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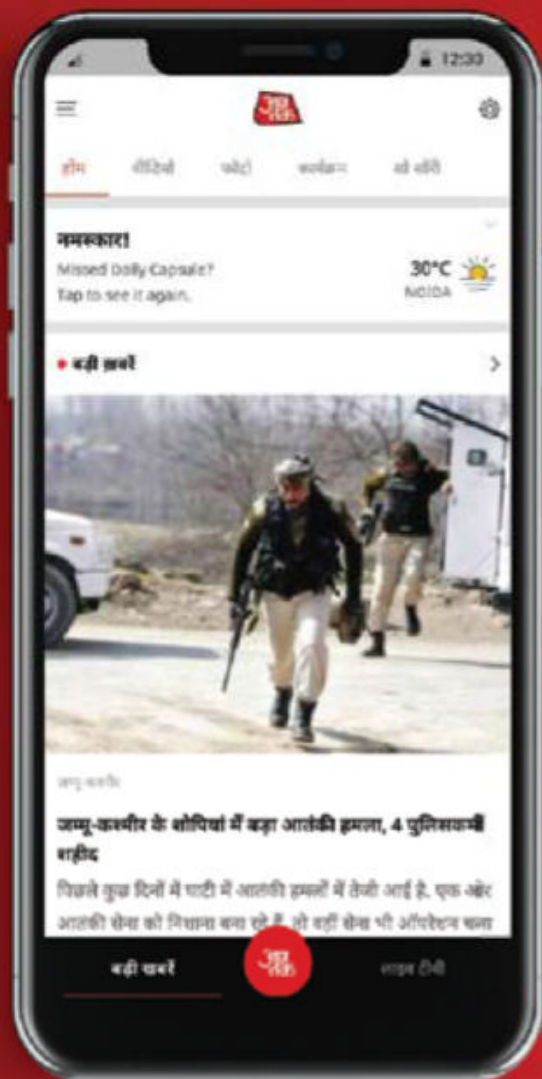
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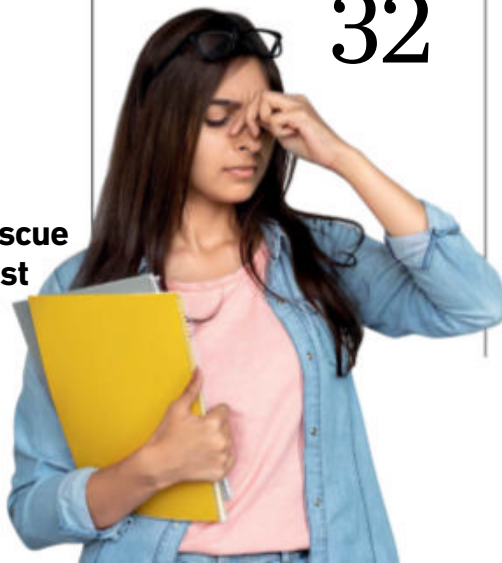
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TOP RIGHT: MARTIN GALLAGHER/GETTY IMAGES,

ADVERTORIAL

BLEEDING PER RECTUM: IS IT CANCER OR PILES?

Symptoms of both Piles and Rectal Cancer are similar. You can have bleeding P/R (Per rectum) but may not know whether it is just Piles or cancer, especially since Bowel Cancer is the third largest cause of death in the world. Early diagnosis can decrease mortality.

A renowned hospital in Punjab's holy city, Sirhind, Dist. Fatehgarh Sahib, - Rana Hospital, a dedicated hospital to treat Fistula and Piles Hemorrhoids (Piles), has recently started a project for rectal Cancer awareness.

According to the founder, Dr Hitender Suri, the hospital has organized almost 100 camps, and many doctor meetings to create awareness about Rectal and Bowel Cancer among the general public. "It's a little worrisome that the symptoms of both Piles and rectal Cancer are similar. You can have bleeding P/R (Per rectum) but may not know whether it is just Piles or cancer. Also, bowel Cancer is the third largest cause of death in the world. Early diagnosis can decrease mortality reasonably," said Dr Suri.

Dr Suri also informed that Fistula is a demanding disease and the hospital has a dedicated and experienced team to treat complex fistula.

He further added, "We have also innovated GMS Piles relief device as a home-care solution for treatment of Piles (Hemorrhoid) and fissure." Rana Hospital, Sirhind started this Rectal Cancer Awareness project two years ago. Dr. Suri as a firm believer of social service, provides free online consultation for patients suffering from bleeding per rectum as part of social responsibility towards society. Dr Suri hopes that with

his and his team's consistent and focused efforts, a lot of patients' lives will be saved by early diagnosis of the disease.



Dr Hitender Suri has his name in the prestigious Limca Book of Records and the coveted Guinness Book Of Records.

He is working as a corona warrior. Recently his efforts were recognised as a World Record in Unique Book of World Records for the largest online pledge taking community awareness campaign for COVID-19 Pandemic, under Mission Fateh of Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh

Symptoms of Fistula

- Skin irritation around the anus
- A throbbing pain that worsens when you sit, move around, poo or cough
- Smelly discharge from near your anus
- Passing pus or blood when you poo
- Swelling and redness around anus and a fever (if you have an abscess)

Symptoms of Piles

- Bright red blood after you poo
- An itchy anus and feeling like you still need to poo after passing stools
- Mucus stains on your underwear or toilet paper after wiping
- Lumps around your anus
- Pain around your anus



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HUMOUR *in*
UNIFORM

Officers don't like to lose. Exhibit A: One naval officer's write-up in the base newspaper of our unit's lunchtime softball game: "In a spirited end-of-season finale, the Khaki Special (officers/chiefs) team fought hard but finished the season in second place. Meanwhile, the enlisted personnel (the Blues) won their last game but finished next to last in the standings."

What he failed to mention about the season ... the two teams played only one game, against each other.

—J. KIRBY SPENCER

During basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey, I was sent to the firing range to qualify as a marks-



man. After taking a few shots, I asked my sergeant how I'd done.

"Son," he told me, "you better learn to use a bayonet real good."

—EDMOND KRYSZ

While in paratrooper training school, I asked the instructor, "What happens if the para-

chute doesn't open?"

"It's guaranteed," he reassured me. "If it doesn't open, just bring it back."

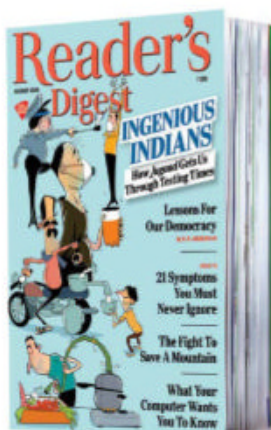
—RICHARD HOFFMAN

Reader's Digest will pay for your funny anecdote or photo in any of our humour sections. Post it to the editorial address, or email us at editor.india@rd.com

CARTOON BY BILL THOMAS

OVER TO YOU

NOTES ON THE
August ISSUE



Lessons for India's Democracy

Dr Ambedkar's speech remains as relevant today as it was when it was delivered 71 years ago. Unfortunately, some dreams, such as ridding society of caste and creed, still remain elusive. Instead of marching forwards, we seem to be moving back towards medieval times. While all hope is not lost, and we still remain the world's largest democracy, we do need to rise above partisanship and move away from politics of caste, religion and language (among others). The phenomena of cult worship of a party or leader must make way to ensure capable Indians are given the chance to lead. After all, India is, and should be, far greater than the elite ruling class or the elected officials who lead the nation. Elected politicians need to plan for long-term welfare goals instead of focusing on short-term, petty gains—only then will India live up to the ideals of a true democracy.

—ATUL SAXENA, *New Delhi*

Atul Saxena gets this month's 'Write & Win' prize of ₹1,000. —EDs

Ambedkar's address to the constituent assembly is a fascinating eye-opener. The apprehensions of one of the architects of the Indian constitution,

in 1949, stand fully validated in recent years. Gradual denudation of equality among citizens on social and economic fronts has reached a

tipping point. The ruling dispensation, across political parties, has failed to safeguard the rights of the masses, representing a hollow democracy.

PRAFULL CHANDRA
SOCKEY, *Jharkhand*

The Great Indian Jugaad

Let's all just admit it: We, Indians, have a penchant for solving complex problems using the most basic materials. No doubt this flexibility can lead to hilarious results, but at other times, we can only admire the ingenuity.

Take the coronavirus lockdown, for instance, which saw some of the most clever *jugaadu* solutions to daily problems. Now, whether these will continue to be used in the post-lockdown period remains to be seen. Nonetheless, there should be no problems with jugaad arrangements as long as they continue to benefit humanity, particularly in tough times.

SANJAY CHOPRA,
Mohali, Punjab

The Fight to Save a Mountain

Anyone who has ever been swayed by the beauty of verdant valleys will appreciate that Steve Lall's story makes for more than just a meaningful read. The transformative journey of an aviator who tries to save an ecosphere from ravagers and poachers is also not something one usually encounters.

Furthermore, the urge to continue with his work even at a time when a raging pandemic has reduced tourist visits to a trickle (thereby forcing him to resort to farming) makes the man an exemplum in an age in which the pursuit of filthy lucre has caused the decimation of green stretches.

KALYANI DAVIDAR,
via email

The Things We Leave Behind

Sandip Roy's article reminded me of the strange, miscellaneous articles my mother left behind, nearly 38 years ago: powder puffs, a round box with

untouched jewellery, stuffed toys and clothes—all gifted by my younger sibling in London.

Tucked away in an iron trunk, these 'relics' are remnants of the habits of an older generation. Years later, my brother also left behind a collection of rare books, magazines and newspaper clippings. Perhaps, a deep-rooted attachment prevents us from parting with such memories.

SURINDER PAL,
Gurugram

Children of Destiny

Neeraj Murmu's selfless effort ought to be applauded. Creating awareness on the importance of education among the downtrodden is an important and uphill task. Nevertheless, conducting such a programme as a member of the village Bal Panchayat will surely have great reach and impact.

Bringing such inspirational stories into the limelight helps remind us of the value of hard-work and dedication, and motivates others

to work for the welfare of society as well.

