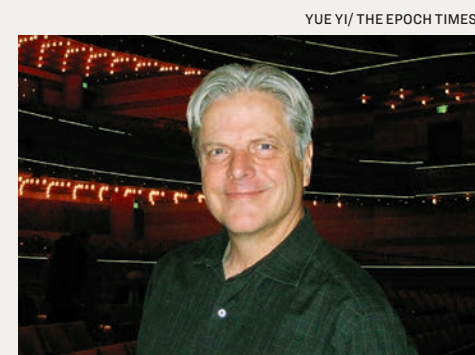
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THE EPOCH TIMES INTERVIEWS
SHEN YUN AUDIENCES

Shen Yun Shows That Goodness Will Ultimately Prevail

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.



YUE YU / THE EPOCH TIMES

[Shen Yun] is a hopeful show about the return of God and compassion.

RICHARD PAUL EVANS,
novelist, Salt Lake City



NTD

[Shen Yun has] created a sense of godliness in the human soul.

SARAH HEINZ,
filmmaker, Phoenix



DAI DEMAN / THE EPOCH TIMES

At the core of this beautiful performance is peace and the principle that goodness will ultimately be victorious.

SEO HYOSEOK,
president of Korea Baduk Federation,
Seoul, South Korea

Shen Yun's Upcoming Performances

Rockford	Ill.	March 1
Charlotte	N.C.	March 2-4
Billings	Mont.	March 4
Indianapolis	Ind.	March 4-5
Bakersfield	Calif.	March 7-8
St. Petersburg/Tampa	Fla.	March 7-April 2
Denver	Colo.	March 8-12

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

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

Turning Weariness Into Enthusiasm

If life's got you down this winter, follow these tips to transform your weariness into strength



IPPEINAO/GETTY IMAGES

BARBARA DANZA

There's a sense of weariness in the air. The news is chaotic and relentless. Skyrocketing prices are a drag. The list of things to conceivably worry about seems awfully long these days.

When you're weary, you feel tired, as if your tank is empty and you don't have the energy to face life's demands with the same enthusiasm you usually do. You may find yourself making silly mistakes or treating others with less grace than you'd like to. Routine tasks seem to take longer, and you may find yourself avoiding things you know you shouldn't. If you're feeling somewhat weary as winter presses on, you're not alone.

Of course, you'd rather not remain in this weary state. You might fantasize about taking drastic measures, such as quitting your stressful job or canceling all of your plans or giving up on your outlandish goals. But weariness isn't a good state from which to make big decisions. In reality, you can usually take smaller, simpler actions to get out of your funk and back to your energized self, ready to face whatever life throws your way.

Rest

If you're just pushing through the weariness, grinding yourself down as you go, take a day of rest. If your life is so busy that you need to schedule it, then schedule it. Find the next day possible that you will do nothing but rest. Get your family on board, take a personal

Whether it's a personal day away from work, ordering dinner out, or time with the family, a day of rest is a breath of fresh air for the weary.

When you're weary, improving your outer environment little by little will foster a more positive inner environment.

day away from work, order dinner out, ask for help, do whatever you need to do to afford yourself a day of rest.

You'll likely experience two phenomena: You'll perk up just a bit having this day to look forward to—a light at the end of the tunnel. Secondly, you'll actually allow yourself to rest when the time comes. To make the most of such a day, you might consider making it a screen-free day as well. Our screens tend to overstimulate us and siphon our energy. They also hinder our ability to sleep well.

A day of true rest—when's the last time you had one of those?

Nourish

What have you been feeding yourself lately? When you're weary, you tend to grab food that will comfort or satisfy a craving quickly. Your care for your food's nutritional content dwindles, and it's easy to get into a sugar-craving cycle in which we feel hungry (and even hangry) more often. This pattern becomes self-perpetuating as we grab more carbs.

Starting with your next meal, slow down and choose satiating and healthy foods. This is a great time for homemade chicken soup or even a healthy snack of cheese and nuts. Make sure you're properly hydrated as well.

You may have lost track of what you're eating. Some people find that logging their meals in a journal or a fitness app can help with identifying how to improve the quality of foods they're nourishing their bodies with.

Social Media's Harmful Impact on Teenage Girls Is Undeniable

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They started spending a lot more time online and less time in-person with friends and less time sleeping. Over the years since 2012, social media platforms became more and more engaging, with girls fighting for likes and followers on Instagram and Snapchat and being drawn into the powerful algorithms of TikTok.

Claims that the links between social media use and depression are "small" fail on multiple points. With heavy users twice as likely to be depressed as light users, it seems odd to describe the links as small. The associations are just as large as factors subject to public health interventions such as smoking, obesity, and lead exposure. Although not all teens are negatively affected by social media, some are very negatively impacted.

If 38 percent of girls who ate a new-to-the-market candy got a stomachache, compared to only 11 percent who ate other candy, the new candy would immediately be pulled from the market even though the majority weren't adversely affected. Yet those are the exact statistics for social media and depression for girls in one of the best-designed studies, and social media is still available to children and teens with no age verification required.

Contrary to popular belief, teen girls don't deny that social media plays a role in their misery. In Meta's internal research on Instagram, leaked in 2021, teens frequently

blamed the pressures of social media for their generation's high rates of depression ("this reaction was unprompted and consistent across all groups," one internal report notes.) So why don't girls give up social media? Partially because the sites' algorithms are designed to keep users on the app for as long as possible, and it's even harder for teens to stop, given their developmental stage. Many teens have also told me they don't know how. All of their friends use social media, so they would feel left out if they didn't use it, despite the negative content that's harming them.

Finally, given this group-level impact, we need group-level solutions. There's growing bipartisan support for raising the minimum age for social media to 16 (it's currently 13). That would at least get social media out of middle schools, which is a developmentally difficult time. The age minimum would also need to be enforced, either through users sending a picture of their ID or through verification by a third-party site. We didn't let the logistics of verifying age stop us from enforcing the age limit for alcohol, cigarettes, or driving, and we shouldn't let it stop us here.

Until that happens, keeping kids and teens off social media is our job as parents—and it's not an easy one. Social media platforms don't require parental permission to open a social media account, and they don't verify age. But here's what parents can do in the meantime.

Consider putting parental controls on your child's device, such as Bark or Google Family Link, so they can't download new apps without your permission, or place strict time limits on their use of social media apps (this may not prevent them from being exposed to harmful content, but it will at least mean that they're exposed to less and may spend their limited time on more beneficial activities). Especially for kids and younger teens, a

Tidy

The stuff that surrounds you can be a heavy burden to bear. The amount of stress and chaos emanating from your environment not only reflects your inner state, but exerts an impact upon it as well.

After you've rested, pop in some earbuds, choose something positive and uplifting to listen to, and spend some time tidying up your space. It's almost comical how therapeutic and encouraging this can be.

