

THE EPOCH TIMES

LIFE &

TRADITION

BIBA KAYEWICH

The Art of Forgiveness

Author Kelly Browne offers insights into the power of true forgiveness to heal your heart



FINDING HEALING

Forgiveness disempowers the offense's hold over you and allows you to move toward inner peace, happiness, and healing.



Kelly Browne

"Forgiveness is a choice that only you have the power to create in your heart and mind, in your own time, when you're ready."

BARBARA DANZA

Apologizing and forgiving can be two of the most difficult actions for people to take. It requires a willingness to set down pride and let go of emotions such as anger or hurt. However, owning up to one's mistakes and truly forgiving others can be the key to setting oneself free.

Author Kelly Browne's new book, "101 Ways to Create Mindful Forgiveness: A Heart-Healing Guide to Forgiveness, Apologies, and Mindful Tools for Peace," teaches readers how to embrace the acts of apologizing and forgiving. I asked her for her advice for people who struggle in this regard. Here's what she said.

The Epoch Times: What inspired you to write "101 Ways to Create Mindful Forgiveness"?

Kelly Browne: About seven years ago, I was set to write a book about how to properly apologize. Despite my best efforts, I kept putting it down because something was missing—the crucial element of forgiveness. Not just "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you," but the mindfully healing energy behind what it means to create forgiveness not just for others but for yourself.

It wasn't until I had personally experienced excruciating trauma that made me physically sick that I suddenly understood how critical "mindful forgiveness" was for my own self-care. Sharing these heart-healing tools was so incredibly important to me to help other people who have endured events that have hurt them. Included in the book are tools, meditations, and prayers I learned, discovered, and embraced to support my journey to forgiveness.

The Epoch Times: Why do you believe the ability to forgive can be so difficult sometimes?

Ms. Browne: While many of us seek a quick-fix solution to our personal issues, when it comes to our feelings, they can't simply be shut off like a switch.

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Our Adopted Irish Holiday

St. Patrick's Day has a time-honored home in America

JEFF MINICK

There's really no other holiday in the United States like St. Patrick's Day.

Patrick, a fifth-century bishop and the patron saint of Ireland, is credited with spreading the gospel and the Catholic faith on that island nation more than 1,500 years ago—but on his feast day, March 17, Americans of all creeds, colors, and ancestral homelands are free to raise a glass of stout to the wearing of the green. Many of them may know little about Patrick or Irish history, but can join the festivities to wet their thirst and have some fun. Some will listen to Irish music

or watch Irish step-dancing, and hundreds of thousands will cheer on the parades in cities such as New York, Boston, and Savannah. Other celebrants deck themselves out in green in places as diverse as Australia, Singapore, and Russia.

"Everybody is Irish on St. Patrick's Day," said President Dwight D. Eisenhower, "but if your name is Eisenhower, you've got to wear something green to show it."

And wear green they do, the Murphys and the O'Connors and the Kellys, but also the Stammettis and the Toussaints and the Garcias.

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SALLY SUN/THE EPOCH TIMES

Ever since America's first St. Patrick's celebration in 1601, many American cities have developed their own unique St. Paddy's Day traditions.

The Art of Forgiveness



Giving and accepting apologies are both essential, not only for mending relationships but also for the emotional health of both parties. "The Return of the Prodigal Son," 1667–1670, by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo.

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We may faithfully repeat the adage "forgive and forget," but we can't. Our parents and caregivers may encourage us to move on, insisting we say we're sorry or get over it, and we don't, especially if the apology was insincere. Every time that person or event crosses your mind, it brings you right back to that excruciating moment of pain.

Those traumatic thoughts can manifest in our bodies and become physical ailments that make us sick. The reality is—forgiveness isn't condoning the harm that was committed against you nor releasing that person from blame, ever. Forgiveness doesn't allow that person to continue to harm you or "push you around." You can choose to forgive someone for your own self-care and physical health. You, and only you, can decide whether to discontinue a relationship with that person or continue it. Forgiveness is a choice that only you have the power to create in your heart and mind, in your own time, when you're ready.

The Epoch Times: For someone reading this who is harboring resentment toward another, how do you recommend they begin to move toward forgiveness?

Ms. Browne: Holding on to bitterness and resentment over the way someone has harmed you only continues to hurt you. Why? Because the energy you're creating in your body every time you think of that moment, event, or person has a negative physical effect on you, which has adverse effects.

Stop for a moment and think about how being mentally chained to an event is taking up your emotions. You may not even realize how these moments from the past are coloring your present, your fears, and your relationships with other people. Mindful forgiveness is your mental decision to consciously choose to disempower resentment by energetically releasing the incident from your thoughts, rendering it powerless, and moving

toward inner peace for your happiness and healing.

The Epoch Times: On the other side of the coin, it can be equally as difficult to own up to one's mistakes and apologize. What are some signs that one needs to apologize?

Ms. Browne: First and foremost, when you recognize you've made a mistake, immediately taking responsibility by apologizing for your thoughtless words or actions is key to repairing a relationship. What you say and do reflects the kind of person that you truly are. If you're living your life with an awareness of being mindful or thoughtful in how you interact with others, you likely want to continue to learn how to be a better person across your personal and business relationships. It's also important to have an awareness about the people you are choosing to have in your life on a day-to-day basis or circle of friends. If someone is continuing to create unnecessary drama or is consistently dishonest, you can choose to release them.

“While many of us seek a quick-fix solution to our personal issues, when it comes to our feelings, they can't simply be shut off like a switch.”

Kelly Browne, author

The Epoch Times: What are the best ways to apologize?

Ms. Browne: Expressed with the spirit of genuine sincerity, those three words—I am sorry—have the power to restore divided nations, heal the heart, or even save a life. Conversely, when a thoughtless word or act has caused endless pain and suffering for you or someone else, accepting an apology—I forgive you—is just as essential. While you can't control the

outcome of an apology, of whether someone will accept it or not, keeping in mind the Six R's of apologizing from my new book, "101 Ways to Create Mindful Forgiveness," is always a good method: realizing, remorse, reacting, responsibility, restitution, and resolution.

The Epoch Times: Modern communication increasingly occurs in a digital space. Is it ever appropriate to offer forgiveness or apologize via email or text?

Ms. Browne: Apologies and forgiveness are always best in person, video chat, or even by telephone when you can connect to the other person in real time and hear each other's voices. As we embrace digital communication, especially in the business arena, emailed apologies are common and accepted. Between friends, family, and the people we love, texting has taken over as an instantaneous way to connect; however, you can't feel the spirit of that person's intention. While texting an apology or offering forgiveness may break the ice between you, following up with a call or meeting to clear the air is best so that you both may decide if you want to continue the relationship.

The Epoch Times: What are the greatest benefits of mastering the skills of apologizing and forgiving?

Ms. Browne: The greatest benefit of forgiveness is that it energetically releases the hurt feelings that no longer serve you. You have one life on this earth. Choosing to love yourself and being grateful for your health is the most essential. Let everything else go, release suffering to a higher source, or as my mother would say, "Put it in God's hands." Remember to breathe as you encounter difficult moments—your breath is your life force. Giving or accepting an apology never erases the past or changes the hurtful event, but it opens both parties to forgiveness, the possibility of restitution, and the healing ability to release those angry feelings so that you both may move forward in peace.

PERFORMING ARTS

Telling Timeless Stories Through Universal Art

For Shen Yun Performing Arts dancer and choreographer Jisung Kim, it all starts with reverence

CATHERINE YANG

The speed at which Shen Yun Performing Arts catapulted to world renown since stepping onto the performing arts scene in 2006 has sparked worldwide interest. Perhaps one of the reasons for its steady success is that the New York-based company is composed of serious artists, the kind who not only see this as a craft, but dedicate their lives to reaching the infinite heights of a form of art, and to sharing it with the world. For Jisung Kim, a classical Chinese dancer and budding choreographer who has been with Shen Yun since 2013, it all begins with reverence.

Kim believes that with humility and hard work, blessings follow, as his own artistic journey shows.

"All talent is given by the divine, and inspiration, too, by definition comes from the divine," Kim said. What are muses, if not messengers of heaven? he asked, referencing a long line of works and artists that pay respect to the divine. It's true that in classical cultures both East and West, art was for the veneration of God, and Shen Yun overtly states that it seeks to follow in that tradition.

"When you have that reverence, you can be humble, and see the bigger picture," he said. Kim believes that with humility and hard work, blessings follow, as his own artistic journey shows.

Shen Yun Performing Arts, the world's premier classical Chinese dance company, has a mission to revive 5,000 years of Chinese civilization.