PREETHA RANGASWAMY,
Chennai

Five Lessons in Harmony

As an instructor in Hindustani classical music, Reem Khokhar's article struck a particular chord. It reinforced my belief that there is more to music than what we hear.

Learning any art form that builds a basic human connection will take you on a journey that celebrates emotions, bonds and values in a way that is more than just unique. It keeps our wellness and happiness quotient intact—even improves it. Hopefully, more youngsters will pursue art forms seriously for a balanced, happy and humane outlook towards life.

MALVIKA NIRANJAN,
via email

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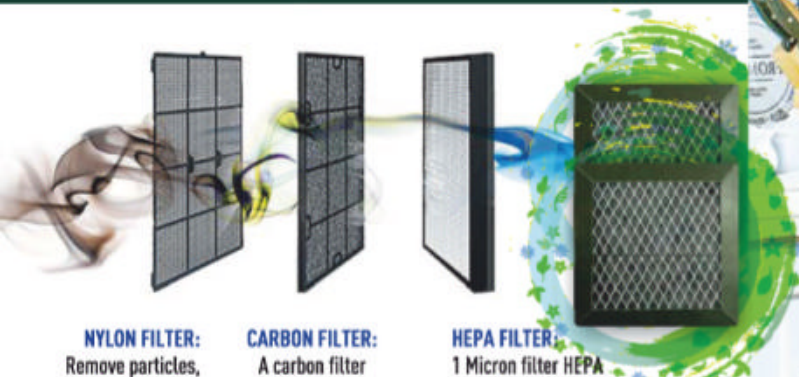
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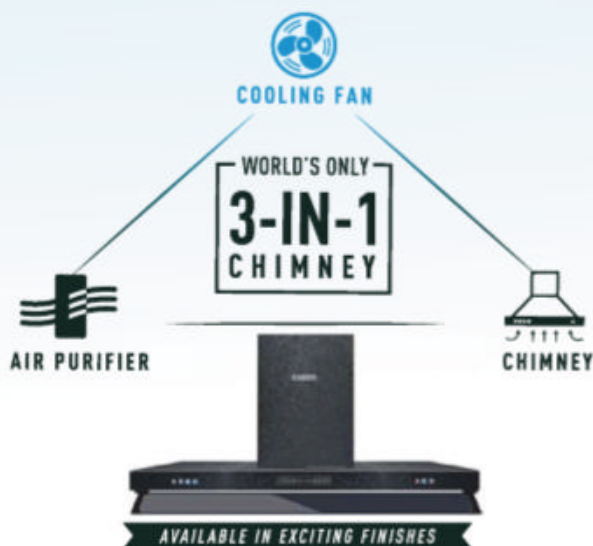
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CONVERSATIONS

NEP 2020: The Good, The Worrisome and The Ambiguous

What does the National Education Policy 2020 mean for school education in India?

BY *Vimala Ramachandran*



WHEN the government announced the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, it was greeted with a great deal of apprehension. Since Independence, India has had two major education policies, the first in 1968 and the second in 1986. The government appointed several commissions from time to time and most of them came up with excellent ideas and concrete suggestions. However, most of the transformative suggestions and workable ideas remained unimplemented. In the last 20 years we have seen the looming crisis of learning that has become the defining feature of our school system. We have also seen the decay of

institutions that were once known for providing high-quality education. Most importantly, we have witnessed the steady erosion of faith in government schools. Therefore, the scepticism about the actual impact of policies on the ground is not unfounded.

Like previous policies—the ones from 1968 and 1986—the latest has put forth some new ideas and reiterated several old ones. I will try to summarize which are the new ideas in school education that have promise and those that are worrisome. I will also try to flag some ambiguities—with the hope that the current government will tread the difficult path of translating the new policy into action with appropriate government guidelines, orders, budget provisions and a road map to transform the education system.



NEP 2020 has acknowledged the learning crisis and come up with a concrete plan to turn the spotlight on foundational literacy and numeracy. This is being proposed by restructuring the system by dividing it into four stages (known as 5+3+3+4). Stage one is for children from ages three to seven which will include three years of preschool education and two years of primary schooling. During this first phase it is expected that children will acquire basic reading and writing abilities and number skills. Here, preschool education will not just be the responsibility of primary schools but also of the *Anganwadi* centres that were created in 1975. There is ambiguity on how this would be rolled out. The mid-day meal programme is expected to include breakfast and the policy says that adequate nutrition would be ensured in the first five years.

The second stage has three years of primary schooling from classes three

to five, for children of eight to 11 years. The third stage is again for three years that will take the child from class six to eight, covering 12- to 14-year-olds. The final one is from class nine to 12 for children of 15 to 18 years. Students will get an opportunity to study vocational subjects alongside the formal subjects from high school, i.e. class six onwards.

The policy proposes removing a hierarchy of subjects—the status of maths would be the same as a vocational course and, at the secondary level, students can mix and match the subjects they wish to take—without limiting them to any one stream (like science, commerce and arts). There is a proposal to integrate vocational education into the formal structure—thereby giving children an option to learn different skills—traditional (called *lok vidya*), technical, agricultural, culinary, food processing, etc. The worrisome part is whether some children will be forced into vocational training,

especially those in poor, under-resourced areas.

Another interesting idea, albeit not new, is to make a cluster of 15–20 schools the basic hub for management, appointment and professional training of teachers, as well as monitoring the quality of education. This is also expected to be a hub to make sure adequate teachers are available in all schools, even if that involves educators teaching in more than one school, to address the severe shortage of science and maths teachers at the high- and secondary-school levels.

The big idea is to move away from rote-learning and memory-based exams to a different system that will test the conceptual, analytical and critical-thinking skills of students. The assessment system is expected to set a new trend. This will make a huge difference, if it is done sincerely. While this holds a lot of promise, there is a need to acknowledge the fact that all our teachers would have to be retrained to teach differently and not memorize textbooks. Transforming the teacher will be key.

In order to transform the school system, the policy says it will focus on rigorous teacher education. This is where the ambiguity creeps in—the policy talks about hiring teachers



**ALL OUR
TEACHERS
WOULD HAVE TO
BE RETRAINED
TO TEACH
DIFFERENTLY AND
NOT MEMORIZE
TEXTBOOKS.**

locally (especially for vocational, physical education, arts). While the policy clearly states that the status of teachers would be improved and efforts would be made to attract the best into the profession, it is silent on whether some teachers would continue to be kept on short-term contracts while some others would have a permanent tenure. The preparation of teachers would be through an integrated bachelor's and education degree; i.e., Bachelor + B. Ed.

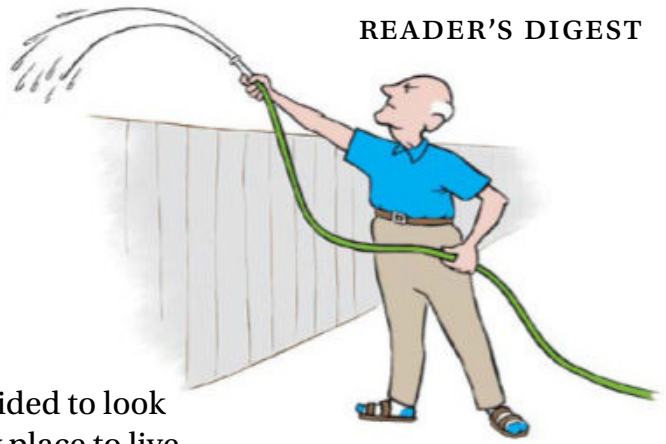
Teacher preparation is expected to focus on mastery of subject knowledge and pedagogy, and recruitment would be through teacher-eligibility tests.

The pathway from preparing a policy to action requires not only political will, but combined efforts of administrators, educators, teachers and other professionals. The biggest question is whether this policy will remain on paper or if it will actually lead to transformation. The jury is still out on that. **R**

Vimala Ramachandran is an educational researcher and retired professor of teacher management, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration. The views expressed here are personal.

WORLD WIDE WEIRD

BY *Rosie Long Decter*



Tense Fences

Barry and Hellynne Lee, both in their 70s, were charged with assault in June 2018. The Welsh couple's crime? Spraying their neighbour, Harold Burrows, with a garden hose over their shared fence. The neighbours had been squabbling for years, but things escalated one day while the Lees hosed down their driveway. When Burrows confronted the Lees about yard waste the stream was pushing on to his lot, they turned up the drama—and turned their hose on him.

Burrows, who recorded his surprise shower, later presented the footage as evidence to a judge. The court imposed a two-year restraining order, and the Lees

have decided to look for a new place to live. Hopefully, with some time and space, the debacle will just be water under the fence!

Finders Keepers

What would you do if you stumbled upon a bag of money on the street? That's what happened at least 13 times in the last six years to citizens in Blackhall Colliery, England. Someone was leaving bags of £2,000 (nearly ₹1,95,000) in cash around town. Most remarkably, honest citizens kept turning in the bounty. After two weeks, if the money wasn't claimed, the person who found the money got to keep it. In January, police learnt that a pair of Good Samaritans were leaving the mystery cash. The duo, who

wanted to remain anonymous, were doing so as a way to 'give back' to vulnerable people in the community. So, for all of the 13 citizens who became £2,000 richer, honesty really did pay off.

Most Boring Show Ever

If you're visiting Fukuoka, Japan, on a budget, there's a hotel that has you covered: You can stay for a paltry 100 yen a night (about ₹70). The catch? Visitors must agree to let the hotel live-stream their stay on its YouTube channel. So far, more than half a million viewers have tuned in to watch strangers sip tea, read and, once, watch a guest attempt to play Twister by himself. (Don't worry, the bathroom is private!) **R**



My Father, Do Not Rest

BY Sarojini Naidu

On 1 February 1948, two days after Mahatma Gandhi's assassination by Hindutva fanatics, Sarojini Naidu gave an impassioned speech on All India Radio, calling on the nation to remember the Mahatma's death as a pledge to right action. Here is an edited version of her address.

WHILE WE ALL MOURN—those who loved him, knew him personally, those to whom his name was but a miracle and a legend—though we are all full of tears and though we are full of sorrow, I feel that sorrow is out of place and tears are a blasphemy. How can he die, who through his life and conduct and sacrifice taught the world that the spirit matters, not the flesh, that the spirit has the power greater than the powers of the combined armies of the earth, combined armies of the ages? He was small, frail, without money, without even the full complement of garment to cover his body ... how was he so much

stronger than the forces of violence, the might of empires and the grandeur of embattled forces in the world?