As you go, keep an open bag or box handy to collect things you no longer want or need for donation or trash. Take note of even the smallest improvements you make as you go—a cleared-off counter, a pile of laundry put away, a drawer organized.

If things have been getting out of hand for a while, schedule other time slots when you'll putter around your home tidying. When you're weary, improving your outer environment little by little will foster a more positive inner environment.

Renegotiate

Hopefully, after taking good care of yourself and your surroundings, your outlook will begin to become at least a little more hopeful and your state calmer.

When that's the case, take a look at your obligations, your schedule, your plans, and the things that you've got hanging overhead. Write them out in no particular order.

Identify the things on your list that have no business taking up your precious time and energy. Are you worried about something that's really not that important? Are you obsessing over things you have no control over? Are you putting pressure on yourself to do unreasonable things within unreasonable timelines?

Look for things that you can completely let go of, renegotiate the details of things that are imposing too much pressure upon your life (either with yourself or other involved parties), and stretch out the deadlines of goals you're aiming to achieve. You're not giving up what's important here, but rather summoning your bravery to take a look at what's burdening you and reducing the pressure however possible.

Seek

It's difficult to understand the state of the world today. Literally everyone has been through a set of tumultuous years, and the turmoil seems to have shifted in many ways but not subsided. It's taxing and challenging to process amidst life's regular challenges. No wonder you're weary.

When you're weary, seek higher wisdom. Take time to quiet your mind, awaken the very best parts of yourself, and ask for divine guidance.

As Ralph Marston once put it: "Rest when you're weary. Refresh and renew yourself, your body, your mind, your spirit. Then get back to work."



GHISLAIN & MARIE DAVID DE LOSSY/GETTY IMAGES

It's important that parents sincerely listen to their teenage daughters and believe in them.

more straightforward solution is a pared-down phone that doesn't have internet access or any ability to download social media apps. When my husband and I wanted to get a phone for our now 13-year-old daughter last year, we gave her a Gabb phone, which offers a special discount. She can call and text her friends, take photos, and contact us if her bus is delayed without us worrying that she's found a way out to social media sites without our permission. It also looks very similar to a normal Android phone, so it doesn't stand out.

Like many parents, I'm frustrated that we need to solve this problem one by one when so many families are looking for solutions to the same problem. But until the laws are changed, that's the situation we're in if we want to help our teens—and it's clear that they're crying out for help.

Originally published on the *Institute for Family Studies* blog

Jean M. Twenge is a professor of psychology at San Diego State University and is the author of "iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood."



Offering a loved one assistance, a listening ear, or encouragement communicates the message that their dreams are important to you.

The Power of Connection

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In this report, researchers point out the broad reach of isolation:

"Among our survey respondents, there were no significant differences in rates of loneliness based on race or ethnicity, gender, level of education, income, religion, or urbanicity. Large numbers of survey respondents in both political parties suffer loneliness, although Democratic respondents were more likely to report loneliness (40 percent) than Republicans (29 percent)."

What Loneliness Is and Isn't

Loneliness doesn't merely mean the lack of friends. People with many friends can still feel socially detached, just as those with few friends may rarely or never feel a sense of separation.

Likewise, being alone doesn't necessarily mean being lonely, nor is it always something negative. Some people, particularly introverts, enjoy time by themselves and are perfectly comfortable with solitude. Even extroverts desire "me time" to reflect and recharge.

Loneliness is different. When we're lonely, we feel cut off or alienated from other people and have no one we can genuinely communicate with. Even when we're surrounded by others, we can still feel alone if we don't have an emotional connection with them.

We all need people we can share our innermost thoughts and feelings with: people who will laugh with us during joyful times and cry with us during painful times. People we can experience the unfolding of daily life with—through all the ups and downs.

The High Cost of Loneliness

Even before COVID-19-related social disruptions, researchers widely viewed loneliness and isolation as an epidemic with serious health implications. Although measuring feelings can be subjective, tracking the effects of those emotions isn't. Much research supports the conclusion that loneliness contributes to health risks such as:

- Depression and anxiety
- Substance abuse disorders
- Suicidal thoughts
- Cognitive decline
- Obesity
- Cardiovascular problems
- Sleep disruption
- Premature mortality

The Harvard report echoes this association, citing evidence to support the stunning claim that "lacking social connection carries the same, if not greater, health risks as heavy smoking, drinking, and obesity."

Being connected to others greatly improves our health—physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Doz-

ens of studies have demonstrated that people who have satisfying relationships are happier, have fewer health problems, and live longer.

Emma Seppala, science director of the Stanford Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education, wrote: "Studies show [people with strong connections to others] also have higher self-esteem, greater empathy for others, are more trusting and cooperative and, as a consequence, others are more open to trusting and cooperating with them. In other words, social connectedness generates a positive feedback loop of social, emotional, and physical wellbeing."

Isolation and loneliness are serious problems with real and often devastating consequences, as in the case of increased suicide risk. The ramifications deeply affect everyone in our society in one way or another and shouldn't be taken lightly.

Connection happens when two people are real and transparent with each other.

7 Steps Toward Connection

If all of this bad news is daunting, here's the good news: This is a problem with an attainable solution, an ailment with an achievable cure. There are actionable steps you can take to overcome loneliness and experience the power of connection.

Perhaps you, like so many people, have no one in your life that you can call a close, intimate friend. Or maybe you have a number of shallow relationships you want to deepen into something more authentic. Whatever your situation, let's look at ideas for initiating new relationships or deepening existing ones:

Push yourself forward. Every meaningful relationship begins with one person taking initiative and taking risks. This means choosing courage over caution. When it comes to deepening relationships, we all have reasons for hesitating. Perhaps you've been burned before and have learned to shy away from risk. Maybe you're immobilized by a thousand scary what-ifs. Remember this: Every close friendship begins with one person simply saying hello to a neighbor or inviting a coworker to meet for coffee.

Put yourself in the company of a variety of people. It could be a church group, community project, book club, or exercise class. But choose something to join, and do it now. There's a saying that you can't get to second base with one foot on first. It's the same challenge you face in drawing closer to others. You can't learn to swim by reading a book about swim-

ming, and you'll never achieve closeness with others unless you choose to join in.

Learn the art of authenticity. Connection happens when two people are real and transparent with each other. This means being who you truly are, resisting the impulse to play games or put on a false persona to impress someone. Sharing vulnerable thoughts and feelings should happen slowly as trust is developed. Put another way, intimate aspects of our lives should be ladled out judiciously rather than dumped out hastily.

When you're with another person, be present. We're bombarded by distractions almost constantly, diverting our attention from the people we're with. Strive to be fully present in your conversations and relationships. Be an active listener, make eye contact, and give people your full attention. Being fully present is an essential way to ensure connection in any situation.