"I watched Shen Yun when I was very young, maybe in 2006 or 2007," he said. "I was mesmerized."

Moved by the ancient legends, heroes, and divine beings depicted by Shen Yun's performers, he turned to his mother and said he would join them one day. Half a dozen years later, he did.

Kim, who is Korean, was so determined to achieve his goal that he flew halfway across the world to attend a bilingual school—Fei Tian Academy of the Arts, which teaches in both English and Chinese—where he spoke neither language. Even before his acceptance was finalized, he overcame what he describes as a painfully crippling case of social anxiety in order to become the performer he knew he was meant to be. "I feel like this is my life's mission," he said.

Universal Language

Kim picked up Chinese and English soon enough, as well as the ancient language of classical Chinese dance, an art form full of cultural nuance and references that date back thousands of years.

"Its expressive power is strong; it can bring to life characters. I was interested in the ancient legends, values, morals ... and I wanted to share this with other people," Kim said.

"Reading these stories and histories, I felt a lot of emotions in the scenes when gods show something to the humans, and I really like the heroes. Sometimes, I was very touched by their unwavering heart, or when they did something that made me think, 'I want to be like that, too.'"

On stage, he can be. Characteristic of classical Chinese dance is the expressivity that Kim mentioned; the art form has roots in all the physical arts of ancient China, including operatic dance. Through dance, Kim can embody these characters and share with audiences their joys, sorrows, courage, virtues, and motivations.

People sometimes find it noteworthy that he's Korean.

"For instance, my cousins asked me, 'You're Korean; why classical Chinese



Jisung Kim (C) in "Descent from Heaven—A Renewal" from the 2017 Shen Yun performance.

dance?" he said. "The messages behind the art, the principles, values, morals—they're universal."

Korean culture is mostly rather traditional, he adds, and traditional cultures around the world share common values such as benevolence, propriety, and loyalty. Historically, traditional Chinese culture has also influenced many nations around present-day China, and Kim grew up with stories such as the Monkey King's adventures, from the beloved classic "Journey to the West."

"These stories are rife with values that still move people today, he explained, like compassion, loyalty, justice, and integrity.

"Universal values speak the strongest to people," he said. "Classical Chinese dance is a body language, one that everyone can understand."

Expanding His Range

In 2018, Kim became a principal dancer in his tour group. That also was the year he was first cast as a major antagonist in one of Shen Yun's dances.

"This was a significant turning point in my acting career, as it allowed me to break out of my comfort zone and explore new territory," Kim said.

In the dance "The Modern Temple" from Shen Yun's 2018 tour, Kim portrayed a character who sets out to con a temple's devout followers and is, in effect, defeated. Far from the heroes he had long admired, this role required Kim to strengthen his acting skills.

"It proved to be an invaluable learning experience that ... helped me grow as a performer," he said. "Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to expand my acting range."

A Shen Yun production includes about a dozen dance vignettes, spanning 5,000 years of Chinese history. As such, the performers, more often than not, will exit the stage donning one hat and quickly return with another. Kim added that the same year he first portrayed a villain, he also took on the role of a "goofy" ancient Chinese scholar in the dance "Buffoonery in the Schoolyard," drawing loud laughs from the audience through comic antics.

That stretched his acting muscles again, but also required coordinating the acting with the difficult tumbling techniques of classical Chinese dance.

"Coordinating distance and timing to match the music and sound effects of the scene required precise attention to detail," he said. The costuming, which functions as a prop, adds another layer of complexity; in "Buffoonery," the character suffers a disfiguring injury on stage and is cured all in the same seven minutes of the dance, requiring "careful coordination and execution" of a prosthetic prop and choreography.

Two years later, the results of that year of growth on stage were apparent. In 2020, Kim was also cast as an antagonist, this time one of Chinese history's most notorious villains, Dong Zhuo, in the dance "The Beauty Trap."

"[He's] a tyrant with extreme traits," Kim

said, such as "cruelty, violence, and lack of restraint." To prepare, he delved into historical references, practiced in front of the mirror, and received coaching from experienced choreographers and instructors. It wasn't smooth sailing.

"Despite all the preparation, I received some constructive criticism after a dress rehearsal that my persona lacked solidity and substance, which was crucial for the role," he said. It turned out that feedback was just the missing piece to the puzzle.

It ultimately pushed Kim to his limits, he said, and by the beginning of the tour, he had enhanced his craft to deliver an authentic performance in one of the most memorable story-based dances of the production that year.

That year's program included some comedic vignettes as well. They were a unique experience for Kim.

"The fact that I was both the choreographer and the main role made it rather special," he said. In the 2020 piece "The Novice Monks," a young couple visits a Buddhist temple ahead of their wedding to offer their prayers. However, during the trip, the bride-to-be is abducted, and it's up to a young monk to save the day.

The young monk was an involved role for Kim. The comical character is forced to disguise himself as the bride, taking on her mannerisms so as to fool her abductor, before he faces off with the villain in a dynamic showdown scene.

"I had to fluidly transition between two distinct personas—the monk and the bride—a skill I had not previously mastered," he said.

"The dance program allowed me to bring my creative vision to life, while also teaching me the importance of attention to detail, hard work, and dedication. Overall, the experience was personally and professionally enriching."

It was a valuable experience in performing his own choreography, another skill that Kim has cultivated during his time with Shen Yun.

Timeless Stories

Kim says he has always been interested in choreography, and his time as a student was spent creating dances for colleagues' competition entries.

As time went on, "[Shen Yun's] artistic director encouraged me to go in this direction, and that gave me more confidence," Kim said.

Most noteworthy, perhaps, is the story-based dance piece "Unprecedented Crime" in this year's season. It shows the courage of people of faith in modern-day China, depicting the very real persecution of Falun Gong spiritual practitioners at the hands of the Chinese Communist Party, while also showing the audience a spark of hope.

It's become one of the most talked-about dances in this year's program.

"I feel it's important to tell people about this persecution. And it's good for people to know. Put from a humanity perspective, you can't not care about this," Kim said.

Kim also practices Falun Gong, following the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance. He had read many stories about the ongoing persecution in China.

"I felt thankful that I'm in a free society, but also that I want to ... let people know about this [persecution]," he said.

For the current season, Kim also choreographed a second piece, "Sacred Quest Through Vermillion Kingdom," with Yu Yue. It is a story from the Monkey King's tales in "Journey to the West," the saga that formed Kim's most memorable first impression of Shen Yun.

"The reason these ancient stories have been continually passed down for thousands of years is because they're the best and most interesting stories," Kim said. "Traditional values are the most important thing in creating art."

It was these stories that compelled Kim to pursue a career in art, and in Shen Yun, he feels he has the opportunity to realize his mission.

"Because I'm touched [by these stories], I want to share this with other people, too."

The Epoch Times is a proud sponsor of Shen Yun Performing Arts.

Shen Yun's Upcoming Performances

Lakeland	Fla.	March 15
Cheyenne	Wyo.	March 15
Thousand Oaks	Calif.	March 15–16
Orlando	Fla.	March 16–19
Colorado Springs	Colo.	March 17–19
Long Beach	Calif.	March 18–19
Northridge	Calif.	March 21–22
Ft. Lauderdale	Fla.	March 21–23

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

Our Adopted Irish Holiday

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Interestingly, this festival of Erin as we know it today in the United States is a product of immigrants, not of the native Irish.

Our Adopted Celtic Extravaganza

In the beginning, these American salutes to Patrick were religious in nature. On March 17, 1601, the Spanish colony of St. Augustine, Florida, claimed the honor of first celebrating St. Patrick's Day in the New World with a parade. More than a century later, Savannah, Boston, and New York followed suit with parades put together by churches and Irish immigrants. In time, these celebrations lost their religious focus and became more secular, a holiday marking Irish heritage and culture.

In the "History of St. Patrick's Day," the editors at History.com briefly describe the growth of these events from the mid-19th century to the present:

"In 1848, several New York Irish Aid societies decided to unite their parades to form one official New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade. Today, that parade is the world's oldest civilian parade and the largest in the United States, with over 150,000 participants. Each year, nearly 3 million people line the 1.5-mile parade route to watch the procession, which takes more than five hours."

All these parades and traditions pay homage to the Irish past.

Head down the coast to Savannah, and we find the biggest St. Paddy's celebration in the Southeast. More than 15,000 people strut their stuff in this parade, and other scheduled events feature Irish music, an official pub crawl, and a rugby tournament.

Customs

As with these parades, various traditions often found more fertile ground in countries outside of Ireland, particularly in the United States, with its enormous population of Irish daughters and sons. The shamrock, which according to legend was used by Patrick to teach the Trinity to pagan tribes and which is today a national symbol for Ireland, evolved into a primary decoration for the holiday. Today, the shamrock appears on U.S. greeting cards and posters marking this special day.