It was because he did not care for applause. He only cared for the path of righteousness. He cared only for the ideals that he preached and practised. And in the midst of the most terrible disasters caused by violence and greed of men, his faith never swerved in his ideal of non-violence. He believed that though the whole world slaughter itself and the whole world's blood be shed, still his non-violence would be the authentic foundation of the new civilization of the world and he believed that he who seeks his life shall lose it and he who loses his life shall find it.

His first fast in 1924 was for the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. It had the sympathy of the entire nation. His last fast was also for the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity, but the whole nation was not with him. It had grown so divided, it had grown so full of hate and suspicion, it had grown so untrue



towards the tenets of the various creeds in this country that it was only a section of those who understood the Mahatma, who realized the meaning of that fast. It was very evident that it was not any community but his that disapproved so violently and showed its anger and resentment in such a dastardly fashion. Alas for the Hindu community, that the greatest Hindu of them all, the only Hindu of our age who was so absolutely and unswervingly true to the doctrine of Hinduism should have been slain by the hand of a Hindu! That, indeed, is almost the epitaph of the Hindu faith that the hand of a Hindu in the name of Hindu rights and a Hindu world should sacrifice the noblest of them all.

But it would be the act of faithless deserters if we were to yield to despair. If we were indeed to believe that he is dead, if we were to believe that all is lost because he has gone, of what

avail would be our love and our faith? Of what avail would be our loyalty to him if we dare to believe that all is lost because his body is gone from our midst? Are we not there—his heirs, his spiritual descendants, the legatees of his great ideals, successors of his great work? Are we not there to implement that work and enhance it and enrich and make greater achievements by joint efforts than he could have made singly?

Therefore, I say the time is over for private sorrow. The time is here and now when we stand up and say, “We take up the challenge” to those who defied Mahatma Gandhi. We are his soldiers. Our banner is truth. Our shield is non-violence. Let the peoples of India rise up and wipe their tears, still their sobs and be full of hope and cheer. Let us borrow from him (why borrow? He has handed it to

us) the glory of his own courage, the magnificent epic of his character. Shall we not give to the world the completed message of Mahatma Gandhi? Though his voice will not speak again, have we not a million, million voices to bear his message to the world, not only to this world, to our contemporaries, but to the world generation after generation?

What is death? My own father, just before his death, with the premonition

**MAY THE SOUL OF MY
MASTER REST NOT IN
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POWDER OF HIS BONES
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HIS DEATH, BE
REVITALIZED INTO THE
REALITY OF FREEDOM.**

of death on him, said: "There is no birth. There is no death. There is only the soul seeking higher and higher stages of truth." Mahatma Gandhi, who lived for truth in this world, has been translated though by the hand of an assassin, to a higher stage of the truth, which he sought. Shall we not take up his place? Shall not our united strength be strong enough to preach and practise his great message for the world? Shall we not all

take up his message and fulfill it? I used to wonder very often during his many fasts in which I was privileged to serve him—supposing he died in some far-off place, how should we reach him?

It is therefore right and appropriate that he died in the city of kings, in the ancient site of the old Hindu empires, in the site on which was built the glory of the Moghuls, in this place that he made India's capital, wresting it from foreign hands. It is right that he died in Delhi; it is right that his cremation took place in the midst of the dead kings who are buried in Delhi, for he was the kingliest of all kings. And it is right also that he who was the apostle of peace should have been taken to the cremation ground with all the honours of a great warrior; far greater than all warriors who led armies to battle was this little man, the bravest, the most triumphant of all. May the soul of my master rest not in peace, but let the powder of his bones be so charged with life and inspiration that the whole of India will, after his death, be revitalized into the reality of freedom.

My father, do not rest. Do not allow us to rest. Keep us to our pledge. Give us strength to fulfil our promise, your heirs, the guardians of your dreams, the fulfillers of India's destiny. You, whose life was so powerful, make it so powerful in your death; far from mortality, you have passed mortality by a supreme martyrdom in the cause most dear to you. **R**

LAUGH LINES

Deodorant? No, I've never needed to buy any. People just give it to me, complete strangers sometimes.

—[@SaintEd61](#)

The fact that Head & Shoulders doesn't have a body wash called Knees & Toes disappoints me.

—[@TheRealSassy1](#)

Dry shampoo is the equivalent of unicorn blood for hair—it'll keep it alive, but it'll be a half life, a cursed life.

—[@elliepeek](#)

I'm sick of men's 3-in-1 bodywash–shampoo–conditioner. Throw toothpaste in there.

—[@ComradTwitty](#)

Coming Clean

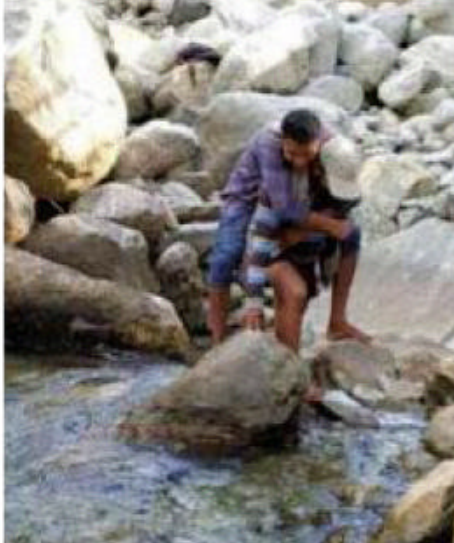
Dove chocolate tastes so much better than their soap.

—[@RevSvenTV](#)

My twins hate to brush their teeth. So I just convinced them that it's fun to brush someone else's teeth. Problem solved.

—[@hunz74](#)





(Left) 50-year-old Diwani Ram carrying a traveller across a rivulet; (right) Diwani Ram

GOOD NEWS

FOR A
Better Planet

Yamraj to the Rescue

SERVICE For the last three decades or so, 50-year-old Diwani Ram, from the Bangapani region in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district, has helped thousands of people cross flooded rivulets during the monsoons, when heavy rains destroy bridges connecting nearby villages. But Ram—nicknamed 'Yamraj' because he would at times be seen riding his buffalo from place to place—is no ferryman: The intrepid farmer physically carries travellers on his back transporting them across the water through powerful currents, slippery rocks and unpredictable eddies to the other side.

"My father taught me how to walk in deep waters when I turned 14, and since then I have been doing this work every season. Now, my son has also joined me," he tells *The Better India*.

Many offer payment in return for his services, but Ram has, more often than not, forgone remuneration, preferring to help stranded travellers, such as officers, tourists and locals, for free. With state machinery at work rebuilding bridges, people may soon no longer need Ram's help, but the altruistic Yamraj—who was even elected Gram Pradhan (village head) of Siling (2015 to 2019)—is sure to find some other way to help his community.

TOP LEFT: THE BETTER INDIA; RIGHT: EXPRESS PHOTO SERVICE

Let There be Light

DEVELOPMENT Overcoming years of stalls, bureaucratic rigmarole and corruption, the 30-odd families of Dunaan Asthan, a small, remote village in the Shopian district of south Kashmir, finally see the light—literally. The village gained access to electricity for the first time in August this year, ending decades of having to use candles, oil and solar lamps or torches to illuminate streets and homes.

While efforts to power the hamlet were initiated a few years ago and electric poles were ordered under the government rural electrification scheme, the process was halted by an Anti-Corruption Board investigation. Pulwama deputy commissioner, Yasin Choudhary, took charge of the matter, making a special request for the equipment to be used, sourcing other requirements through various channels and organizing field staff and locals to raise the poles and install a 63 KVA transformer.

With focused, effective leadership, this decades-old need was met in just seven days, proving once again that nothing is impossible when people work together for a common goal.

A Cut Above

EQUALITY Members of the Chakkliya Dalit community scored a rare win against the deeply entrenched caste-based discrimination they have faced

for generations from dominant-caste residents of Vattavada, a village in Idukki, Kerala. Branded as untouchables, the Chakkliyas have routinely encountered biased treatment, including being denied service by local barbers, forcing them to visit neighbouring towns or rely on each other just to get a haircut.

Fuelled by protests, the Vattavada panchayat mandated that all salons



The public salon in Vattavada, Kerala

treat everyone equally, but this only resulted in flat refusals and upper-caste residents boycotting shops that followed the rule. In response, the panchayat ordered all salons be closed except for a single, public barbershop that would operate under the strict ordinance that it cater to members of all communities.

Open for business from 14 September, its customers will include upper-caste panchayat president P. Ramaraj, who hopes to lead prejudiced community members by example. Here's hoping that this decisive strike against hate becomes the norm. **R**

—COMPILED BY ISHANI NANDI

POINTS TO PONDER

I believe that Gandhi's views were the most enlightened of all the political men of our time. We should strive to do things in his spirit: not to use violence in fighting for our cause, but by non-participation in anything you believe is evil.

Albert Einstein, *theoretical physicist*

But keeping aside political affiliations—real and imagined—for the moment, wouldn't you want a news show that does not embarrass you, that is robustly researched and reported and that you watch for information, not for mindless entertainment?

Barkha Dutt, *journalist*

It may be true that morality cannot be legislated, but behaviour can be regulated. It may be true that the law cannot make a man love me, but it can keep him from lynching me, and I think that's pretty important also.

Martin Luther King Jr, *American civil rights activist*



ALAMY(3)

There are more people moving us forward than there are sowing division. I surround myself with people who have faith.

Maria Shriver, *journalist*

If you think of the economy as a patient, relief is the sustenance the patient needs while ... fighting the disease. Without relief, households skip meals, pull their children out of school ... pledge their gold to borrow ... small and medium firms ... stop paying workers, let debt pile up, or close permanently. Essentially, the patient atrophies, so by the time the disease is contained, the patient has become a shell of herself.

Raghuram Rajan, *economist*

If you're pretty, you're pretty, but the only way to be beautiful is to be loving. Otherwise, it's just "Congratulations about your face."