Show respect at all times. Mutual respect is at the core of close relationships. It confers dignity, honor, and high worth to the recipient. Part of showing respect means honoring differences. People's view of the world and how to live in it may not be the same as yours due to their life experience, temperament, personality, upbringing, and access to education. When you accept, you don't judge. When you stop judging, people will respond to you and connect with you.

Help other people feel good about themselves. Psychologists have identified a secret to close relationships: Our feelings for another person are strongly influenced by how that individual makes us feel about ourselves. Some may say this principle sounds self-centered and egocentric, but it's a basic fact of human nature and can be a powerful positive force. People who feel the closest connection are the ones who support, praise, and strengthen each other.

Be supportive of the other person's goals and dreams. Everyone has aspirations they would like to see come to fruition. It might be a health-related goal such as losing weight or a career goal such as starting a business. It could be a family goal related to kids or parents or even a long-held dream of writing a book, visiting a foreign land, or running a marathon. By lending a listening ear, offering encouragement, brainstorming together, or helping to conduct research, you communicate an important message: "Your dreams and ambitions are important to me, just as they are to you."

Gregory Jantz, Ph.D., is the founder and director of the mental health clinic The Center: A Place of Hope in Edmonds, Wash. He is the author of "Healing Depression for Life," "The Anxiety Reset," and many other books. Find Jantz at APlaceOfHope.com



The railroad station museum in Ashland, N.H., on a glorious fall afternoon in September 2022.

WINDOW INTO THE PAST

Inspiring a Young Girl to Learn Morse Code

Young and old alike discover the wonders of sending messages—the old-fashioned way

TIM CARTER

I'm a very lucky person. Several years ago, I was asked to be a reenactor at the Ashland, New Hampshire, railroad station. It's now a museum, and each summer and fall, other reenactors and myself treat visitors to a trip in a time machine.

I'm the station's telegrapher, replete with sleeve socks, black paisley vest, electric-blue paisley bow tie, and period visor. I've been told my mustache adds a delightful finishing touch to the illusion. You can't believe how humbled I am to sit at the same desk where real railroad telegraphers listened to the telegraph sounder and then transmitted replies for nearly 100 years.

The Ashland station opened in 1849 and professional telegraph operators kept the trains running safely by sending and receiving messages to/from other stations

up and down the railroad tracks.

Stopping in Ashland

The scenic railroad that operates on the historic Boston, Concord & Montreal Railroad line does weekend five-hour fall foliage trips from late September until Columbus Day in October. The round trip originates out of the Meredith, New Hampshire, station south of Ashland, New Hampshire.

The train departs from the Meredith station about 10:30 a.m. heading north toward Plymouth, New Hampshire. It passes the Ashland station but doesn't stop. Once the train arrives in Plymouth, the passengers exit the train and eat a relaxing buffet lunch inside a cozy restaurant.

On the return trip to Meredith, the train makes its stop at the Ashland station. Passengers are encouraged to get off the train to chat with the women in their stunning huge hoop dresses and bonnets as well as men and children dressed in period clothing. They also wander inside the

restored train station to view all of the fascinating railroad memorabilia.

While inside the station, they're also treated to me sending Morse code just like the telegraphers of old. If the chatter from the passengers isn't too loud, my Morse drifts out the open station door to the platform.

On Sunday, Sept. 25, 2022, I was all dressed up waiting for the train to glide into the Ashland station on the well-worn iron rails. The train's conductor provides a short 20-minute stop in Ashland just after 2 p.m. Ashland is about halfway between Plymouth and Meredith.

Kaylee and Her Mom

One Sunday was unusual as I felt not many passengers got off the train to look around. When they walk into the station, the telegrapher's office is immediately to the right, and most people are polite and just pop their heads in the open



The Boston, Concord, & Montreal Railroad was chartered in 1844.

door to see the source of the dihs and dahs resonating throughout the historic building.

I'm always looking out the window to try to spy any children who might be on the trip. While doing a ham radio demonstration about six years ago at a STEM school event with my Morse mentor Jim Cluett, WIPID, we discovered quite by accident that kids delight in hearing their name sent in Morse code.

"Hi! What's your name?" I said. Standing at the doorway with her eyes nearly as big as her oversized eyeglasses was a young girl with long brunette hair. The rhythm of me sending Morse must have captivated her like a siren's song does a seafarer.

She was wearing a warm hoodie sweat-shirt as autumn was in the air. My guess is this young lady was no more than 10 years old. Standing next to her was her mom.

"It's Kaylee."

"Such a beautiful name! Would you like to hear what it sounds like in Morse code? Help me spell it so I get it right."

"Sure! K A Y L E—it's got two e's," she said with a smile as big as the throbbing locomotive idling just down the tracks.

As often happens, Kaylee was drawn into the station by the sound of the Morse

LESSONS FROM 'LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE'

The Ingalls Family and Us

Bridging the gap and bringing back the timeless traditions of faith, home, and community

JEFF MINICK

In March 1974, "Little House on the Prairie" premiered on network television.

Based on the children's books by Laura Ingalls Wilder, this dramatic series ran for nine years, garnered four Emmys and 16 nominations, and remains one of the most successful shows in the history of television. Despite its age, "Little House" remains popular with audiences today.

Much of that appeal doubtless has to do with the fine acting of Michael Landon as Pa Ingalls and Karen Grassle as Ma, and with Melissa Gilbert, Melissa Sue Anderson, and Rachel Lindsay Greenbush playing daughters Laura, Mary, and Carrie. Often loosely based on the novels, the storyline and dialogue are solid, and the cinematography and music attractive.

Many viewers are surely attracted as well by the virtues depicted in these frontier stories. They experience a nostalgia for a past they never lived, a time when life was simpler, or at least more basic, and the threads of a common morality ran through the fabric of the culture. They don't necessarily yearn to return to that age with its backbreaking labor, its slow communications, or its pre-antibiotic illnesses, but they wish their lives more closely resembled

those of Charles and Caroline Ingalls, their three girls, and some of the other characters on this show.

Here's some good news for them: Work and words can make some wishes come true.

The Series Begins: A Quick Look

Following the full-length movie pilot, episode one of the "Little House" series finds the Ingalls family newly arrived on the banks of Plum Creek and ready to unpack their covered wagon. Charles finds work at a mill in the nearby town of Walnut Grove in exchange for lumber to build a house. Lacking a plow and seed, he takes another job as well with the flinty Mr. O'Neil. After



Karen Grassle as Caroline Ingalls and Michael Landon as Charles Ingalls.

breaking his ribs on a family picnic, Charles is unable to work, and O'Neil comes to collect the two oxen Charles had promised if he failed to complete the job. Some town-folk come to Charles's aid, finish up the work, and the Ingalls family is now free to plant their crop.

In that single episode are samples of all the gifts—a tight family, a place to call home, a supportive community—that so many long for today. But is it possible we can learn from "Little House" how to create those things and so make our wishes come true?