Pubs in major U.S. cities feature Irish folk bands and dances, and in addition to Irish soda bread, restaurants and homemakers serve up corned beef and cabbage, a combination never popular in Ireland but which appeared to poor immigrants because those foods were affordable. Even fast food restaurants have gotten into the picture, serving up such holiday treats as the McDonald's Shamrock Shake.

Green is the color of this Emerald Isle day. In U.S. cities, our parades and the spectators lining the streets make up a sea of green shirts, blouses, and coats. In some places, those who forget to wear some piece of green clothing, or at least a shamrock, receive a Paddy's Day pinch from their friends, a custom having to do with leprechauns—mischievous creatures who delight in pinching humans.

Like Mardi Gras, the Fourth of July, and New Year's Eve, the feast day of Patrick has strong associations with the consumption of alcohol. Because it occurs during Lent, with its dietary restrictions, the Catholic church in Ireland and in the United States took to removing some of these prohibitions for St. Patrick's Day, fueling the consumption of beer and whiskey. In 2023, when St. Patrick's Day will fall on what is supposed to be a meatless Friday for Catholics, some bishops around the United States have issued special provisions lifting this prohibition for the day.

All these parades and traditions pay homage to the Irish past. Those with ancestors from the old country honor their heritage, while the rest of us piggyback on the event as an occasion to have a good time.



St. Patrick, a fifth-century bishop, is credited with spreading the gospel in Ireland.

Often overlooked, however, in this Irish stew of dance, songs, and Guinness are two additional reasons to doff our hats to this holiday.

The Man and the Mission

The first has to do with Patrick and those he inspired so long ago.

Born in the late fourth century into a wealthy Roman-British family, the 16-year-old Patrick was snatched away from his family by Irish raiders and carried back to their island home to become a slave. There, a regimen of prayer and fasting reignited his indifferent faith. After a six-year slog of privation, Patrick, as he later wrote in his "Confessions," heard a voice in a dream telling him that freedom was his and that a ship was ready. He made his escape via a boat to Britain and was reunited with his family. Yet, inspired again by the voice in his dreams, he was determined to build the Christian faith in Ireland.

After a period of study, years in which we know little of his life, he returned to Ireland and, until his death in A.D. 461, preached the gospel, converted peoples and Irish kings, ordained priests, and founded monasteries. Following Patrick's death, Christianity continued to spread there, and his spiritual descendants soon carried the faith to different parts of Europe, becoming renowned abroad for their learning and at home for the ancient manuscripts they copied and preserved.

Thomas Cahill's book "How the Irish Saved Civilization" may have exaggerated the impact of these monks, but for several centuries following Patrick's death, they delivered the gospel to faraway places and were vital to the preservation of learning and culture in a dark age.

Melting Pot

Driven by poverty and starvation, more than 1.5 million Irish fled Ireland for America during the Potato Famine

(1845–1855). Despised and discriminated against by many native-born Americans, particularly in the cities of the Northeast, they nonetheless persevered in making a home of their new land. They distinguished themselves in America's

wars and politics, eventually entered the professions, and brought many gifts and talents into American culture.

Today, these same Americans of Irish descent are stellar examples of that blending of culture and ethnicity that has long served as an American ideal. On St. Patrick's Day, they celebrate that heritage, but for the rest of the year, these Irish offspring are Americans, most of whom have deep roots in their adopted country. Like the rest of us, they began as immigrants and have ended as Americans.

"Erin go bragh," a phrase which we moderns translate as "Ireland forever," goes back to the Irish Rebellion of 1798. Today, many Patrick's Day partiers shout those words during parades or use them as a toast in pubs and bars. Given the connections of the Irish to our past and our strong affection for St. Patrick's Day, this year we might add, with another shout and a lifted glass, "America go bragh!"

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust On Their Wings," and two works of nonfiction, "Learning As I Go" and "Movies Make The Man." Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va.

ALL PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

Highlights Magazine and the Patriotism It Once Instilled

For over 75 years, Highlights has been delighting children—but its topics today are quite different from those at its inception

ANNIE HOLMQUIST

Last summer, news broke that Highlights, the classic children's magazine probably best known for its hidden picture puzzles and "Goofus and Gallant" comics, had joined the ranks of the "woke." The magazine capitulated to those demanding depictions of gay families, syndicated columnist Michelle Malkin wrote, while its booklist began featuring transgender-friendly titles such as "I Am Jazz."

Such topics were completely contrary to some of the features in the original Highlights, Malkin explained.

It seemed almost unbelievable to think that a secular children's magazine could feature the Bible stories and American traditions that Malkin claimed Highlights originally offered. But then an opportunity to test Malkin's statement unexpectedly presented itself. A friend of mine uncovered an old stack of Highlights magazines, their dates ranging between 1951 and 1960, and asked if I would be interested in looking at them.

Cracking open the February 1952 edition of Highlights, I discovered that Malkin wasn't joking. And as I paged through the faded and fragile pages, I began to realize that these magazines offered an education far more in line with the idea our nation's founders had than the one that schools seem to offer today.

Healthy Americana

One of the first things I noticed was the heavy presence of patriotic themes in the magazines. The February issue featured stories on both George Washington and Abraham Lincoln that recounted their histories and extolled their virtues, quoted from the Declaration of Independence, and gave instructions on how to host a patriotic party. Even the hidden picture puzzle was full of Americana references, instructing children to look for the heads of Washington, Lincoln, and Thomas Edison, along with images of Valley Forge, the Liberty Bell, and an eagle.

It wasn't just the February issue that featured patriotic themes. Other issues recounted tales of the Pilgrims, featured Thomas Jefferson, and even discussed the freedom of assembly enshrined in the U.S. Constitution.

Such lessons on history and heroes seem to fit the bill for education that Noah Webster laid out in his essay, "On the Education of Youth in America." A good education recounting the history of the American revolution and "the most remarkable characters and events that distinguished it" should be a primary part of American education, Webster explained.

"But every child in America should be acquainted with his own country," he wrote. "He should read books that furnish him with ideas that will be useful to him in life and practice. As soon as he opens his

lips, he should rehearse the history of his own country; he should lisp the praise of liberty, and of those illustrious heroes and statesmen, who have wrought a revolution in her favor."

Love of Virtue

But the old editions of Highlights don't just cover history and American heroes; they're also heavy on lessons of virtue. The opening editorial in the February issue, for example, encourages children to love their parents and be open and honest with them, recognizing that they want what's best for their children. The same issue features an adapted story from the biblical book of Exodus, recounting the Israelites complaining in the wilderness because of a lack of food. And of course, the famous Goofus and Gallant always contrast the difference between virtuous and nonvirtuous living!

Webster also highlighted virtue as one of the chief components of education, noting that "an acquaintance with ethics ... is necessary for the yeomanry of a republican state." He also recommended that children be taught "submission to superiors and to laws," explaining that "the virtues of men are of more consequence to society than their abilities; and for this reason, the heart should be cultivated with more assiduity than the head."

Benjamin Franklin, although far less religious than his contemporary Webster, agreed.

"The general natural Tendency of Reading good History," he wrote, "must be, to fix in the Minds of Youth deep Impressions of the Beauty and Usefulness of Virtue of all Kinds."

Franklin even went so far as to recommend Christianity, leaving little question that he would have approved of the inclusion of the Exodus adaptation in Highlights.

Industry and Perseverance

A final thing I noticed was the independent and industrious nature on display throughout the old issues of Highlights. One story talked about children saving money for a desired item and then giving up that money for another in need. Another story featured two brothers heading out on their own for the day to make some money at the nearby train station.

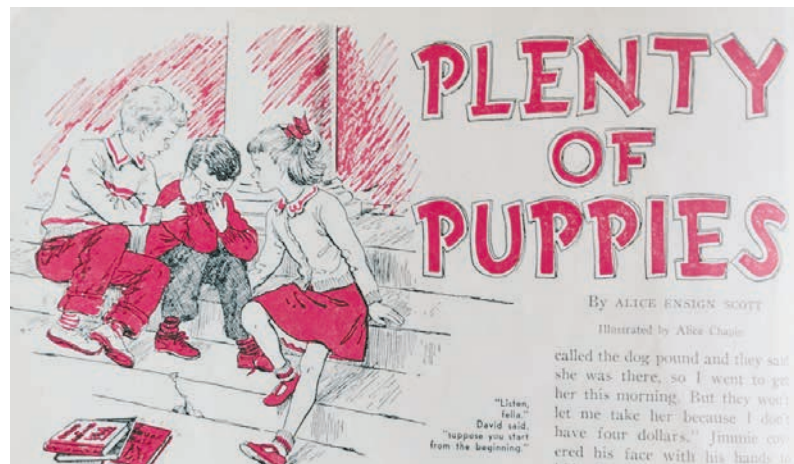
The crafts section gave step-by-step instructions on how children could build their own stepstool, encouraging them to gather "a crosscut saw, a square, a file, a hammer, and sandpaper," as well as nails. Imagine telling today's bubble-wrapped children to grab those items without adult supervision! The Karens of our culture would throw a fit!