John Mayer, *musician*

FROM LEFT: ALAMY, RACHIT GOSWAMI/INDIA TODAY/ALAMY



Maria Shriver

Raghuram Rajan

John Mayer

It Happens
ONLY IN INDIA



Together, in sickness and in health

Rob you safe

An Aligarh jewellery store recently found itself in the thick of some COVID-19-proof criminal action. Three nondescript masked men entered the shop, held their hands out for a quick spritz of hand sanitizer, whipped out guns and robbed the establishment of a cool ₹40 lakhs worth of

jewellery—all under a minute. The incident was caught on a security camera and Uttar Pradesh law enforcement swiftly swung into action, capturing our conscientious criminals within a few days of the loot. With a pandemic on the prowl, it's nice to know that even the criminal classes are doing their best to adapt to

the 'new normal'.

Source: ndtv.com, news18.com

A truck-full of rice

A man's bid to rid himself of the drudgery of grocery-shopping landed him in bulk-buying hell when a bungled delivery order resulted in an entire truck-full of rice delivered to his doorstep. Weary of stepping out for a purchase

every day, our protagonist arranged to buy this daily staple in bulk, but wires got crossed and he found himself caught in tense negotiations to undo this shopping mishap. With a furious wife hot at his heels and a lorry-driver who wouldn't take no for an answer, the man's misadventures were made famous by his brother-in-law, who live-tweeted this epic tale of a man with too much rice.

Source: [twitter.com](#)

All that isn't news

Thanks to Sudarshan TV, prime-time television news hit a new low. The channel's partially aired show on 'UPSC Jihad', anchored by editor-in-chief Suresh Chavhanke insinuated that a conspiracy had been hatched to 'infiltrate Muslims' into the civil services—all this amidst visual cues suggesting links to Islamist terror groups. Further broadcasts of the show, which has been widely condemned for its bigotry, were stayed by the



Social distancing, awkwardly-drawn-markers edition


Supreme Court, which observed that the show's "object, intent and purpose" was to "vilify the Muslim community". Dismissing the show's fabrications, the judges went on to remind Chavhanke that journalistic freedom is not absolute, and that the court was concerned about both "free speech and dignity".

Source: [thehindu.com](#)

Birthday bhakti

For the Indian Prime Minister's recent 70th birthday celebrations, YouTuber Anmol Bakaya had something special planned. This fanboy chanted the Indian Premier's name for 24 hours, hoping to

catch the attention of the object of his affection, and garner online buzz. Bakaya, by his own admission, found himself struggling after 12 hours and sought strength from the Almighty to carry on. Now, that the 24-year-old has spent 24 hours of his life uttering the Prime Minister's name in vain, he was quoted as saying that this was an "interesting experience". We agree, though maybe not in the same way.

Source: [indianexpress.com](#) 

—COMPILED BY NAOREM ANUJA

Reader's Digest will pay for contributions to this column. Post your suggestions with the source to the editorial address, or email: editor.india@rd.com

PHOTO: @MIISHNOTTYANA ON TWITTER

An illustration of an elderly man with a white beard and hair, wearing a red cap and red shorts with white stripes, sitting on a blue pool floor. He is leaning back with his hands clasped over his knees. In the background, there are legs in yellow pants and red shoes with white stripes. A white handrail is visible on the right. A red and white beach ball is in the bottom left, and a yellow inflatable ring is in the bottom right. A 'no swimming' sign is on the left. The background is a pink wall with a grid pattern.

BETTER LIVING

Love Ageing, Live Better

Your opinion about what it means to be elderly can determine if your own golden years are spry and happy

BY *Bruce Grierson*
FROM ZOOMER

ILLUSTRATION BY *Aless Mc*

WHAT WE ASK Google most frequently can easily be discovered by seeing how the search engine autofills the beginning of a statement or question we've typed in. These top results are also, then, a snapshot of what other inquiring minds privately think of the subject that's just been raised.

In 2013, social scientists from the Centre for the Study of Group Processes at the University of Kent in the UK explored a specific collective bias by typing "old people should" into the search bar.

"Old people should not drive," read the top result. And, more disconcertingly, the second most popular was: "Old people should die." These troubling findings indicate our society's indictment of the elderly. But also, on a deeper level, they're a reflection of our views on the ageing process itself. The cultural message that has clearly been swallowed hook, line and sinker: Be afraid, be very afraid, of getting old.

As other researchers have found, there's a karmic irony at the centre of this kind of thinking. Holding negative opinions of ageing, they've concluded, makes people age more quickly.

Becca Levy, a professor of epidemiology and psychology at Yale's School of Public Health, has found again and again that subjects who hold the most negative view of ageing—or who have assimilated pessimistic stereotypes of the elderly—pay for that bias on a physical level.

Levy has been exploring the topic for the last 20 years. In 2002, her most well-known study examined data collected in the mid-1970s from the town of Oxford, Ohio, USA. Residents over 50 were asked to respond to statements about ageing. "As you get older, you are less useful" (yes or no); "As I get older, things are (better, worse or the same) as I thought they would be."

When Levy evaluated the mortality data from study subjects, she made a startling discovery: Those with the most negative views of ageing died, on average, 7.6 years younger than those with the most positive ones. In fact, she found that being ageist influenced lifespan more than gender, incidence of loneliness or amount of exercise.

There wasn't an obvious explanation for the ageism effect, but since the number one killer of people in that age group is cardiovascular disease, Levy wondered if this attitude stresses the heart, and decided to test that hypothesis.

In her lab at Yale, Levy had 54 participants between the ages of 62 and 82 take math and verbal tests under a tight time limit. Before they began, the subjects were 'primed' with either positive or negative stereotypes of ageing: Words were flashed on a screen too quickly for the conscious mind to apprehend. The groups exposed to negative terms—such as 'decline,' 'decrepit' and 'confused'—saw a spike in blood pressure and

an increased heart rate. Participants primed with positive stereotypes like 'astute', 'wise' and 'accomplished' calmed down.

"We wondered how that might operate in the community over time," Levy says—a question that led to another in a second eye-opening study in 2009. In it, Levy analyzed survey data from 440 subjects of the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Ageing—one of the world's longest-running ageing studies—who were between 18 and 49.

She found that those who agreed with gloomy opinions of ageing suffered twice as many heart events—from mini-strokes to congestive heart failure—as those who had absorbed rosier ones. Even after controlling for every factor she could think of—from diet and smoking habits to depression and family history—Levy found that the subjects' thoughts on ageing were still of huge significance. What might explain the dramatic physiological effects of something as ineffable as thoughts about getting old?

Our attitudes, conscious or not, drive our routines and lifestyle—a fact Levy believes is a factor in her studies' outcomes. "If people hold more negative views of ageing, they may be less likely to walk the extra block or engage in healthy behaviours as they get older, because they tend to think of poor health later in life as inevitable," she says.

According to Harvard psychologist

Ellen Langer—who has collaborated with Levy in the past—the disconnect between young people and their future selves also comes into play. "People under 40 don't think of themselves as getting older," she says, explaining that this could prevent them from developing behaviours that benefit them later.

And indeed, in 2011, psychologist and marketing professor Hal Hershfield showed that when people were urged to think about their later-in-life selves, they allocated more resources for the future—such as squirrelling away more money for their retirement.

In another of his studies, subjects who were nudged into considering their future by writing a letter to themselves 20 years down the road beefed up their exercise routines.

To see whether attitudes can still be reversed closer to the end of life, Langer ran studies in which older people were encouraged to remember what it was like to be young. In her famous *Counterclockwise* study, conducted in 1979, eight men in their 70s and 80s were dropped into an elaborate time-capsule recreation of 1959. They emerged, one week later, measurably spryer—their grip strength and flexibility had improved, and they performed better on tests of cognition.

This work has inspired the design of some seniors' facilities and the re-thinking of eldercare. In the Hogeweyk



AGEISM EVEN AFFECTS THINGS YOU WOULDN'T EXPECT, LIKE HANDWRITING AND MEMORY.

'Dementia Village', built near Amsterdam in 2009, residents are placed into cottages tailored to evoke the familiar and comforting surroundings of their particular upbringing.

In addition to her studies on mortality and heart disease, Levy has gone on to show that ageism affects even things you wouldn't expect to have a psychological dimension, such as balance, handwriting and memory.

And last February, in the Public Library of Science's journal *PLOS ONE*, Levy published her most personal study yet.

Her grandfather had suffered from Alzheimer's and, in collaboration with the scientific director of the National Institute on Aging, she explored whether ageist thoughts could influence that condition.

Using a data set of 4,765 subjects with an average age of 72, Levy and three colleagues zeroed in on people who carry the E4 variant of the APOE gene, which increases the likelihood of developing early-onset Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia by 50 per cent.

As it turned out, around a quarter of the subjects carried the variant, and all of them were still dementia-free at that point. When Levy compared attitudes towards getting older with health outcomes four years later, those who held more optimistic views of ageing were half as likely to show signs of dementia.

Pushing back against ageism should begin early, says Levy, noting that studies have shown children as young as three have already taken in negative stereotypes.

"But we also have research that suggests that thoughts are malleable," she adds. "If you prompt them, most people can come up with positive images of ageing. People can be taught to question negative beliefs."

How would we know whether a new generation is accepting more positive attitudes about ageing? Perhaps, down the road, when you begin to type "Old people should" into Google, the search engine will spit out a result like: "Old people should be respected."