Let's climb aboard our own covered wagon, travel back in time, and find out.

Family

When Charles realizes that by working so much he is neglecting his family and getting testy with the kids, he takes Caroline and the girls on a picnic. When he falls from a tree and breaks his ribs, Caroline plows the fields while the girls, who already do chores and watch little Carrie, take up the slack on cooking and household chores.



Watching "Little House on the Prairie," we might ask ourselves, "How central is family to my own life?"

Here is a family that works together, provides their own entertainment—Pa's fiddle, reading the Bible, and storytelling—and pitches in when the going gets tough. In the pilot show, Charles at one point says he never should have taken Caroline away from her family in Minnesota. "My family is where you are," says Caroline, echoing Ruth from scripture: "Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay."

Today, that emphasis on family has gone missing. A recent Pew Research Center poll shows that while a large number of parents prioritize their children's education and career satisfaction, only about 20 percent teach their children that marriage and family are important in life.

Watching this episode, we might then ask ourselves: How central is family to my own life?

If we have no family under our roof, then we might ask: Is there a way I might better my connections with my family members, or reestablish a relationship with a fallen-away relative?

Home

Lying in bed in the loft built for them by their father, Laura says, "I think home is the nicest word there is."

Laura's right. The word home has magic in it, as does a home itself. For many of us, home is a memory box, a collection of treasures, each of which reminds us of who we are and where we've been. There's the secretary with its pull-down desk owned by our great-grandmother, the dollhouse played with by our daughters when they were in kindergarten, the bookshelf built by our father, the desk given us by our spouse when we were first married.



The telegrapher's office at the Ashland, N.H., railroad station.



Jim Cluett (L), the train conductor for the scenic train, with a few others in period dress.

code like I'm pulled into my kitchen by the intoxicating aroma of my wife's delicious fresh vegetable soup.

Kaylee's eyes were laser focused on my right hand as I pounded brass with my Kent straight key. She reminded me of what our house cats look like when they've cornered a mouse that's trying to set up home before a long New Hampshire winter.

Going Slow

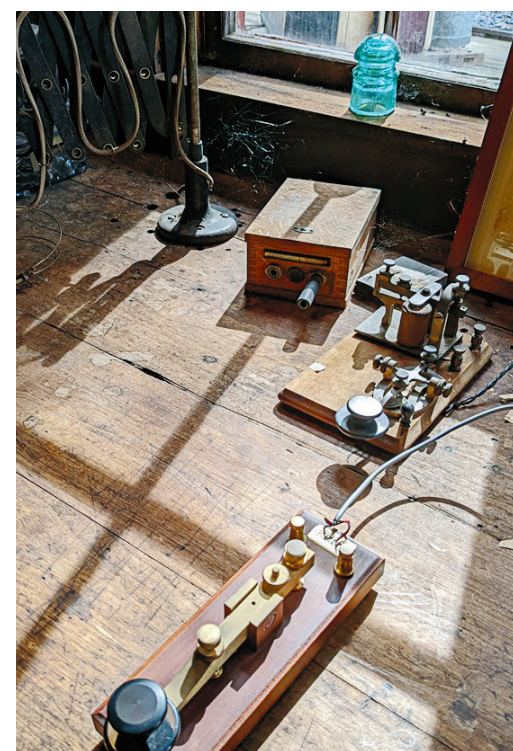
Some adults love to hear their names in Morse, too. Just before sending each letter, I tell them what I'm about to send so they can hear how unique each letter sounds. I then send it in real time as if I was pushing a telegram update to a friend or relative at a distant station through the miles of copper wire that used to hang beside the tracks.

Here's a re-creation of what I said to Kaylee:

W3ATB - Kaylee at the Ashland NH Railroad Station

As soon as I stopped sending Kaylee's name, her face reminded me of my own children on Christmas morning. The entire station was ablaze with Kaylee's happiness. Her mom was also glowing like a pile of coal in a steam locomotive's firebox.

It's possible that moment in time in the Ashland railroad station may be tattooed in four minds for the rest of our lives.



Carter's Kent straight key at the bottom of the photo, with a key used by the station's historic telegraphers near the window.



A small selection of the historic memorabilia collection inside the station.

"Oh my gosh, that was so cool! Thanks for doing that." Kaylee started asking questions faster than water shoots from a firehose. I answered each one and shared that in less than one month she could easily memorize the entire alphabet.

"Kaylee, how about you try to send a few letters?"

"Can I?"

"Why, of course!"

I then had her send a K and an A, as those are both pretty simple letters in Morse code. She wanted to keep pressing down on the straight key as if it were a doorbell, so I had to show her how to hold the straight-key knob with her two fingers and thumb.

Moments later the train conductor, my Morse code mentor, Jim, called, "All aboard!" He was out on the platform, and it was time for the train to depart back to Meredith.

Kaylee's mom asked for a photo of Kaylee and me, we said our goodbyes, and they both disappeared out the door.

'I Want to Send Your Name'

Moments later, Kaylee was back in the telegrapher's office.

"I want to send your name! Can you show me how?"

wave to passersby in their cars, but I don't know their names or a thing about them.

It's Up to Us

If we want the things we see in "Little House on the Prairie"—the tight-knit family, a house transformed into a home, neighbors and friends we know and trust—we have to work for them. If we wish to strengthen our families, we may have to give up overachieving at the office and spend more time with our spouse and children. If Caroline Ingalls can sweep the dirt floor of a sod house, put out a few treasured items brought from Minnesota, and call the place home, we can surely make our own homes worthy of that same name. And while creating or finding a community is difficult, there are plenty of ways to begin: joining a church or some local organization, learning the name of the clerk who rings up our groceries, and treating those we encounter as we wish to be treated.

We have luxuries those recent ancestors could scarcely have imagined: temperature-controlled vehicles that can cross Kansas in hours rather than in days, health care that prevents so many of the diseases and deaths of that age, the ability to hold a device in the palm of our hand and communicate with the world.

But they possessed some things our culture is lacking. By adopting their can-do, self-reliant attitude, we can, if we wish, strengthen those old-time essentials of family, home, and community.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminarians 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.

The word home has magic in it, as does a home itself.



Actress Melissa Gilbert as Laura Ingalls.

NBC TELEVISION/
COURTESY OF GETTY IMAGES



Actor Michael Landon (1936–1991) as Pa Ingalls.

NBC TELEVISION/
COURTESY OF GETTY IMAGES

You can imagine my surprise to see her. I glanced up and saw Jim standing just outside the office door with a huge smile on his face. He wasn't going to release the train until the magic happened.

In case you don't know it, a train engineer can't move a train until such time as the conductor gives the order. Jim's grin telegraphed to me that I might have just created the next new young ham radio operator.

"OK, my name is really easy. It's T I M. It's just one dash or dah, two dots or dihs, and two dashes or dahs. Close your eyes and listen closely. Remember, Morse is auditory. You learn Morse the same way your mom taught you to talk. You just hear the distinct sounds."