But such caution isn't what Benjamin Franklin had in mind when he laid out his plan for education in "Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pensilvania." Instead, he encouraged Americans to fix such qualities as "industry" and "perseverance" in the minds of young people.

Many may look at these old issues of Highlights and be aroused by waves of nostalgia from their childhoods. Others may look at them and come away with thoughts of "quaint" and "out-of-touch."

But I come away from them challenged, because the individuals who created them were far more faithful than today's institutions in inculcating history and patriotism, virtue, and independence into the minds of young Americans. These elements are critical to our nation's health, and if we want to see America thrive once more, then we, too, must follow the example set forward in the early editions of Highlights magazine.

ALL PHOTOS BY ANNIE HOLMQUIST



The earlier editions featured stories that displayed children's independent and industrious nature.



Mia Huckman stands with her winning painting, "Our Last Roundup."



A detail of the background and cowboy's hand in Huckman's painting "Our Last Roundup."



"Our Last Roundup" by Mia Huckman.

Teenage Artist Wins Rodeo Art Show

High schooler Mia Huckman's grand championship painting fetched \$275,000 at an auction

LOUISE CHAMBERS

A Texas high schooler was named grand champion of a renowned rodeo art show, thanks to her exquisite photo-realistic painting of

a rider on horseback herding cows.

Huckman, 18, lives in Houston and attends Foster High School in nearby Richmond. Out of 4,500 submissions from school districts across southeast Texas, she took the top spot at Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo's 2023 School

Art Contest on Feb. 11 after entering for the fourth year in a row.

Her acrylic painting, executed on gessoed board, is based on a photo loaned to her by her art teacher that was taken at a real Texas ranch.

"I started working on it in mid-October and finished it in early January," Huckman told The Epoch Times. "The title, 'Our Last Roundup,' was intended to reflect some of the changes that have occurred at that ranch since the photo was taken, as well as a bit of my own personal experience with this being the last year that I'm eligible to enter the School Art Contest."

The detailed painting was challenging, said Huckman, who added: "The deadline is always stressful, and I would often end up staying up super late or waking up super early to work on the piece, in between school work and extracurricular activities. A lot of the time I would have to stay home from trips or hanging out with friends to get work done."

She said it was a challenge to "capture the out-of-focus background of the piece accurately," as it is not something she has done before.

Huckman hoped to convey themes of

"peace and tranquility" and "patience and strength" in her painting. She was encouraged by her school that doing well in the art contest can "lead to lots of beneficial opportunities," such as selling work at auction.

Huckman's winning painting fetched \$275,000 at an auction on March 12.

"This is something that I've been working towards for a very long time, and I'm happy to have accomplished such a difficult goal."

Mia Huckman

It's not the first time the young artist has made waves at the HLSR School Art Contest.

Huckman was an auction winner in 2020, a Reserve Class Champion for painting in 2021, and a Reserve Grand Champion in 2022 when she broke the

record for the highest auction bid received for a student artwork. In 2022, her painting "Partners in Time" sold for \$265,000—that's \$15,000 more than the 2022 Grand Champion's painting sold for.

Huckman is inspired by the subject matter she renders and by past contest winners; she feels "super proud" that she finally claimed the top title.

"This is something that I've been working toward for a very long time, and I'm happy to have accomplished such a difficult goal," she said. "I've been drawing and painting for as long as I can remember."

"Some of my favorite artists are Norman Rockwell, Haddon Sundblom, and Claude Monet. I take inspiration from tons of art and artists I get exposed to, both modern and throughout history."

After high school, Huckman plans to study for a degree in illustration at Savannah College of Art and Design.

"I hope to pursue a career as a concept artist once I graduate," she said. "Ideally, once I've established a career, I'll be able to move abroad and continue getting to do what I love."

Boys Plant Flowers for Fallen Officer

When 2 brothers found the memorial of a young officer killed in the line of duty, they decided to show their appreciation

LOUISE CHAMBERS

Two boys whose family stumbled across a memorial for a young police officer killed in the line of duty were so moved that they decided to spend their weekend planting flowers at the site, in honor of the fallen officer.

Zachary Chancer, 38, and his wife, Kristina, 37, live in Cherokee County, Georgia, with their 14-year-old daughter, Olivia, and sons Bronson, 8, and Ezra, 5. In February, the family was out walking in JB Owens Park in Holly Springs, Georgia, when Ezra came across a tree planted in a flower bed without flowers.

"He saw the plaque, and he asked me to come over and tell him what it meant," Zachary Chancer told The Epoch Times. "I told him that it was for a fallen officer and read the plaque to him. At the time, we had no idea ... what situation happened,



The Chancer family and members of Officer Joe Burson's police department stand beside his memorial.

but that didn't matter to Ezra. He let his imagination run wild."

The memorial belonged to officer Joseph William Burson, who was killed during a traffic stop in June 2021 at the age of 24 while serving Cherokee County.

Every time the family visited the park, the kids would go to see the plaque. One day, they asked their father why there were no flowers at the site, and the family decided to buy some fresh flowers and a vase. However, as the family brainstormed together, they came up with something more permanent they could do.

"Ultimately, we chose wild daffodils," Chancer said.

According to Chancer, wild daffodils represent hope, folly, and unrequited love. The flowers are perennial, and the

bulbs are used in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease, a cause dear to his family's hearts.

On Feb. 19, in the early afternoon, the family took a walk through the woods to collect native wild daffodil bulbs. Between them, they gathered about 100 and took the bulbs to the memorial along with leftover mulch from Chancer's landscaping job.

With Ezra and Bronson taking the lead, the family of five made sure the soil was loosened up before dividing the tasks of digging holes, handing over the daffodil bulbs, and spreading the mulch. When their bulbs had been planted, Chancer took a photo of his two proud boys and uploaded the photo to a local community Facebook page.

The family was blown away by the response.

"Honestly, we were overwhelmed," Chancer told The Epoch Times. "We didn't do it for the recognition; we saw a need. ... [This officer] laid down his life to protect and serve the community, and we wanted to give them something."

"By putting the flowers there—and these flowers would always be back—we felt like it would draw people to see it, and actually pay respect and show love. We wanted the family to know and the friends to know that he wasn't just yours; he was here for all of us."

Kristina Chancer echoed the same feeling as her husband. She said that in a really dark time, like the world is currently in, "if you can shed some kind of light or make somebody smile or make somebody happy, I feel like that's what it's about."

Her motto for her kids is "be the change you want to see."

The boys' kind action soon reached the fallen officer's police department, and his sergeant contacted the Chancers to suggest that they meet at the memorial. When the Chancers arrived, they were shocked to meet the entire department, their camera crew, and officer Burson's widow.

Bronson and Ezra received medals for their kind deed. Both told The Epoch

Times they felt "good, excited, and cool" to be recognized.

Speaking to Burson's widow was "beautiful."

Zachary Chancer said: "Little did we know she was going through a bad week, a bad month, and somehow the post had reached her as well. She just wanted to meet us and tell us thank you and that it brightened her world."

The Chancers met in Texas, relocated to Florida with their young family, and moved to Georgia when they fell on hard times. Nostalgic for their past community involvement in Florida—hosting parties and cookouts for more deprived neighborhoods—they're actively seeking out ways to get involved and show kindness in their new home state.

"Me and Kristina, we came from broken families. We were raised by multiple people just to have an opportunity at life," Zachary Chancer said. "We chose that when we were starting our family, no matter what, we were going to do what we felt was best and right for our children. We weren't going to abandon each other, or them."

Although there have been challenges, the couple has wanted to raise their children with compassion and empathy.

They have wanted them to "understand that even at the highest heights and the lowest lows, you can always do something to show you care."

Paralyzed Dad Insists on Daddy-Daughter Dance

Despite being wheelchair-bound, Charles Potter hasn't let his injuries stop him from being there for his daughters

LOUISE CHAMBERS

A man paralyzed in 2006 when his car was hit head-on by a drunk driver has refused to miss a moment with his family. He has even learned daddy-daughter dances from his wheelchair to show his youngest daughter, a budding ballerina, that his love knows no limits.