Or perhaps: "Old people should have patience with the rest of us." **R**

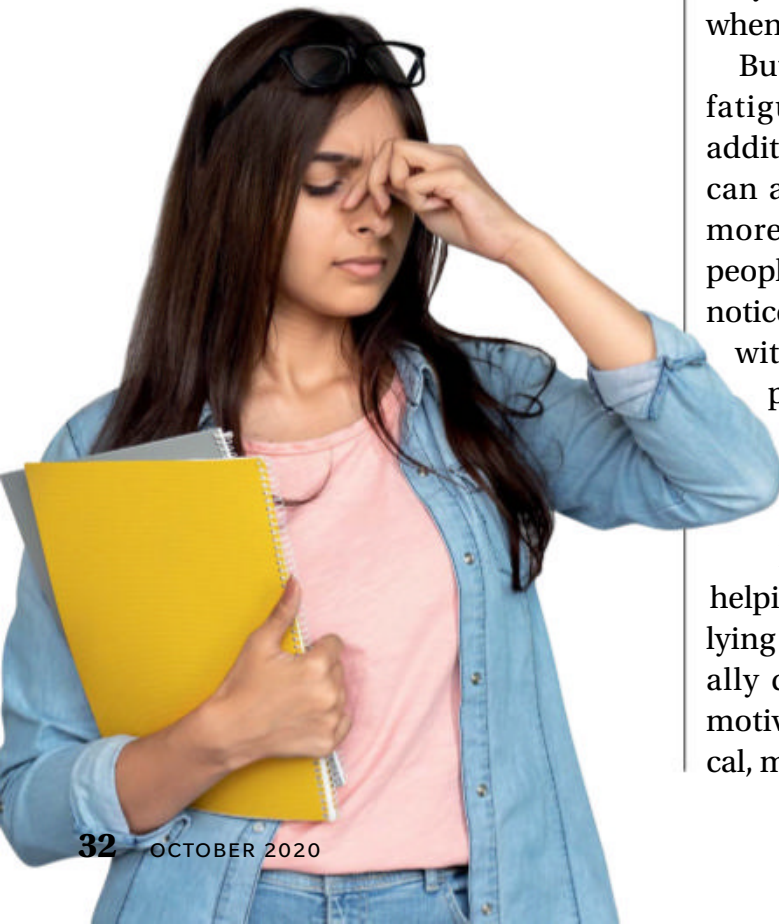
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Fighting Fatigue

The first step is observing yourself in order to discover its cause

BY *Christina Frangou*



YOU DON'T WANT TO get out of bed and, once you finally do, you can't find the energy to exercise. During the day, you lack the ability to concentrate on anything. Just like paper cuts and bad dreams, fatigue happens to everyone at some point. It's a common ailment, reported by as many as one-third of people visiting their primary care physician.

In many cases, fatigue is a normal response to life circumstances: stress, a change in sleeping patterns, a heavy workload. Since we can't always avoid these things, Dr Tom Declercq, a professor of medicine at Belgium's Ghent University, suggests giving yourself more rest than usual during these times to restore energy levels. "It's very important to listen to your body when it's asking for more sleep," he says.

But here's the tricky thing: Although fatigue can often be resolved with additional rest and lifestyle changes, it can also be a symptom of something more serious. Declercq recommends people visit their family physician if they notice any other physical changes along with feeling tired, or if their fatigue persists for more than two weeks after making lifestyle changes.

When speaking to a doctor, describing your experience of exhaustion in detail is essential for helping him or her to identify an underlying cause. Although fatigue is generally defined as a lack of energy and motivation, this can manifest as physical, mental or both. Some questions you

could ask yourself before an appointment: Do you not feel refreshed even after a long night's rest? Do you find it hard to focus on projects? Do you tire quickly when physically active?

Fatigue accompanied by a fever may indicate infection, while dizziness could be a sign of anaemia. Laboured breathing may be suggestive of heart disease. If you feel sadness or nervousness, depression or an anxiety disorder might be causing your fatigue, it could be improved by taking an antidepressant or starting cognitive behavioural therapy. Fatigue that comes on suddenly, persists and is associated with unexpected weight loss or night sweats may be a red flag for cancer.

Naturally, the quality and quantity of sleep you're getting should be considered. Poor sleep hygiene—like dozing with a pet in your bed or using screens late at night—can disturb your rest. Sleep apnoea is another common culprit; people with this condition stop breathing for at least 10 seconds at a time during their sleep.

Any amount of alcohol consumption can worsen your sleep, but the more you consume, the greater its effect. While alcohol might help you fall asleep faster, it interrupts circadian rhythms and thus is an obstacle to getting restorative rest.

When does fatigue become chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS)? There's no specific diagnostic test for CFS (also known as myalgic encephalomyelitis or systemic exertion intolerance disease),



FATIGUE ACCOMPANIED BY A FEVER MAY INDICATE INFECTION, WHILE DIZZINESS COULD BE A SIGN OF ANAEMIA.

but the condition is defined as a prolonged and profound fatigue that hangs around for at least six months without an identifiable cause, impairs your cognitive function and leads to debilitating exhaustion even after minor physical or mental exertion. It's unclear how many people have CFS and what might be behind it.

While not a cure, exercise might help with persistent cases. "When people tend to have a chronic fatigue problem, it's not a good idea to stay in your chair. It's a lot better to move," says Declercq. **R**

LIFE'S

Like That

My teenage son and I were discussing dating and relationships. To impress upon him that I had valuable experience to share, I commented, “You know, I’ve been around the barn a few times.”

“Yeah, Mom,” he said, unimpressed, “but always on the same horse.”

—NANCY WEST

Times I’ve seen my husband cry:

1. Our wedding.
2. The birth of our children.
3. The time I mowed the grass too short.

—[TW@MOMMAJESSIEC](#)

I walked into our living room and found our expensive decorative



“Got anything else? I gave up carbs.”

sofa pillow in shreds. I asked my teenage daughter whether she knew which of our three dogs was responsible.

“It was Cotton,” she promptly replied.

“How do you know?”
“I watched him.”

—TONY BUNKER

Sad after the funeral of a friend, my wife and I ducked into a Chinese

restaurant for a little Szechuan pick-me-up. The feel-good session ended abruptly when I read the fortune in my cookie: “You will soon be reunited with a good friend.”

—STANLEY HEERBOTH

Sometimes I worry that my nine-year-old is too sweet for this world, but recently she looked at my

CARTOON BY *Dan Misdea*

Why don't toasters have a window so you can see how toasted your bread is?

—[@JONATHANHIMPLE](#)

face and said, "I didn't know you could be old and get a pimple," so it turns out she'll be fine.

—JESSICA VALENTI

Daughter (via text): Mom, where are you??

Mom: Leaving Walmart. Halfway home. Why, sweetie?

Daughter: You brought me to Walmart with you ...

Mom: OH, DARN! Be there in a bit!

—[spotlightstories.com](#)

My aunt was in the hospital for hip-replacement surgery and not happy about having to wear the hospital garb she'd been given. So when she was wheeled into surgery, my mother ran out and bought her a nice robe to wear instead. Rather than being thankful,

my aunt was appalled.

"You left the hospital while I was in surgery?" she asked. "What would you have done if I had died?"

"I'd have returned the robe," answered Mom.

—SUE TIMMONS

It really doesn't feel like September till Macy's puts their Christmas decorations up.

—[@MRGEORGE](#)

WALLACE

Reader's Digest will pay for your funny anecdote or photo in any of our humour sections. Post it to the editorial address, or email: editor.india@rd.com

DEAR GOD ...

Sometimes kids have such big questions that not just anyone can answer them. *Boredpanda.com* collected a few such queries from third graders.

◆ **DEAR GOD:** How come you didn't invent any new animals lately? We still have just all the old ones.

◆ **DEAR GOD:** Is Reverend Coe a friend of yours, or do you just know him through business?

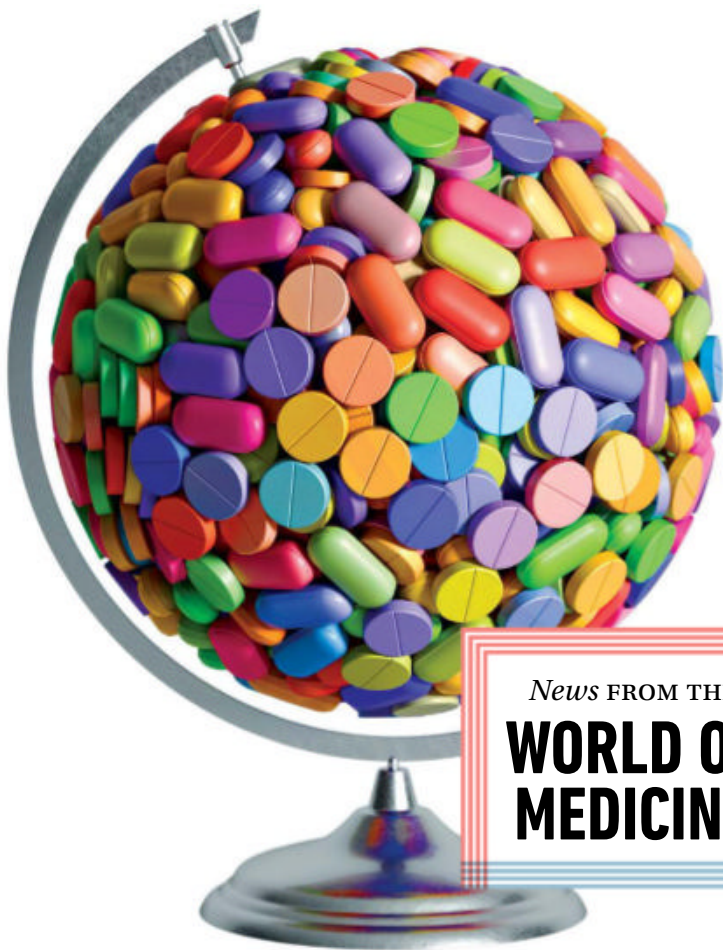
◆ **DEAR GOD:** Who draws the lines around the countries?

◆ **DEAR GOD:** How did you know you were God?

◆ **DEAR GOD:** I bet it is very hard for you to love all of everybody in the whole world. There are only four people in our family, and I can never do it.

◆ **DEAR GOD:** I think the stapler is one of your greatest inventions.





News FROM THE
**WORLD OF
MEDICINE**

VEGETARIANS MAY HAVE HIGHER RISK OF STROKE

In an 18-year study of 48,188 people with no history of heart disease, vegans and vegetarians had a 22 per cent lower risk of developing heart disease than meat eaters—but a 20 per cent higher risk of suffering a stroke. Researchers speculate that this is because of their low vitamin B₁₂ levels, though there may be other factors. If you follow a vegan or vegetarian diet, consider boosting your intake of B₁₂ through supplements or fortified foods such as cereal.