I looked at her face to make sure her eyes were closed tight and said, "I'm going to send my name slowly three times. Focus on the spacing and concentrate on each letter."

Kaylee did exactly as I had requested. It was now her turn. She grasped the Kent key knob just right and started pounding her first bits of brass.

The first time she tried, it was a little sloppy. But the second time was perfect. "Great job, Kaylee! That was excellent! You're going to have a great fist!"

Kaylee's face said it all and she rushed out the door past Jim, hopping up onto the train. I was beaming myself as I was sure a new CW operator had just been born.

I walked out to the platform to wave to her as the train chugged away and she leaned out an open window, slapping my hand with a high five.

The Highlight of the Trip

The next day, Jim called me with news.

"As I was walking down the aisle of the train the little girl's mother stopped me. She told me that your demonstration of Morse was the highlight of the entire weekend trip. In fact, while they were still on the train, Kaylee's mom went to Amazon and purchased an inexpensive Morse oscillator so Kaylee can start to practice."

I don't know that it gets any better than this. It's possible that moment in time in the Ashland railroad station may be tattooed in four minds for the rest of our lives.

It's my hope that I hear from Kaylee or her mom one day. I did give her mom one of my business cards, so we'll see what happens.

Spending that time with Kaylee was magical for me, too. I came home so excited about it, I shared the entire story with my wife, Kathy. Being a mom, she got it right away. Kathy's got no interest in Morse, but she's all about making kids happy.

Originally published on the W3ATB blog.

Tim Carter is the founder of AsktheBuilder.com. He's an amateur radio operator and enjoys sending Morse code sitting at an actual telegrapher's desk. Carter lives in central New Hampshire with his wife, Kathy, and their dog, Willow.



The tight-knit Ingalls family embodied a can-do, self-reliant attitude.

ANOTHER BELIEVER CC BY-SA 4.0



In Kierkegaard's parable, a wicked man prays that his ship won't sink, leading a wise man to caution, "Keep quiet, my friend; if heaven discovers that you are on board, the ship will go under." "An American Ship in Distress," 1841, by Thomas Birch. Timken Museum of Art.

PHILOSOPHY

SOREN KIERKEGAARD

Seeking Wisdom through Parables

A 20th century philosopher uses stories to light the way through modern struggles

ANDREW BENSON BROWN

Depending on who you ask, the present age seems to be one in which we're either struggling up a mountain toward utopia or running off a cliff. Many of those who hold the latter view feel they have little control over the state of things, despite their best efforts to steer hearts and minds toward green pastures.

A parable by the Danish writer Soren Kierkegaard encapsulates this struggle:

"It happened that a fire broke out backstage in a theater. The clown came out to inform the public. They thought it was just a jest and applauded. He repeated his warning. They shouted even louder. So I think the world will come to an end amid general applause from all the wits who believe that it is a joke."

Kierkegaard dedicated his life to warning his age of its failings and pointing toward a way out. But, as prophets seldom profit from their efforts, he was largely unsuccessful. The present era, which finds itself mired in even deeper problems than that one, is only just beginning to appreciate his lessons.

The Philosophical Life

Kierkegaard was born in Copenhagen in 1813. As a young man, he broke off an engagement to a beautiful woman because he felt marital duties were incompatible with his life's purpose: to be a great philosopher. After his father died, he received an inheritance that gave him the financial freedom to pursue this ambition.

He's unusual among philosophers for his engaging writing style. After a long section of analysis, Kierkegaard will tell a story that captures its main point. These memorable parables, with their condensed plots, limited characterization, and unexpected conclusions, don't merely explain his ideas but direct the way to moral or spiritual illumination. One can only understand something by living it, Kierkegaard thought. In this way, he's comparable with another great parable-teller in history—Jesus.

While his philosophical texts themselves are read mostly in universities, a popular oral tradition has arisen surrounding his parables. This is especially the case in Denmark, where he's recognized as the greatest thinker that nation has ever produced. According to



(Above) A Danish theologian, philosopher, and poet, Soren Kierkegaard wrote extensively on faith and religion.

Thomas C. Oden, editor of the "Parables of Kierkegaard" (Princeton University Press, 1978). "The mind of Kierkegaard has been kept alive in the common memory more by his parables than any other part of his authorship."

Against Determinism

Kierkegaard carved out his intellectual position by attacking the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel—a major influence on Karl Marx—who thought that all of history was moving toward a perfect endpoint in the modern Prussian state. Hegel's writing style was difficult and reflected his own abstract, logical method. While Hegel wrote of the influence of dictators such as Julius Caesar and Napoleon, whom he referred to as "world-historical individuals," he contended that average people had no control over events. The most they could do was come to understand the objective truth about where society was inevitably leading them. Hegel, like Marx, was a historical determinist.

Kierkegaard objected: What sane person could ever believe in such a thing? The scientific outlook that was rising to dominance in his lifetime favored pure objectivity. But did such an ideal mean anything from an individual perspective? Was it a desirable goal or even possible? In "Philosophical Fragments," he wrote, "The objective truth as such, is by no means adequate to determine that whoever utters it is sane; on the contrary, it may even betray the fact that he is mad, although what he says may be entirely true."

This idea is best illustrated through a wonderful parable. Kierkegaard describes a patient who escapes from an insane asylum and, to avoid being recognized, resolves to say only what's objectively true. Walking along, he picks up a ball and puts it into his pocket. The ball reminds him of the earth. With every step he takes, the ball strikes him and he says, "Bang, the earth is round." Arriving in town, he wants to convince a friend that he's not crazy, so he repeats this phrase. But by the very way he keeps repeating the fact, he's identified as the escaped madman. Moreover, curing him wouldn't involve convincing him that the earth is flat.

Kierkegaard's point here isn't that there is no objective truth—a common notion today—but that objective facts are related through personal experience. Enforcing objectivity on others in the name of history or science is a bit like shackling sane people in an asylum run by a madman.

Misappropriation

Kierkegaard is a classic example of a writer who sacrifices everything for his art. In a little more than a decade, he threw all his energy into writing dozens of books and essays. Then in 1855, after having taken out the last of his

inheritance from his father from the bank, he collapsed in the street. Wasting away in a hospital, he expressed regret that he hadn't married and had a family. He was 42 when he died.

His writings became famous in the 20th century. Some philosophers, seeing him as a precursor, assimilated him into the "existential" school of thought. The term was itself coined by Kierkegaard to refer to the importance of "the ethically existing subject." For Kierkegaard, however, the religious life represented the highest stage of human existence. Almost everything he wrote is directed toward that end. French atheists such as Jean-Paul Sartre isolated some of his concepts while ignoring others.