Charles Potter with his daughter Charlie, 6.

Rhode Islander Charles Potter lives with his fiancée, Rhonda Conrad, in Arizona. Charles has an older daughter named Brogan, 19, and the couple have a 6-year-old daughter together, Charlie.

Charles was paralyzed in an accident at the age of 20 and doesn't work. Rhonda works for a medical billing company and is Charles's caregiver.

"I was 16 and I did not know Charles at the time of his accident, but I did read it in our local newspaper and it scared me, being I was a new driver," Rhonda told The Epoch Times. "Charles was hit by a drunk driver in Winchester, Virginia, in September 2006. His light had just turned green, and he went to take a left turn when the drunk driver came up over a hill at 100 miles per hour, T-boning him."

Charles broke his neck, bruised his spine, and sustained a cut near his eye. He had a bone taken from his hip and fused into his neck to repair the break but never recovered full mobility. When the accident first happened, Charles was only able to move his head, Rhonda said, and it was "the worst pain he had ever felt."

"[The drunk driver] served three and a half years in prison, and five years supervised probation," she said.

Yet Charles, propelled by positivity, refused to let his injuries hold him back from embracing life and being the best dad he could be. When their daughter, Charlie, was born, Charles was an active and doting parent.

When Charles was invited to take part in a daddy-daughter dance by Charlie's dance school, Steppin' Out Performing Arts of Avondale, Arizona, it was a no-brainer.

"I refuse to let my chair stop me from being there and being present. It means the world to me to be able to be there and perform with her," Charles said, praising his daughter. "She doesn't look at me any differently being in my situation, but she knows there are some limits to what I can do."

With some tweaks to the choreography to accommodate Charles's chair and partial mobility of his hands, Charles and Charlie learned their first daddy-daughter dance ahead of Christmas 2022 in just four days. Rhonda uploaded footage of the recital to TikTok, where the clip went viral. The pair has since performed at two more recitals together.

Rhonda said: "They have such a close bond; the saying 'Daddy's girl, Mama's world' couldn't be more true."

Rhonda, who considers herself an empath, has been overwhelmed by the online response to her videos of Charles and Charlie. "Seeing so many people say they wish their father, or their children's father, was in their daughters' lives is so upsetting to me," she explained, "but I understand, as I didn't have my father in my life either. The amount of people who have been inspired by the video has been amazing as well."

Since her fiancée's viral fame, Rhonda has told Charles he should consider becoming a motivational speaker. Charles already has the motto that has allowed him to navigate through hard times: "Keep your head up and know that everything happens for a reason."



Charles with his first daughter, Brogan.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF MIA HUCKMAN

COURTESY OF HOLLY SPRINGS POLICE DEPARTMENT



Officer Joe Burson, who was killed in the line of duty in June 2021.

COURTESY OF HOLLY SPRINGS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CAP FAMILY

Seneca

How to Endure Suffering Well

Lessons from the ancient philosophy of Stoicism

Seneca the Younger is still remembered today as one of the greatest Stoic thinkers.



ANDREW BENSON BROWN

Many people today feel powerless. Facing events beyond their control, from wars to environmental problems, they regress into themselves, adopting a philosophy of self-satisfaction as a way of sidestepping despair. Often tied to this is a belief that quantum physics rules the universe: If nothing is out there other than particles and quarks, why not just live for me?

During the Roman Empire, a similar school of thought competed for the minds of the nobility. Epicureanism taught that one should seek pleasure and avoid pain to navigate a random world governed by atoms swirling in a universal void. It's a shallow life philosophy that depends on accidental circumstances to be successfully applied, most notably health and wealth. But for people who suffer misfortune and hardship, it hardly provides a satisfactory outlook on life.

Fortunately, ancient Rome offers an example of a man who provided an alternative to this outlook. He was a rare instance of a great thinker who, invested with considerable power for a time, knew how fragile it was and sought more permanent truths than the vagaries of social status.

Educating a Bad Emperor

Lucius Annaeus Seneca the Younger was born to a wealthy equestrian family in Spain in about 4 B.C. He became a tutor to Nero, the future Roman emperor, but was unable to curb the boy's licentious nature. When his pupil assumed the throne, Seneca became his chief adviser. Like all good teachers, he held out hope that Nero could change. Unfortunately, Nero was less interested in being a good emperor than he was in being a good artist. While he participated in rigged music, drama, and chariot competitions, Seneca was running the empire. The early years of Nero's reign were thus marked by able administration and prosperity.

But over time, the emperor became paranoid and cruel. Seneca's political enemies at court whispered in Nero's ear that his adviser was trying to outdo the emperor as a poet and orator, and so the philosopher retired from public affairs to the relative safety of his country estate.

It was during these final three years of his life that Seneca wrote his most important literary works, including 124 philosophical letters to his friend and former student, Lucilius. Covering a wide range of topics, they're written in a simple but witty style and provide an excellent introduction to Stoic ethics.

What Is Stoicism?

Stoicism was first theorized by Greek philosophers hundreds of years before Seneca's time, but only fragments of these earlier works have come down to us. Seneca's surviving writings, by contrast, fill 10 volumes in the Loeb Classical Library.

A newly revised collection published by



Seneca and Nero's lives were intertwined. "Double Portrait of Seneca (?-65) and Nero (37-68)," circa 1617, by Peter Paul Rubens.

Regnery Gateway, "Gateway to the Stoics," includes a few of Seneca's most important letters, translated by classicist Spencer Klavan. These selections reveal that Seneca's teachings were, in many ways, strikingly similar to those of Jesus.

In Letter 47, he congratulated Lucilius upon hearing that he treated his slaves like members of the family. Despite superficial differences in social rank, Seneca observed, all men are "fellow slaves, if you only consider how drastically fortunes can change." He went on to denounce the cruelty of masters before providing his own variation on the golden rule: "Live with those beneath you in rank as you would hope to live with those above you. Every time it occurs to you how much power you have over your slave, recall to mind that your own master has just as much power over you."

And just who is this master, Seneca asked. Perhaps, like Hecuba, queen of Troy, you'll be sold into slavery. Or maybe your master is an appetite: greed, sex, or ambition. And above all, Seneca noted, everyone is a slave to fear.

Fear was rampant during Nero's later reign. After Seneca's retirement, the imperial administration crumbled; Nero began executing those he suspected of disloyalty. Social unrest worsened after the failed Pisonian conspiracy to assassinate the emperor, named after its leader, Gaius Calpurnius Piso. The plot was discovered, Seneca was implicated, and Nero ordered him to commit suicide.

As the historian Tacitus described it, a centurion arrived at Seneca's house during dinner and relayed the order. Deprived of the right to recite his will, Seneca turned to his friends and family, stating: "I leave you the example of my life, the best and most precious legacy now in my power. Cherish it in your memory, and you will gain at once the applause due to virtue, and the fame of a sincere and generous friendship." Then, after chiding the teary-eyed to be firm, he opened his arteries.

Stoicism and Christianity

In Letter 91, Seneca described a fire that destroyed the city of Lyons in a single night, emphasizing how years of fruitful labor can quickly come to ruin: "Things emerge by slow degrees and then rush to destruction."

He admonished Lucilius to "rise to meet the blows of fortune, and, whatever happens, bear in mind that it is less serious

than people say." If we remember the inevitable fact that everyone is destined to die, we can bear the downfall of cities "with equanimity." By changing one's attitude, a person can learn to bear the workings of fate, represented by the divine mind that governs everything.

In A.D. 64, another fire broke out in Rome that destroyed large sections of the city. Nero blamed the Christians for the disaster as a way of redirecting rumors that he himself had started it. While Seneca doesn't mention this more famous fire in his letter, the advice he gives on bearing death calmly could easily be applied to those who were brutally persecuted in the wake of Nero's reign of terror.

In "Seneca: The Humanist at the Court of Nero," biographer Villy Sorensen observed that "many of Seneca's expressions are reminiscent of Christ's words in the gospels, and in his letters to Lucilius he expresses more personal religious sentiments than the more impersonal belief in fate." In Letter 41, for example, Seneca wrote: "God is near you, with you, in you."

Some passages in the writings of St. Paul bear a remarkable resemblance to Seneca's thinking. It's noteworthy that these two men were exact contemporaries—both died violently in A.D. 65 as victims of Nero's purges. In Romans 5:3-4, St. Paul wrote that "we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope." It's this last part, "hope," that was missing from Stoic doctrine.

He was a rare instance of a great thinker who, invested with considerable power for a time, knew how fragile it was and sought more permanent truths than the vagaries of social status.