The Gut Bacteria That Could Help You Run Longer

In 2015, researchers at Harvard University found that in the week after the Boston Marathon, runners in the race had a higher concentration of bacteria called *Veillonella*, which help break down the lactic acid that forms in muscles. The researchers then took a strain of the bacteria from one of the marathoners and injected it into mice, and sure enough, the mice ran 13 per cent longer than the mice who received a different type of bacteria. This suggests that someday those mice—and those marathoners—could help create a probiotic supplement containing *Veillonella* to help you become a better runner.





THE SURPRISINGLY FAST-ACTING BENEFITS OF CLEANER AIR

WE'RE ACCUSTOMED TO thinking of environmental change, and its attendant effects on our health, as being measured in years. But researchers are now discovering how quickly and dramatically air quality can improve—and how big an impact those improvements can make. For instance, when Atlanta hosted the 1996 Olympic Games, parts of the city were closed to cars for 17 days. In the following four weeks, kids' medical visits for asthma decreased by more than 40 per cent. In 1990, when Hong Kong passed stricter regulations for the content of fuel oil used by power plants and cars, sulphur dioxide levels immediately fell by 45 per cent on average and as much as 80 per cent in the most polluted areas. Within six months, there was a significant decrease in the number of deaths from respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

In March 2020, when businesses shut down because of the coronavirus pandemic, nitrogen dioxide levels were about 30 per cent lower on average in the north-eastern United States than they were in the same month for the years 2015 to 2019. Also, during the month that China was under quarantine because of the pandemic, one study estimated that improved air quality helped prevent more than 12,000 pollution-related deaths. With a recent study showing that an increase of just one microgram per cubic metre of fine particulate matter is associated with an eight per cent increase in the COVID-19 death rate, measures to improve air quality may be more important than ever before.

Caffeine Limit for Migraines

Researchers—and migraine sufferers—have long known that caffeine can affect headaches. Now a study has looked closely at the triggering quantities and found that three caffeinated beverages—coffee, tea or soda—in a day increased the migraine risk. The risk is greater for people who typically drink less than that in a given day.

Timing of Opioid Prescriptions

An analysis of data from 6,78,319 patients found that physicians were 33 per cent more likely to prescribe opioids during late-day appointments and 17 per cent more likely to do so if the appointment was running later than scheduled. Prescriptions for non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and physical therapy were not affected by appointment timing. **R**



Reaching Out the Right Way

Want to help someone struggling with mental health? Here's some advice from experts

BY Naorem Anuja

1 Spot the signs The first step to providing assistance to those grappling with their emotional well-being is to identify signs of distress. Pooja Nair, an independent psychotherapist and faculty at the Queer Affirmative Counseling Practice, run by Mariwala Health Initiative, Mumbai, says, "Over time, friends and families develop an intimacy and understanding of each other. Use this knowledge to watch out for and identify changes or out-of-character behaviours. Simple questions like 'Are you doing okay?' or

'Are you alright?' can offer a chance for them to open up and talk about any internal conflicts they may be facing."

2 Create a safe space Caregivers can help by creating a stable, reliable space for their loved ones to find an easy port in the storm. While this applies to everyone, it is particularly important for adolescents. Says senior psychiatrist and director of Children First, Dr Amit Sen, "Young people are at a stage where the process of growing up and finding themselves leads to a lot of turmoil in their inner world. Ensure you give them a stable external environment, to which they feel rooted and connected." Start by building a relationship of trust and making yourself available as a confidante who can be approached with anything.

3 Listen actively "The distress of a loved one makes us uncomfortable, and so our first instinct is to problem-solve. But, the key is active listening—where you hear their feelings. When a person is telling you their story, try to understand what they are feeling and hold on to that," says Mumbai-based Dr Rizwana Nulwala, Krizalyz counselling and mental health services.

Refrain from downplaying what someone with depression feels with phrases such as 'This is just a phase,' 'It will pass' or 'You just need to try harder.' Instead, share similar experiences if you've gone through them—it will help remind them they are not alone—but



avoid comparisons and ensure the focus remains on their issues, not yours.

Dr Kamana Chibber, clinical psychologist, Fortis Hospital, Delhi, lists what else to avoid: “Don’t interrupt; give them time to share and express themselves fully. Don’t be dismissive of their experiences, even if you see things differently. Offering solutions is tricky, even counterproductive, making them feel misunderstood, which prevents help-seeking. Solutions that do not lead to desired results can lead to feelings of inadequacy, alienation and further withdrawal.”

4 Save the judgement Avoid using words such as ‘weird’ or saying their feelings are ‘crazy’, or invalid—that is not helpful at all. “Your non-judgmental attitude should show in the words you use, as well as your body language,” says Aparna Samuel Balasundaram, US-based behavioural health consultant and psychotherapist.

Remember that behaviours resulting

from mental-health challenges are not meant to irritate you. They are medical conditions and deserve empathy and flexibility from caregivers.

5 Normalize therapy Reassure and remind loved ones that mental-health counselling is fundamentally about learning better life skills and self-care—not a sign of weakness or abnormality. “Therapy is a course in self-preservation. It can teach you a lot about yourself, and how to live a happier, healthier life,” Nulwala says.

That said, therapy can be a tough journey that requires one to take a long, hard look at oneself and make significant changes. “It is difficult work and requires a lot of courage. Not everyone has the capacity for it,” adds Nulwala.

Families and friends of people experiencing this process should provide support and positive reinforcement that encourages them to trust and stick to the process, even when it gets hard. **R**

21 TALL TALES THAT ARE IMPOSSIBLY TRUE ...



... AND 21 FACTS THAT ARE ACTUALLY MYTHS



OR

FICTION?

BY *Marissa Laliberte, Ashley Lewis AND Jacopo della Quercia*

Strange but Impossibly **TRUE**

1 Dinosaurs had feathers. That's what archaeologists have found in the fossil evidence of some species, including velociraptors. Whether bigger species such as *Tyrannosaurus rex* had them is under debate, but some scientists believe they had light feathering. In fact, researchers have long noted that chickens and other birds share skeletal similarities with *T. rex* and are its probable descendants.

2 McDonald's once created bubble-gum-flavoured broccoli. Not surprisingly, the bizarre attempt to get kids to eat healthier did not go over well with the child testers.

3 You have a greater chance of dying on your birthday than on any other day of the year. In fact, the younger you are, the more likely you are to bite the bullet on your big day. So go ahead and party—but not too hard.



4 Sloths can hold their breath longer than dolphins can. Dolphins need air after 10 minutes, but a swimming sloth can hold its breath for up to 40 minutes. Their secret: Sloths can slow their heart rate at will, reducing the need for fresh oxygen.

5 A woman was elected to the US Congress before women's suffrage. Montana's Jeannette Rankin was sworn in as the first female Congress member in 1917; all American women were given the right to vote in 1920.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: LINDA BUCKLIN/SHUTTERSTOCK (DINOSAUR), MATTHEW COHEN (PEZ)
THIS PAGE: PIXEL-SHOT/SHUTTERSTOCK (BIRTHDAY), CHANANCHIDA CH/SHUTTERSTOCK (FLAGS)

6 The dunce's cap used to be a sign of intelligence. Thirteenth-century philosopher John Duns Scotus thought a pointed cap would funnel knowledge from its tip to his brain, and his 'Duns-men' followers wore the hats as badges of honour. In the 1500s, his ideas became less popular and the meaning of the Dunce's cap was turned on its head, becoming something of a joke.



7 The founders of Adidas and Puma were brothers. Adi and Rudi Dassler went into the shoe business in 1924 as Dassler Brothers Shoe Factory. They made running shoes for Jesse Owens, among others. But, their sibling rivalry boiled over in 1948, when they split the company: Adi launched Adidas; Rudi created Puma.

8 Astronauts can cry in space. But with no gravity to pull the tears down their faces, the water just pools into a ball on the astronauts' cheeks. Even more annoying: No-flow crying "stings a bit," says astronaut Chris Hadfield.

9 Nutella was invented for chocolate lovers. After World War II, chocolate supplies were low in Italy. Pietro Ferrero knew Italians would still want their chocolate fix, so he came up with a way to stretch what he had by creating a sweet paste made of sugar, hazelnuts and just a little cocoa.

10 The shortest war in history lasted 38 minutes. In 1896, the sultan of British-protected Zanzibar died and a new one took over without British approval. The Brits were not happy, especially when Sultan Khalid bin Barghash refused to step down. British warships spent less than 40 minutes bombarding the palace before Khalid fled, marking the end of the (very quick) Anglo-Zanzibar War.

11 The longest word in the English language has 1,89,819 letters. It's the technical name of a protein, which lists its entire amino acid sequence and would take about three and a half hours to say out loud.

12 Dorothy's slippers in *The Wizard of Oz* weren't always ruby red. In L. Frank Baum's 1900 novel, he describes them as "silver shoes with pointed toes." But, the 1939 movie was being shot with the new Technicolor technique, and red shoes made a more eye-catching choice than silver ones. There were at least four pairs made for the film, one of which was recovered only last year after having been stolen from the Judy Garland Museum in 2005.



13 Firefighters use chemicals to make water 'wetter'. The wetting agents reduce the surface tension of plain water so it spreads and soaks into objects more easily, which is why what fire crew use is known as 'wet water'.

14 Kiwis were originally called Chinese gooseberries. After New Zealanders started growing and exporting the fruit, they changed the name in a marketing move. 'Kiwifruit' was more appealing to US consumers, and it drove home the idea that it came from 'Kiwis', a nickname for New Zealanders.



15 Frogs' eyes help them swallow. Like snakes, frogs swallow their food whole—and alive. When a frog closes its eyes, they are pressed into their sockets and down toward the roof of its mouth, pushing on the food and moving it down the throat.

16 The second got its name for being the second unit of time, after the minute. The Romans called 1/60 of an hour *pars minuta prima* (first small part), so it was logical that 1/60 of a minute would be *pars minuta secunda* (second small part).

17 Movie trailers originally played after a movie. They 'trailed' the feature film—hence the name. But, theatres noticed that the audience would leave before these de facto ads ran, so they were moved to before the film, with their old name trailing with them.



18

Giraffe tongues can be 50.8 cms long. The tongues' dark bluish-black colour probably helps prevent sunburn.