To boil down Sartre's basic idea to a cliché, people lead authentic lives when they exercise the freedom to choose. The particular choices they make aren't something Sartre stops to moralize about. For Kierkegaard, however, certain choices lead in the right direction, while others lead to despair and confusion. Authentic living ultimately involves leaving reason behind and making a "leap of faith." Sartre's brand of secular existentialism is—like so many modern ideas—a neutered version of an older, more profound theory.

Sartre's admiration of freedom without limits had nihilistic implications that, in jettisoning Kierkegaard's spirituality, jettisoned ethics as well. Licensing all behavior represents the flip side of historical determinism. And since a moral void brings in its train alternative ideologies seeking to fill it, it's no surprise that Sartre himself converted to Marxism a decade after publishing "Being and Nothingness." Although these two paradigms are polar opposites, they result in similarly evil consequences and share the same ring of false piety.

Readers who go to Kierkegaard himself and skip the layers of interpretation will find no shortage of wisdom for our times. He had much to say about bad faith, which is best conveyed in a parable about a renowned wise man who sails on a ship with a wicked one:

"When the ship was in distress the wicked man lifted up his voice in prayer, but the wise man said to him: 'Keep quiet, my friend; if heaven discovers that you are on board, the ship will go under.'"

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 Apollologist.wordpress.com

LARGER THAN LIFE: ART THAT INSPIRES US THROUGH THE AGES

Zacatecas Cathedral: Mexico's Baroque Masterpiece

ARIANE TRIEBSWETTER

Zacatecas stands apart for its Churrigueresque architecture when Mexico was known as New Spain.

The Zacatecas Cathedral, located in Zacatecas in the north central Mexican state of the same name, is a masterpiece of Spanish Baroque architecture.

In the 18th century, this historic town prospered because of its rich deposits of silver. To celebrate their good fortune, miners built the Catedral Basílica de Zacatecas between 1729 and 1760, replacing two existing structures. Also known as the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption of Zacatecas, the Catholic church was only fully completed and consecrated in 1841.

The cathedral dominates the center of Zacatecas and stands apart from other Mexican churches for its Churrigueresque, or Ultra Baroque, architecture from when Mexico was known as New Spain. This architectural style refers to a Spanish baroque design popular in both Spain and Latin America in the 18th century and

characterized by elaborate sculptural elements, carved lacework, and Corinthian columns.

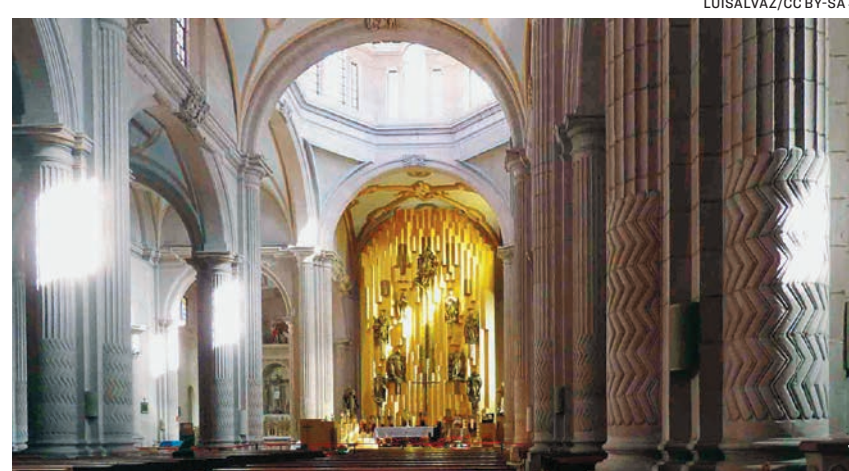
This style is especially noticeable in the building's baroque exterior. The cathedral's main façade is covered with elaborate and intricate details on pink stone, combining European and indigenous decorative elements such as angels and various plants.

However, the church's interior greatly contrasts with its ornate exterior, where the somber neoclassical style replaced the extravagant baroque style. Inside, the Doric style prevails with stone side altars and large columns. The church is laid out as a Latin cross, with two side naves, and features a gilded altar and detailed sculptures.

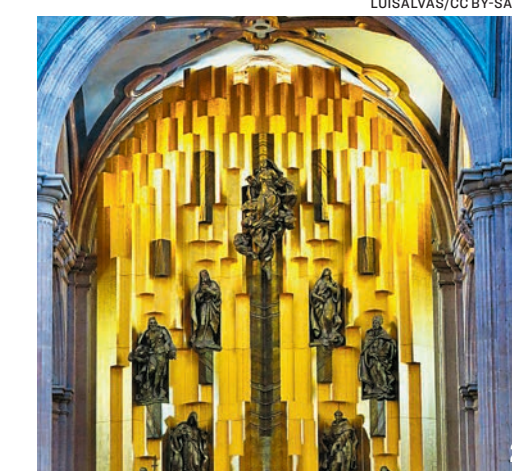
Ariane Triebswetter is an international freelance journalist, with a background in modern literature and classical music.



One of the neoclassical side altars of the Zacatecas Cathedral. The walls here are decorated with sculptures of saints and evangelists.



LUSALVAZ/CC BY-SA 4.0



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1. Unlike the richly decorated baroque exterior, the cathedral's neoclassical interior has a more austere appearance, as seen in the massive white Doric columns, low central vault, and stone side altars. At the center, beyond the wooden church benches, one can spot the high altar.

2. The central altar piece, made of Finnish birch covered with 24-carat gold leaf, was completed in 2010 by Mexican artist Javier Marin, and replaces the original. The altar piece weighs 20 tons; the 55-foot high altar features geometric niches with 11 sculptures of the Virgin of the Assumption and saints.

3. The main façade of the Zacatecas Cathedral, completed in 1745, is one of the best examples of Churrigueresque architecture in Mexico. Ornamented with Corinthian columns with lace-like details, the three-tiered façade holds various religious figures, most notably sculptures of the 12 apostles at the sides.

4. Indigenous elements combine with traditional European elements in these Corinthian columns. The stem is ornamented with angels, and plant motifs—mostly vines—referring to indigenous imagery.

5. Flanking the heavily ornamented rose window in the center of the façade are sculptures of two saints.



JVITELA/CC BY-SA 4.0

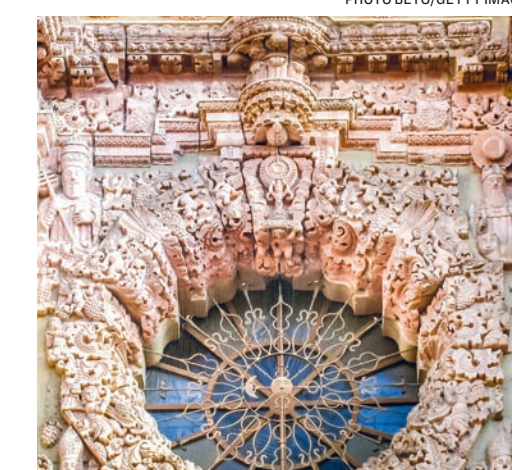


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ROBERTO GALAN/SHUTTERSTOCK



CRAIG PERHOUSE/GETTY IMAGES



SVETLANA BYKOVA/SHUTTERSTOCK

The church glows with its pink-colored cantera stone, a volcanic rock from various regions in Mexico and Central America. According to locals, the façade's color changes during the day. One of the two towers further from the white dome supports a bell made from the jewels and coins of Zacatecan followers.