For Christians, suffering wasn't only proof of moral distinction but preparation for the world to come. Stoics believed that the universe would end in an apocalyptic conflagration, but they didn't teach that there was anything beyond this.

Although Stoicism paid respect to the lower orders, it never caught on beyond the Roman aristocracy. It was Christianity that popularized the idea that all men are brothers, ending the cultural tribalism dominating pagan religions. But if, as Klavan noted in his foreword to "Gateway to the Stoics," it's true that "the Christian Church has made Stoics of us all," we partly have Seneca to thank for that fact.

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

DEAR NEXT GENERATION Advice from our readers to our young people

Encouraging Talents and Accepting Guidance

A little bit of inspiration goes a long way

My advice to younger generations is to seek God's wisdom through prayer and reading, studying, and listening to God's Word daily. By doing this, He will enable us to discern between good and evil. I am an 83-year-old blessed father of three boys and 10 grandchildren, who reads the Bible and prays every morning, asking God for wisdom, discernment, and some gifts from the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

My advice goes beyond the younger generations. Parents, grandparents, relatives, and friends have a great potential to positively influence children and teenagers. Mature people can often detect certain gifts and talents in younger people. Old folks can encourage younger people by guiding them in the right direction, supporting them in various ways, advising them, or even providing some financial assistance in their education.

Our oldest boy demonstrated a technical interest early in his life. At the time the first PCs hit the market in the mid-'80s, we

bought him a computer. He soon wrote his own programs and was able to help his teacher and fellow students solve some problems at elementary school. Now, he owns his own computer networking business with four hired employees. The good thing is that his dad, who encouraged him by fostering his interest, later became a beneficiary by having many of his computer problems taken care of.

Older folks can encourage younger people by guiding them in the right direction, supporting them in various ways, advising them, or even providing some financial assistance in their education.



Our youngest son displayed some amazing gymnastic abilities. As a preschooler, he made handstands and later walked up and down the stairs on his hands. We enrolled him in gymnastics, and he excelled, earning several trophies and once being the BC champion. An injury forced him to change to a different career, which was not totally different. He has become one of the top movie stuntmen in North America.

We noticed an astonishing interest in science in one of our grandsons, who designed his own electrical motor. I have bought him a basic book on chemistry and physics, and last Christmas a book on engineering. Both books are written in easy, understandable language and richly illustrated. Recently, we celebrated his 12th birthday, at

which we gave him a beautifully illustrated tome on Earth Science. He could hardly lay it away during breakfast. This young fellow knows already more about science than many older folks.

My recommendation to the younger generations remains to first seek God's advice by talking and listening to Him and reading His word every day. Secondly, it is important for all of us to remain open-minded to the Lord's leading and to the counsel of mature, respected, and accomplished people.

—Wilfried Hein, British Columbia

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.

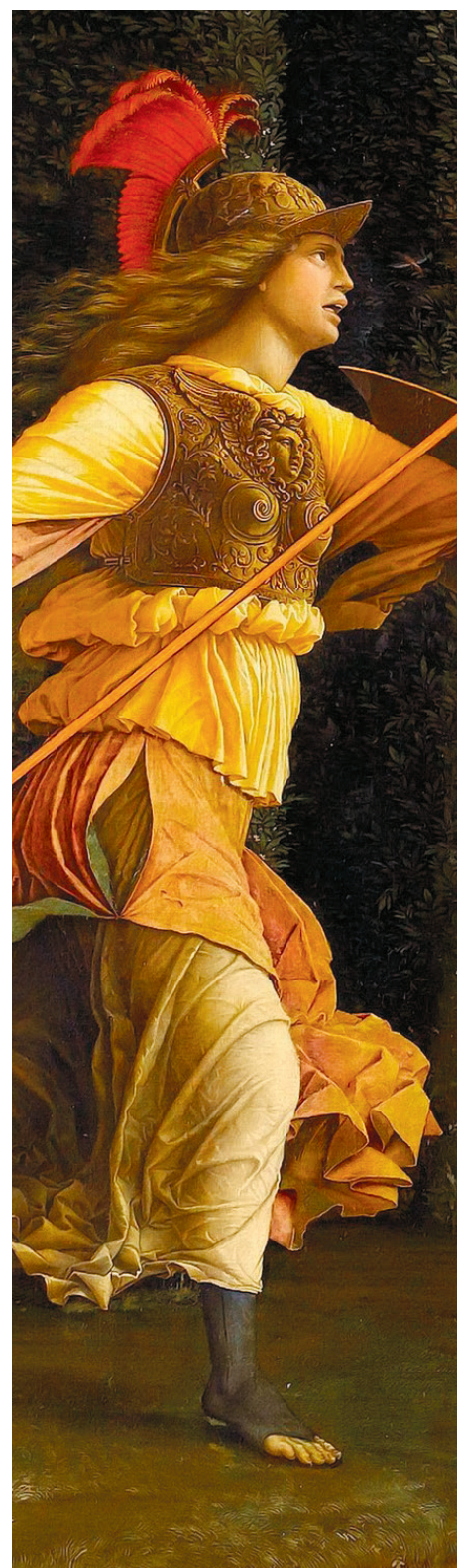
Send your advice, along with your full name, state, and contact information to NextGeneration@epochtimes.com or mail it to: **Next Generation, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY 10001.**



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1. A portrait of Isabella d'Este by Leonardo da Vinci.
2. Virtue, bound, awaits to be saved by Minerva.
3. A detail of Minerva shows the magnificent goddess chasing out evil. The Louvre.
4. Avarice and Ingratitude jump into the swamp carrying Ignorance.



"Minerva Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue," circa A.D. 1502, by Andrea Mantegna. Oil on canvas 5.25 feet by 6.3 feet. The Louvre.

FINE ARTS

Weed Your Garden: 'Minerva Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue'

Works of art that tell us about life

YVONNE MARCOTTE

It's a hot summer day. A professor is preparing his lectures in his home office. He stretches and takes a much-needed break. He opens a window of his study to take in some fresh air and sunshine and, of course, to admire his garden. He notes with satisfaction that the seeds he planted the previous spring are growing and blooming. The sun shines on his leafy greens, the tops of carrots, the vines of tomatoes, and—oh no!—lots of weeds.

Too involved in his academic work over the past weeks, he failed to notice that his garden has been overrun with weeds. He goes out and, upon careful inspection, sees a host of unwelcome plants. They've insidiously crept into his rows of squash, beans, and sunflowers. Time to weed.

During the Middle Ages, the garden was symbolically represented in art as the place in ourselves where man's virtues were cultivated. In A.D. 1279, Dominican monk Frère Laurent wrote a moral treatise with an illumination (a picture in a medieval manuscript) titled "The Virtue Garden."

Later, during the Renaissance, artists portrayed gardens as allegorical settings and drew from classical literature, myths, and legends in their paintings. One story was that of Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom and justice, who watched over the celestial Garden of Virtue. It was said that, as the ages passed, her righteous rage grew as she watched the garden be overrun by the weeds of many vices.

Weeding the Garden of Virtue

Renaissance artist Andrea Mantegna (circa A.D. 1431-1506) told this story in his painting "Minerva Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue" (A.D. 1502). Mantegna's painting symbolically presents the vices that people should remove from themselves.

In the painting, Minerva is barefoot and dressed in her signature floor-length chiton (Roman gown), wearing her Corinthian battle helmet pushed back to reveal her features. She carries a spear and an aegis, her shield with a Medusa head that wards off evil.

The warrior goddess plunges forward, driving out the vices, who flee in terror. "Cupidi," minor deities with moth-like wings who wreaked havoc with their malicious mischief in the garden, now scatter. Everything is in chaos as the depraved creatures run here and there struggling to

avoid Minerva's wrath.

Mantegna used epigraphy, an inscription technique used in the Middle Ages to identify figures or objects by placing scrolls, banners, or headbands near or on a figure. On the far left is an olive tree with feminine features wrapped in a scroll. According to some sources, the banner identifies the figure as Daphne, who was turned into a tree to escape capture by Apollo. Other sources identify the figure as Virtue, who has been bound and is unable to grow in the garden.

A figure, holding several babies and identified by a scroll held by a cupid, looks back terrified as Minerva rushes toward her. In the center, Diana, goddess of chaste love, is saved as she stands on the back of a centaur, symbolizing concupiscence, who pulls at her gown.

Minerva drives the depraved figures into the swamp. On the bottom right, Avarice and Ingratitude jump into the marsh carrying a dull and lethargic Ignorance, who wears a crown. Other vices are driven into the swamp. On the bottom right, Inertia, with a look of fear but who seems to be sight-impaired, pulls Idleness, naked and without arms, with a rope.