19 The lighter was invented before the match. In 1823, a German chemist created the world's first lighter, Döbereiner's lamp, which was used in industrial settings. It wasn't until three years later that an English chemist made the first friction match.



20 Adolf Hitler's nephew fought with the Allies. William Hitler, a British native, was travelling in the United States with his mother, Bridget Hitler, when World War II broke out. An outcast in England because of his family name, William tried to enlist in the US armed forces but was denied. After a sincere letter to President Franklin Roosevelt and a thorough background check, William was finally accepted. He served in the US Navy for three years as a pharmacist's mate.

21 You can't hum while holding your nose. You just tested it, didn't you? You might be able to get a note or two out, but good luck with a full song. Normally, when you hum, the air is able to escape through your nose to create the sound, and of course, it can't do that when you're holding your nostrils shut.



'Facts' That Are **FALSE**

1 Blood is blue inside your body. Human blood is the same colour inside your body as it is outside: red. Our veins look blue because the tissue covering them changes the way light is absorbed and scattered, which affects our perception of their colour.

2 The hottest part of a chilli is the seeds. Capsaicin, a chemical compound that binds to the pain receptors on our nerves to produce that fiery heat, is most concentrated in the inner white rib of the chilli. The seeds don't actually contain any capsaicin, but they may be coated in it because they touch the rib.



3 Jesus Christ was born on 25 December. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke never mention the date of Jesus's birth. So, why do we celebrate 25 December as the day Christ was born? It could be because of a Roman Catholic historian from the third century, Sextus Julius Africanus, who believed Jesus was conceived on 25 March—nine months before what is now Christmas Day.



4 The Sahara is the world's largest desert. Technically, Antarctica is. The US Geological Survey defines a desert as "arid land with meagre rainfall [usually less than 25.4 cms per year] that supports only sparse vegetation and a limited population of people and animals." Antarctica averages only 15.24 cms of rain a year (mostly as snow) and is almost 1,42,44,934 square kms. The Sahara is only 85,46,960 square kms.



5 Chameleons can change their colouring to match any background. The lizards do adjust their skin tone to camouflage themselves in certain environments, but their colour range is limited. The really vibrant hues you see on TV and in books aren't usually meant for tricking predators. Those chameleons are trying to attract a mate or defend their territory. Male chameleons have even been known to change their colours to appear female, which helps them sneak by other males without the threat of a fight.

6 eBay was founded by a man who wanted to help his fiancée trade PEZ dispensers. That's the story that circulated when the online auction house began, but it was really just a PR tall tale. It is true that PEZ (named after the German word for peppermint, *Pfefferminz*) were originally created, in 1927, to help smokers quit. Almost as strange: The all-important dispensers didn't get their character-inspired tops until 1957. The first was a witch, for Halloween.



7 The Declaration of Independence made the United States a sovereign country. The US Congress adopted the final text on 4 July 1776, but most countries didn't recognize the new government then. The French waited two years and the British didn't formally accept losing their colonies until the Treaty of Paris in 1783.

8 Lemmings will blindly join in mass suicide. Norwegian lemmings do migrate in packs, but the well-known image of their mass suicide was staged for the 1958 documentary *White Wilderness*. Film-makers tipped brown lemmings from a truck over a cliff's edge, making it look as if they were following one another to their deaths.

9 A factoid is a fun mini-fact. In fact, it's the opposite of a fact. Writer Norman Mailer coined the term in 1973 to describe 'facts' that were invented by gossip reporters. The suffix '-oid' (as in 'humanoid') refers to something that appears like something else but is not.



10 Neanderthals were dumb. They were probably just as intelligent as *Homo sapiens*, but scientists think that Neanderthals didn't fare well when the animals they hunted died out after the Ice Age.

11 Eskimos have more words for snow than any other culture. The Canadian Inuit in the Nunavik region do have more than 50 words for it, and the Central Siberian Yupik have 40. But the Scots have the biggest snow vocabulary—421 words.

12 Julius Caesar was born via caesarean section—and the procedure was named for him. In Caesar's time, a caesarean was performed only on dying women, and Caesar's mother likely lived long enough to see him attack England. The origin of the name is uncertain, but it might have come from the Latin *caedere*, which means 'to cut.'

13 Citronella candles are the best way to keep mosquitoes out of your yard. The smoke from citronella candles is as effective as that from regular candles—and neither helps much. If you want an all-natural mosquito repellent, try planting some catnip. (Your cat will thank you too.)



14 The green paste served with your sushi is wasabi. Wasabi is expensive and difficult to grow. Since it's in the same family, most restaurants and food companies use horseradish (with food coloring) instead. Real wasabi is more complex and sweeter than what you get in a typical Japanese restaurant.

ITSARET SUTTHISIRI/SHUTTERSTOCK (MOSQUITO). MATTHEW COHEN (WASABI)



15 **Ostriches bury their heads in the sand.** The birds would suffocate if they did. If a predator is approaching, a frightened ostrich will lay its head and neck flat against the ground as a camouflage ploy. Some human onlookers have assumed that the birds' light-coloured heads were actually in the sand.

16 **Space is always cold.** Without an atmosphere, there's nothing absorbing the sun's harmful rays or trapping in heat. When astronauts are orbiting Earth, the temperature can range anywhere from -156°C to 121°C .

17 **The Hope Diamond is the biggest in the world.** At 45.52 carats, it is a mere bauble compared with the 545.67 carat Golden Jubilee.

18 **You can get tetanus from a rusty nail.** It's the dirt around the nail that can carry the *Clostridium tetani* bacteria.

19 **Water conducts electricity.** Pure H_2O is an insulator.

20 **You can tell a ladybird's age by counting its spots.** A ladybird's spots do not change once it becomes an adult.

21 **Earth is closer to the sun in the summer.** Just the opposite: We are closest in January, when it is winter in the northern hemisphere. **R**



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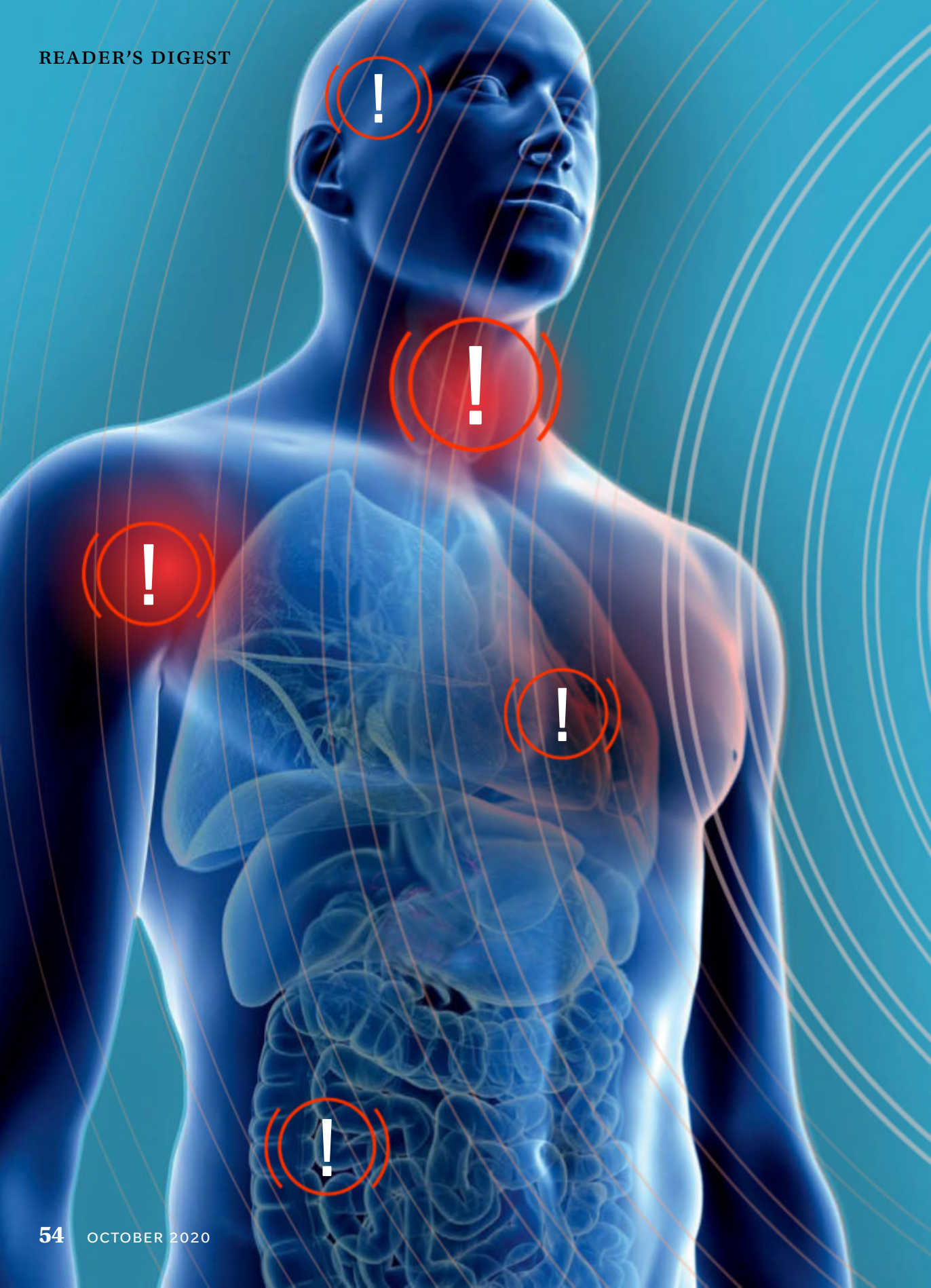
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HIDDEN & DANGEROUS!

INFLAMMATION is behind so many health issues. Here's how to stop it

BY *Mike Zimmerman*
FROM AARP

CANCER, HEART DISEASE, dementia, diabetes: In the lexicon of ageing and disease, these are some worrisome words. But researchers have suspected for years that all of these health issues, and more, have at their heart one common trigger: chronic low-grade inflammation. And now they may finally have proof.