Letter Writing for Kids

8 wonderful benefits of teaching children the art of writing letters

KAREN DOLL

I love to get cards and letters in the mail, don't you? There's just something truly special about a handwritten note that really brightens my day. When we were homeschooling, I wanted my kids to understand and appreciate the value of handwriting, so we wrote letters to family and friends as a regular part of our language arts lessons.

The simple act of writing a letter is so much more than a lesson in handwriting though; there are practical and educational benefits that will serve your kids far into the future. So let's take a closer look at the ways in which letter writing can benefit your kids.

Stimulates the Brain
Writing a simple friendly letter might seem simple but the process actually activates more regions of your child's brain than when typing on a keyboard. Karin James, professor of psychological and brain sciences at Indiana University, discovered that when children write by hand, the process activates the regions in the brain responsible for reading, language, and memory. When these regions are all working at the same time, learning is boosted.

Engages the Body
Children use fine motor skills to grasp and control the pencil. The larger muscles in the neck, shoulders, torso, hips, and legs as well as the foot muscles work together to help keep the body in a stable position. Kids also need excellent hearing so they can sound out letters and words, and strong hand-eye coordination to form the letters correctly and legibly.

Enhances Communication and Literacy Skills
Letter writing is a slow, thoughtful process that allows kids ample time to contemplate what they want to say and how best to organize those thoughts into words that flow smoothly and make sense.

Knowing that their letters will be viewed by someone special, kids are naturally more aware of appearance; they pay extra attention to spelling and punctuation, and work out proper grammar and mechanics as they write. And, as your kids continue to write and receive letters, they will become more and more competent and confident and, as a result, they will want to explore new and bigger words, build more complex sentences, and add more details.

Writing letters is also a wonderful summer enrichment activity that will help to keep the language arts concepts learned throughout the year fresh in your kids' minds.

Sparks Creativity
Writing a letter is an adventure in creativity. Children have limitless freedom to express themselves, and it's truly an opportunity to let their personalities shine. Encourage your kids to try writing in italics or adding artistic details to individual letters and words, such as little red hearts or colorful butterflies to dot each "i."

Strengthens Relationships and Social Skills
There's beauty in a handwritten letter because it's personal and meaningful. And because it takes time, effort, and great care for your child to pen a note to someone special, it's a way for kids to nourish relationships and to practice and express gratitude.

Helps Develop Mindfulness
When kids sit down to write a letter to someone, it's an exercise in mindfulness. Kids need to push away all distractions and focus on the person to whom they're writing. This takes patience and practice but, once mastered, is an essential skill your kids will need for accomplishing many things in life.



Who doesn't love to get letters in the mail?

There's also a rhythm when writing by hand, and this, combined with the repeated motions of the hands and fingers as they form letters and words, really draws the writer into the moment.

Enhances the Study of Different Subjects
Ask any homeschool mom and she'll tell you she's thankful for any chance she gets to combine multiple subjects into one lesson. This is letter writing at its best. Depending upon whom your child is writing to, he might want to describe his science fair project that won the blue ribbon, she may be excited to share the historical fiction series she can't put down, or your teen could recount why he feels his side of the debate was valid and should have won the match.

Suppose your child is writing to a pen pal, a relative in the armed forces, or a grandparent who lives in another country; geography and culture will no doubt play a role as your child describes his or her lifestyle and responds to questions.

It's Fun
Letter writing is great fun. Your kids will be over the moon, giddy with glee, when they discover a letter in the mailbox addressed to them. They might just rush up to their bedroom and start writing a reply. Talk about motivation!

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



Writing a letter is an adventure in creativity.

Because it takes time, effort, and great care for your child to pen a letter, it's a way for kids to nourish relationships.

PEOPLEIMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

My Kingdom
By Robert Louis Stevenson

I called the little pool a sea;
The little hills were big to me;
For I am very small.
I made a boat, I made a town,
I searched the caverns up and down,
And named them one and all.

And all about was mine, I said,
The little sparrows overhead,
The little minnows too.
This was the world, and I was king;
For me the bees came by to sing,
For me the swallows flew.

I played there were no deeper seas,
Nor any wider plains than these,
Nor other kings than me.
At last I heard my mother call
Out from the house at even-fall,
To call me home to tea.

And I must rise and leave my dell,
And leave my dimpled water well,
And leave my heather blooms.
Alas! and as my home I neared,
How very big my nurse appeared,
How great and cool the rooms!

WHAT DID THE AUSTRALIAN CHESS PLAYER SAY TO HIS WAITER?

MAV I PLEASE
GET A CHECK,
MATE!

“We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.”

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW (1856-1950), IRISH PLAYWRIGHT

By Aidan Danza

BACKYARD VISITORS

EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL
These squirrels are so common that they may not need a physical description—everyone knows their gray backs and heads, white bellies, and bushy tails. But did you know they live to be about 12 years old in the wild? In the summer, they are typically more active in the morning and evening, but in winter, they are active all day. Squirrels sleep in nests they make in trees, which are often seen in winter when the trees are bare. The nests look unlike a twiggy teacup, like bird nests do, but more like a large, messy mass of sticks, twigs, and leaves.

RACCOON
Raccoons are also very well-known backyard visitors. They are extremely adaptable—all they need is easy access to water and they can live in a habitat. They will live in dens in trees, but will also dwell in deserted buildings, barns, abandoned burrows, and attics. Their face is extremely well known, with that black burglar mask, gray, stocky body, and black-barred tail. Males are larger than females, and they normally live for around five years.

They are very solitary animals, and they climb and swim well, adding to their adaptability. Raccoons will eat literally anything, much more so than squirrels. Much of this diet is enabled by their forepaws, which act like hands to pry open prey. They will often use their forepaws to pick up food and put it in their mouths, just like we humans eat a sandwich.

Saint Patrick's Day Fun for the Family

BARBARA DANZA

Traditions are an important part of family life. They help paint a picture of a family's values, culture, and character. They make for memories that last a lifetime, and they can be passed on throughout the generations. Through traditions, children can enjoy predictable touchstones that instill a comforting sense of structure, stability, security, and joy.

Saint Patrick's Day is one of those joyful occasions that calls for fun and celebrates tradition but doesn't impose a ton of pressure to deliver an epically magical experience that takes weeks to prepare. With just a few simple touches, you can easily make Saint Patrick's Day a special occasion for the whole family.