In this and later paintings, Mantegna depicted anthropomorphic (inanimate objects with human features) clouds, seen in the upper right. A monkey figure, being pushed into the swamp, also has human attributes. Its arm is up, almost to ward off any blows from the righteous goddess. Nothing escapes the wrath of the goddess.

The warrior goddess plunges forward, driving out the vices

On the upper right, the figures of Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude wait for the vices to be cleaned so they can return to the garden. A white banner coming out of the wall identifies the walled-in virtue of Prudence crying to be released.

The Studiolo

During the Italian Renaissance, people of culture and learning added a private office, or studiolo, to their residences as a place to think and reflect, study the classics, and enjoy the company of like-minded friends.

They designed this private room with the greatest care, using beautiful wood with marquetry, polished floors, and works of art that encouraged reflection and discussion.

In 1491 A.D., the marchioness of Mantua, Isabella d'Este, commissioned Mantegna to provide two paintings for her studiolo at one of her two residences, the Castello di San Giorgio in Mantua, Italy. According to the website My Daily Art Display, Mantegna, in his 70s, took four years to complete the Minerva painting.

Isabella was a leading patron of the arts at this time and used the greatest care in her choices. Her biographer wrote:

"In this sanctuary from which the cares and the noise of the outer world were banished, it was Isabella's dream that the walls should be adorned with paintings giving expression to her ideals of culture and disposing the mind to pure and noble thoughts."

Isabella spent more than 30 years adorning her studiolo, where she placed her collection of books, jewelry, antique cameos, and sculptures. She constantly adapted this study to the changing tastes of the court. There were eventually five paintings by artists, including Mantegna's, in the studiolo, all with the theme of the victory of virtue over vice.

Expert advice from The Spruce tells gardeners to plant densely and use mulch and groundcovers to leave no space for weeds, use other natural methods to get rid of them, and, most importantly, never give up rooting out these unwelcome guests in your garden.

Just as Minerva cleaned out her garden so that the virtues could return and thrive, so too can we weed out the bad elements in ourselves so our finest qualities can shine. Culling our vices can be hard work, but this allows the fruits of our labor to flourish in the autumn of our life.



Justice, Temperance, and Forbearance await in the clouds to return to the Garden of Virtue.

ETERNALCREATIVE/GETTY IMAGES



EDUCATION

Public School: What Every Parent Needs to Know

American kids are learning even less today than reported in the 1983 assessment 'A Nation At Risk'

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, reading and math proficiency declined significantly for fourth and eighth graders during the pandemic.

BARBARA DANZA

Forty years ago, President Ronald Reagan announced the findings of a study on the state of education in America. Citing the infamous report "A Nation At Risk," the president declared, "Our education system, once the finest in the world, is in a sorry state of disrepair."

Four decades later, how are America's government schools doing? That's the subject of "Mediocrity: 40 Ways Government Schools are Failing Today's Students," the new book by Connor Boyack, president of Libertas Institute and creator of children's series "The Tuttle Twins," and Corey DeAngelis, senior fellow at the American Federation for Children and executive director at Educational Freedom Institute. I asked Mr. Boyack what parents need to know about the public school system.

The Epoch Times: "A Nation At Risk" was a shocking indictment of America's schools and is today considered a landmark event in the country's educational history. What were some of the key factors that led to such a dire assessment?
Connor Boyack: The group that published "A Nation at Risk" felt that America's educational system was not adequately preparing young people for a changing economy and competitive workforce. The report highlighted various studies indicating academic underachievement, including declining test scores—and low performance compared to many other industrialized nations.

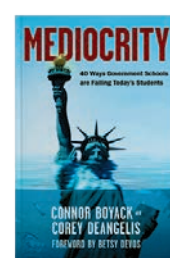
The Epoch Times: Are America's public school students better off today than they were in 1983?
Mr. Boyack: If the educational foundations of our society were in 1983 being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity, today they are fully submerged. Our book "Mediocrity" highlights 40 ways that government schools are failing kids—from pushing propaganda and activist teachers to dumbed-down curriculum and rising levels of remediation needed in college because students are so ill prepared. While there are certainly exceptions where things have improved, we argue in the book that the general output of educational attainment has declined substantially. Consider the National Assessment of Educational Progress, often called the "nation's report card." Just 26 percent of 8th graders [in 2022] perform math proficiently, down from 33 percent in 2019. And reading scores saw their biggest drop in three decades, falling back to 1992 levels, when the first reading test was used. Only 33 percent of 4th graders were reading at a proficient level in 2022, down from 35 percent in 2019. Eighth graders declined from 34 percent to 31 percent. You read that right: Fewer than one-third of 8th graders in America can read proficiently. Mediocrity indeed.

The Epoch Times: How informed do you think the average parent is about the state of schools?
Mr. Boyack: As "Zoom school" emerged during COVID-19—the video-enabled remote instruction as schools were shut down—many parents suddenly had easy access to review what was being taught to their children, and by whom. One teacher in Philadelphia publicly voiced frustration that, "We'll never be quite sure who is

overhearing the discourse" between him and his students, and wondered, "How much have students depended on the (somewhat) secure barriers of our physical classrooms to encourage vulnerability? How many of us have installed some version of 'what happens here stays here' to help this?" And he made clear his concern that parents would interfere with his propaganda efforts: "If we are engaged in the messy work of destabilizing a kid's [sic] racism or homophobia or transphobia—how much do we want their classmates' parents piling on?" Many parents have woken up to the reality that too many teachers consider their closed-door classrooms to be an opportunity to brainwash a captive audience. This is among the reasons why homeschooling tripled and why so many families are now demanding alternative options that can better educate their kids without much of the nonsense found in government schools.

The Epoch Times: What do you wish more American parents understood about public schools?
Mr. Boyack: Many parents feel that the school system is broken. They believe that the system is malfunctioning and simply needs to be fixed. I don't believe that. I believe that the problems we see in today's schools are simply the result of how the system was architected by people like Horace Mann. Mann was an admirer of the schooling system being developed in Prussia, featuring a standardized curriculum, widespread testing, compulsory attendance, professionalization of teachers, and career training. It was an authoritarian, top-down model that emphasized the collective over the individual. Following a trip abroad to see this system in action for himself, Mann became a strong advocate for its implementation in America. His lobbying effort was swift and successful. Mann was instrumental in getting Massachusetts to adopt the Prussian model of education statewide in 1852, and other states soon followed. What emerged in the years ahead was a new kind of school called the "factory model school," where both the design of the school building and the processes used within it were modeled after an actual factory. It was a linear system, moving students through standardized information, regulated processes, and grade levels by age—akin to a conveyor belt process in a factory.

People like Mann who shaped how today's schools operate wanted kids to be subordinated to the state, so they could be molded more easily. Other early architects like John Dewey had this as their core fo-



"Mediocrity: 40 Ways Government Schools are Failing Today's Students" by Connor Boyack.

26% of 8th graders in 2022 performed math proficiently, down from 33 percent in 2019.

33% of 4th graders were reading at a proficient level in 2022, down from 35 percent in 2019.

Parents have many options outside the public school system, from homeschool co-ops to micro-schools.

FIZKES/SHUTTERSTOCK



cus. For example, Dewey once wrote that the new school system they were creating would "build up forces ... whose natural effect is to undermine the importance and uniqueness of family life." He didn't say that with concern, but praise. He wanted "the relaxation of older family ties" so children could effectively be brainwashed to believe differently from their parents. That's not unlike what we have today.

The Epoch Times: Many parents believe that if you live in a town that has a highly rated school district, their children will receive a great education. Is that a safe assumption?
Mr. Boyack: This is only a safe assumption if you're content being graded on a curve. Having a highly rated school district doesn't really mean that children are receiving a high-quality education. It just means that the district is doing better than other districts. It's like in 8th grade math, when you were graded on a curve and got an A for being at the top of the class. That didn't mean you scored perfectly—it just means you didn't do as awful as your peers. With the "rising tide of mediocrity" leading to a significantly dumbed down curriculum, what counts today as a "highly rated" school district is based on a depressed standard. Parents should demand far more.

The Epoch Times: What most concerns you about today's public school system?
Mr. Boyack: My chief concern is how poorly we prepare young people for adulthood. Generations of voters have come out of this school system, historically ignorant, civically apathetic, and supporting socialism. That is a recipe for societal disaster, and it's the chief reason for all the toxic garbage we see in our culture today. For too long, we have delegated the education of our children to this system, only to have it pump out mediocrity. We've all laughed at videos of college students or adults who can't answer the most basic questions about government or current events or history. It's humorous, but it's also profoundly sad to see how awful the school system has performed in preparing young people for being a competent, critically thinking adult.

The Epoch Times: What other options do parents have outside the public school system?
Mr. Boyack: There's never been a better time to get off the conveyor belt and pursue alternative options that better support our kids' educational journeys. There's homeschooling, where you tough it out as a family; homeschool co-ops, where you join together with other families in your community; online schooling, with hundreds of awesome websites and curricula to choose from; micro-schooling, a low-cost option where one or a few teachers offer a mini school without all the bureaucracy that makes schooling expensive; or traditional private schools with large campuses, sports, and social opportunities for the students.

Even better, many states are now passing Education Spending Account laws that allow parents to use some of the money that would have been spent on their child's education in government schools, and direct those dollars to private school tuition or for homeschooling expenses so families can more easily afford to pursue education alternatives for their kids.



FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

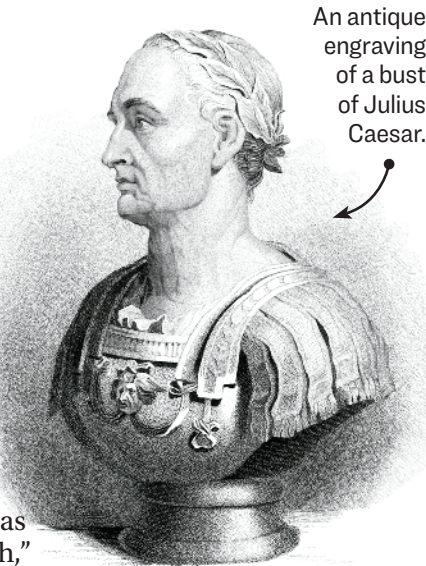
Week 11, 2023



THE IDES OF MARCH

One of the most pivotal dates in Roman history was what was known on the Roman calendar as "the Ides of March," that is, March 15. On a particular March 15 in the year 44 B.C., Julius Caesar was assassinated by about 40 Roman senators, some his close friends, who feared Caesar's reign would lead to tyranny. The shocking event effectively marked the end to the Roman Republic and paved way for the establishment of the Roman Empire.

This monumental event was portrayed by playwright William Shakespeare in his play "Julius Caesar." In one scene, Caesar encounters a clairvoyant who warns, "Beware the Ides of March." This familiar phrase is used today to signify a warning of betrayal or bad fortune.



An antique engraving of a bust of Julius Caesar.

FIERCEBAIN/GETTY IMAGES

Classic Irish Limericks

There was an Old Man of Kilkenny
Who never had more than a penny
He spent all that money
In onions and honey
That wayward old man of Kilkenny.

There was an Old Derry down Derry
Who loved to see little folks merry
So he made them a book
And with laughter they shook
At the fun of that Derry down Derry.

There was a young man of Killarney
Who was chock full of what is called blarney
He would sit on a stile
And tell lies by the mile
Would this dreadful young man of Killarney.

WHY SHOULDN'T YOU SPLIT THE BILL WITH A LEPRECHAUN?



THEY'RE ALWAYS A LITTLE SHORTER
MATT BENNETT/SHUTTERSTOCK

You've got to do your own growing, no matter how tall your grandfather was.



IRISH SAYING
HERDKAND/SHUTTERSTOCK

LORA LUI/SHUTTERSTOCK

By Aidan Danza

HERONS AND EGRETS

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

America's wetlands are home to a wide variety of waterbirds, including those that we know as herons and egrets.



GREAT BLUE HERON

The great blue heron is America's largest heron, measuring up to 54 inches tall. However, the enormous bird only weighs five- to six pounds, given its long, lanky neck and legs. It lives, like the rest of herons and egrets, in wetlands, be they marshes, bogs, or mangroves, wading along the shores and slowly stalking prey. To feed, the heron has a striking technique. The bird slowly wades along the shore, then waits for a long period until a fish comes by. Then, it stabs the fish with its bill (or grabs it, if it's small enough) and swallows it whole. They will also eat frogs, reptiles, and even other birds on rare occasions. Though it may seem odd at first thought, the great blue heron nests in trees, just like a robin or a sparrow. They also will nest in colonies, which can consist of 1,000 or more herons.

GREAT EGRET

Just a little smaller than the great blue heron, the great egret is completely white, except for its bill, which is yellow, and its legs, which are black. Its feeding and nesting habits are very similar to the great blue heron. One difference, however, is the egret's use of its plumes. The great egret, during the breeding season, will grow long plumes on its back and use them in courtship displays, spreading them out all around its body, looking somewhat like a peacock that lost a fight.



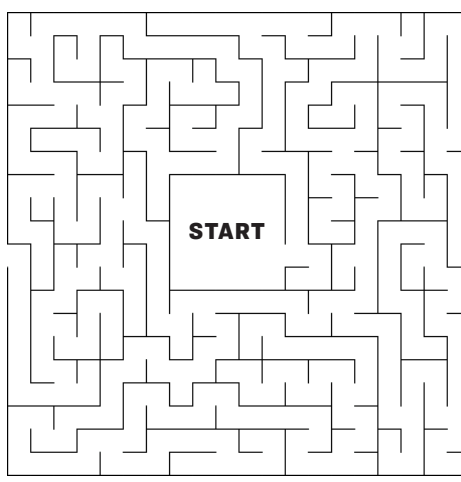
LITTLE BLUE HERON

The little blue heron looks very unlike the great blue heron, having a uniformly blue-and-purple plumage (except for one-year-old birds, which are white). Being much smaller than the aforementioned birds, it eats different foods, usually small fish and crustaceans. Also, unlike the other two birds, they nest in low shrubs, not tall trees. Often, the white juveniles of this species will join groups of snowy egrets (a small egret about the same size as the little blue heron) to forage. Some scientists say that foraging with the egrets causes them to catch more fish.



A juvenile little blue heron.

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

5	8		
31			
3	8		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Easy 1
8 - 5 x (8 + 8)
9 + 8 x 5

Medium puzzle 1

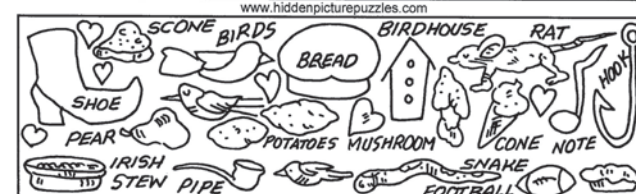
10	19		
43			
8	13		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Medium 1
61 + 8 x (01 - 01)

Hard puzzle 1

2	25		
42			
1	7		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Hard 1
1 - 1 - 2 x 52



HIDDEN TREASURES by Liz Ball
www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com

WORD SEARCH: Happy St. Patrick's Day!

BLARNEYATYTEVHE
BANSHEEBRNFQFLM
OMAGICRAINBOWAE
NFORLEAFCLOVER
HARPIUSCOELVEA
OHROSCELLPENLL
BOGTHKNLIEAUHWD
RLAARYATUBTCGI
OILETEEKIMRRIORS
GDLOPELECOAIRORL
UAIKUAEFMTCEDDE
EYCKBDTGAEKLLP
GOLDBREPRECHAUNJ
VICIINSMONWNCVI
UMISCHIEFNDDKSG

- Banshee Green
- Blarney Harp
- Bog Holiday
- Brogue Ireland
- Celebrate Irish Republic
- Celtic Jig
- Coins Legend Patrick
- Emerald Isle Leprechaun Patron
- Fortune Lucky Potato
- Four-leaf Clover Lucky Rainbow
- Gaelic Magic Saint
- Gold March Snake
- Good Luck Mischief Trifolium

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We see our reporting as a way of navigating the world together, just like how we'd share the news with our own family around the dinner table.

Because of this, we communicate a great deal with our readers—because your voice matters—and that starts with listening.

"As a newspaper, we aim to be a starter of conversations, not the be-all and end-all," explains Jan Jekielek, senior editor and host of "American Thought Leaders." "We want to be media that doesn't just talk, but that listens deeply and tries to understand the bigger picture."

Our team of editors, reporters, and producers uses your feedback to bring you the news that's important to your life. As senior reporter, Charlotte Cuthbertson says, "I want people to open our paper and see the strength and resilience that many other people just like them have exhibited in today's changing times. I want ... to ensure that the voice of the ordinary citizen shall not perish from American public discourse."

Your voice matters and, from the entire Epoch Times team, we're so glad to have you with us. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us at any time with questions or comments.

Thank you.
Jasper Fakkert, Editor-in-Chief

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THE EPOCH TIMES

TRUTH AND TRADITION