Eat Your Greens
When it comes to dinner on Saint Patrick's Day, the obvious choice is some delicious corned beef and cabbage. If your kids aren't into that, anything green will do. Did you know you can make a natural green food dye with spinach? Green pasta is always a hit! For dessert, Irish soda bread is a classic. Shamrock-shaped cookies are always fun. Looking for something really easy? How about some green pistachio or mint chocolate chip ice cream?

Cap It Off With a Wee Story
There is no better way to end any day than with a bedtime story together. Check out "St. Patrick's Day in the Morning" by Eve Bunting and Jan Brett or "Tim O'Toole and the Wee Folk" by Gerald McDermott.

Morning Surprise
When the kids wake up and venture out into the house, what's the first thing they'll see? If they happen to have set an elaborate leprechaun trap the night before, that's likely where they'll head first. They may find curious evidence of leprechauns, such as chocolate gold coins and a bit of a mess around the trap. Hint: A few days before St. Patrick's Day, lay out some empty cardboard boxes and craft supplies and encourage your kids to create their own leprechaun trap. A table decorated in green with, perhaps, some simple gifts (green socks, a shamrock headband, etc.) can be a lot of fun too.

Go Green
When it comes to food, tableware, and clothing, go green or go home. Of course, silly accessories like shamrock-shaped glasses and green sequined bow ties add that little something extra that holidays like this deserve.

Cue the Ditties
The Saint Patrick's Day playlist is one of the best parts of the holiday. Add classic Irish folk artists to get everybody's hands clapping and feet tapping throughout the day. Some kid-friendly classics include: "The Unicorn" by the Irish Rovers, "Danny Boy" by Celtic Woman, "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" by The Irish Tenors, "The Wild Rover" by The Dubliners, and "The Rocky Road to Dublin" by The High Kings.

Know Why
Don't miss the opportunity to educate your children about the meaning of Saint Patrick's Day. Who was Saint Patrick? What does the shamrock symbolize? Why do we celebrate with parades? History.com offers a helpful rundown of how Saint Patrick's Day came to be.

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
2 9
61
2 5
+ - x ÷

Medium puzzle 1
7 14
81
6 11
+ - x ÷

Hard puzzle 1
22 35
89
3 34
+ - x ÷

Solution For Easy 1
2 - 6 + (2 + 5)

Solution for Medium 1
2 - 11 + (9 + 9)
9 - 11 + 2 + 91

Solution for Hard 1
98 - 22 + 8 + 48

WORD SEARCH: Let's Play a Game!

ALLIGATOR PENNANT SURF BOARD CONE BIRD EYE
MALLETT TENNIS RACKET MUG HOUSE SOCK MAGNET
BASEBALL BAT DEAD CANOE FRISBEE

HIDDEN TREASURES by Liz Ball
www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com

Backgammon
Blokus
Boggle
Candy Land
Checkers
Chess
Clue
Connect Four
Cranium
Guess Who
Jenga
Life
Monopoly

Mouse Trap
Operation
Password
Winkie
Risk
Scrabble
Uno

Sorry
Stratego
Taboo
Trouble
Twister
Yahtzee

TRUTH and TRADITION

In Our Own Words

The Journey to Good Health



“It’s made me realize that getting healthy doesn’t have to be about sacrifice or self-denial. When you know better, you naturally want to do better.”

Conan Milner
Senior Health Reporter

Dear Epoch VIP,

My name is Conan Milner, and I’m a health reporter for The Epoch Times. I’ve been writing for the paper since 2005, and exclusively for the Mind & Body section since 2014. This job has given me the opportunity to research and report on subjects I’m very passionate about, such as understanding how our bodies work and learning new ways I can take care of mine.

Health was not always my passion. For years, it wasn’t even a concern. In college especially, I had about as unhealthy a life as you can imagine. I smoked compulsively, worked nights, and slept little. My diet consisted primarily of Coney dogs and Burger King. **But it all caught up with me by my early 20s. It seems so young, but I felt old—miserable both mentally and physically.**

Luckily, I met (and then married) an acupuncturist and my lifestyle changed dramatically. In addition to writing for The Epoch Times, I have helped my wife manage her clinic for over 20 years. In that time I’ve learned a ton about herbs, witnessed the power of natural medicine, developed an enormous respect for ancient Chinese wisdom, and have honed exceptional kombucha brewing skills.

My own health journey has served me well as a reporter because it has given me the kind of perspective that only comes with falling on your face, picking yourself back up, and walking a new road. This process has taught me that better health is often about making better choices. Even if you’re born with great genes and enjoy top-notch health insurance, you still must eventually face the consequences of your lifestyle.

My articles give me a chance to share this journey with my readers. For example, after the opportunity

of talking to several trainers, physical therapists, and a couple of back surgeons, I began to see exercise in a whole new light. Previously, I had little time or interest for anything athletic, but I’ve since developed a regular weight lifting routine that is still going strong after more than three years. Likewise, I’ve learned how to take care of my microbiome, discovered that a simple walk in the woods can inspire and help me let go of anxiety, come to know how to meditate for a clear mind, and have found that I should always be kind to others and grateful for what I have.

For me, these habits have little to do with willpower, and much more to do with an understanding of what hurts me and what heals me. It’s made me realize that getting healthy doesn’t have to be about sacrifice or self-denial. When you know better, you naturally want to do better.

I choose the topics I write about primarily on what I would like to read, and I know I couldn’t find such freedom at any other publication. The Epoch Times has given me the support and encouragement to tackle subjects that many other organizations shy away from. It’s allowed me to cover controversial subjects such as vaccines, wireless radiation, GMOs, and other topics that are often ignored or censored due to corporate interests.

Of course, I always keep in mind that our success comes from our readers—individuals who are curious, thoughtful, and hold the truth in high regard. Thanks for sharing this journey with me.

In truth and tradition,

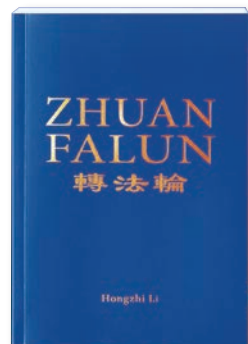
Conan Milner
The Epoch Times



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A Life-Changing Bestseller



Zhuangzi expounds on the profound principles of Truthfulness, Compassion, and Tolerance. It focuses on a long-forgotten term called “cultivation” and the importance of moral character on one’s path to spiritual perfection.

The book is the main text of the spiritual practice Falun Dafa. It was a national bestseller in China in the 1990s, and has since been translated into more than 40 languages. Find out why it has captured the hearts and minds of tens of millions of people in more than 100 countries worldwide.

“What made Falun Gong stand out from other qigong exercises and meditation practices was a moral system—compassion, truthfulness, and forbearance—unmistakably Buddhist in origin.”

Arthur Waldron
LAUDER PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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