In 2017, researchers in Boston reported on a clinical trial with more than 10,000 patients (mean

IT'S SLOW, IT'S CREEPING—AND IT KEEPS YOUR BODY ON CONSTANT ALERT.

age: 61) in 39 countries that tested whether an anti-inflammatory drug, canakinumab, could lower rates of heart disease. They discovered that it could, but they also found that it reduced lung cancer mortality more than 67 per cent, and reports of gout and arthritis (conditions linked to inflammation) also fell.

“Inflammation plays a role in everyone’s health,” says Dr Dana DiRenzo, a rheumatologist and instructor of medicine at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, USA. When inflammation levels increase, so does

the risk of disease. But understanding inflammation can be tricky because, when you get a disease, inflammation levels naturally increase as your body fights the condition. Inflammation, in other words, is both good and bad.

When is inflammation a problem?

When you catch the flu and your body temperature rises to fight the virus, that’s a form of acute inflammation. So is the redness and swelling that occur when you sprain your ankle. The process is a temporary, helpful response to an injury or illness. It provides the healing chemicals and nutrients your body needs to repair the damage. Once the danger goes away, so does the inflammation.

Chronic low-grade inflammation, on the other hand, is a slow, creeping condition sustained by a misfiring of the immune system that keeps your body in a constant, long-term state of alert, says Dr Robert H. Shmerling, teaching clinician in the department of rheumatology at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, USA.

Over time, inflammation damages healthy cells. Here’s why: When cells are in distress, they release chemicals that alert the immune system. White blood cells then flood the scene, where they work to eat up bacteria, viruses, damaged cells and debris from an infection or injury. If the damage is too great, they call in

backup cells known as neutrophils, which are the hand grenades of the immune system—they blow up everything in sight, healthy or not. Each neutrophil has a short lifespan, but in chronic inflammation, they continue to be sent in long after the real threat is gone, causing damage to the healthy tissue that remains. The inflammation can start attacking the linings of your arteries or intestines, the cells in your liver and brain or the tissues of your muscles and joints.

This inflammation-caused cellular damage can trigger diseases like

DIABETES AND CANCER ARE DISEASES THAT INFLAMMATION CAN TRIGGER.

diabetes, cancer, dementia, heart disease, arthritis and depression. And because it's low grade, "its slow and secret nature makes it hard to diagnose in day-to-day life," says Roma Pahwa, a researcher for the National Institutes of Health who specializes in the inflammatory response. "You have no idea it's even happening until those conditions show symptoms."

Causes of chronic inflammation

When you contract a chronic infection like hepatitis C or Lyme



disease, your body responds with inflammation that also lingers for a long time. In fact, it's often the chronic inflammation, not the viruses themselves, that causes much of the long-term damage related to these diseases.

Genetics can be a factor. In some cases, the genes related to these health issues can be turned on by inflammation: Diabetes and cancer are two genetically related diseases that can be triggered by it. In other cases, the gene itself leads to a misfiring of the immune system that causes the inflammation in rheumatoid arthritis, multiple

sclerosis, lupus and other diseases.

The environment plays a role, too; pollution, air and water quality, environmental allergies and a host of other environmental factors can trigger and sustain inflammation. And then there's lifestyle: Obesity, unregulated stress, tobacco use, drinking too much, lack of physical activity, lousy sleep and, of course, poor diet are all linked to chronic inflammation.

Plus, the older we are, the more exposure we've had to environmental toxins, stress, alcohol, bad foods and chronic diseases. Ageing also makes it more difficult for our bodies to properly manage our immune systems, to extract nutrients from food and to shed extra kilos.

Some of the key aggravating factors

Belly fat Having a big belly means you have an excess of visceral fat, which builds up near your intestines and other internal organs. Every day, your belly fat is creating and releasing inflammatory compounds with Bond-villain names such as interleukin 6 and tumour necrosis factor-alpha. Remember, inflammation is a response to cell damage. Fat cells are bloated with triglycerides (the substance that can be turned into diesel fuel) and as a result, they are very fragile and can easily rupture. When they do, they trigger an inflammatory response as



the immune system sends white blood cells to clean up the spilled fuel.

Chronic stress If you handle stress poorly, or feel helpless or put-upon, your body goes into fight-or-flight mode, causing an increase in hormones like cortisol and adrenaline—which directly trigger a rise in inflammation. If you have an autoimmunity-based skin condition like psoriasis, you've probably witnessed flare-ups at times of stress. Mindfulness techniques such as prayer and meditation have been shown to reduce some markers of inflammation and can help people suffering from chronic inflammatory conditions.

Not enough exercise Research has shown that you don't have to be a

marathoner to lower inflammation. In fact, a University of California, San Diego, study found that just 20 minutes of moderate exercise suppresses the inflammatory response. One reason, says Thomas Buford, an associate professor with the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine's division of gerontology, is that exercise can positively affect your gut health.

"The difference between someone feeling okay and feeling great is exercise," says DiRenzo. Even if you have physical limitations—bad knees, for example—exercise will most likely improve them. To get started, DiRenzo suggests picking an activity you can do for five minutes a day. Next week, do it for seven minutes. It could be as simple as a brisk walk. "Yeah, you're gonna be sore," she says, "but this is a good sore. Build and build and you will start to feel better."

Poor sleep If you have to pick one lifestyle area to improve, focus on sleep, both the quantity and quality. It not only lowers your inflammation levels, it also helps you do everything else better. "I find when people give their body time to rest and lower stress, they have an easier time making smart food choices and getting exercise the next day," says Dr Elizabeth Boham, medical director at the UltraWellness Center in Lenox, Massachusetts, USA.

Foods play a major role

Foods high in sugar or unhealthy fats, and low in fibre top the list of 'pro-inflammatory' foods. They feed the 'unhealthy' bacteria in our digestive tract. We naturally have a balance of good and bad bacteria in our gut, but when the bad bacteria become too numerous, they can damage the lining of the digestive tract.

**ONE OF THE BEST
LIFESTYLE CHANGES
YOU CAN MAKE?
EXERCISE AND GET
BETTER SLEEP.**

"The intestinal barrier that separates the microorganisms from the rest of your body can become permeable, allowing particles to escape into the body's circulation," says Buford. This is a condition known as leaky gut. The immune system recognizes these particles as foreign invaders and attacks. But since the gut keeps leaking, the immune system keeps attacking, and—boom—you have chronic inflammation.

High-fibre foods like whole grains, fruits and vegetables help to restore gut balance. They feed the good microbes in your gut during digestion, helping to correct dysbiosis. "There's a lot of evidence that a high-fibre diet provides a positive balance of microbes and can potentially

down-regulate inflammation,” Buford says. Also important: Avoid unhealthy fats because, he says, “even one high-fat meal can change the microenvironment.”

Red and processed meats can cause inflammation, but you don't have to banish meats from your diet, Boham says. This is particularly important for older adults because protein

GOOD FOODS, BAD FOODS

What causes inflammation, and what soothes it?

CAUSES IT: **White bread**

A diet low in fibre can allow unhealthy bacteria to gain the upper hand in your digestive system, contributing to a leaky gut, in which toxins are allowed to pass through into your body rather than being swept away by the digestive system.

SOOTHES IT: **Wholegrain bread**

As the body digests fibre, like that found in whole grains, it creates butyrate, a beneficial fatty acid with anti-inflammatory powers. Butyrate seems to cross the blood-brain barrier and may help prevent neurological decline.

CAUSES IT: **Processed sweets**

Most processed foods, especially desserts, are low in fibre, high in sugar, and packed with chemicals, all of which are bad for the gut. The less frequently you eat processed foods, the better.

SOOTHES IT: **Fruit and yoghurt**

Certain fruits, vegetables and beans contain polyphenols, plant compounds with antioxidants that help mitigate the cellular damage created by inflammation.

Examples include resveratrol (wine, grapes) and catechins (tea, apples, berries). Probiotics contain healthy bacteria, which help keep the bad gut bacteria in check.

CAUSES IT: **Deep-fried foods**

Advanced glycation end products (AGEs) are inflammation-causing compounds produced when meats and grains are cooked at high heat—think doughnuts, french fries and fried chicken.

SOOTHES IT: **Healthy fats**

Monounsaturated fats (olive oil, avocado, nuts) have been shown to lower the risk of heart disease, while polyunsaturated fats (fish, flax) include an inflammation-busting mix of omega-6 and omega-3.

CAUSES IT: **Bottled salad dressings**

Look at the label of your favourite dressing. It's probably high in fat, salt and sugar. Make your own salad dressings with inflammation-fighting olive oil, lemon or vinegar and spices.

SOOTHES IT: **Big, colourful salads**

Vitamins and minerals found in fruits and vegetables prevent oxidative stress—meaning they fight inflammation. They have hundreds of antioxidants, such as vitamins A, C and E, lycopene and selenium.

consumption may help prevent age-related muscle loss. “I recommend a balance between plant protein—nuts, seeds, beans, grains—and animal protein,” she says.

She recommends organic, grass-fed meats and wild-caught fish, which have a lower inflammation factor because they feed on plants and animals that are high in phytonutrients. Try to eat one food from every colour of the rainbow every day.

Is there a test and a cure for chronic inflammation?

The problem with testing is that we all have a certain amount of inflammation in our bodies, and levels fluctuate constantly, so a reading at 8 a.m. will be different from one at 8 p.m. Also, something harmless like the common cold will spike levels of disease-fighting chemicals in our blood, DiRenzo says, so doctors don’t routinely test for inflammation. “Testing should come as a result of certain symptoms like swollen joints.”

For example, if you have heart disease, your doctor may test for C-reactive protein (C-RP), an inflammation marker that’s been linked to cardiac issues. But just chasing inflammation itself, without specific indicators, can open a Pandora’s box of unnecessary testing for patients, DiRenzo says. “Instead of trying to pin down this nebulous term ‘chronic inflammation,’ work

closely with your doctor to identify specific-enough symptoms that may lead to a diagnosis of an inflammatory issue.”

While researchers continue to experiment with anti-inflammatory drugs (beyond ibuprofen, which has side effects such as stomach bleeding and increased blood pressure), none has been approved for use in fighting chronic low-grade inflammation.

BY A CERTAIN AGE, we all have some degree of inflammation in our bodies. The key is to keep it at a flickering ember and not let it erupt into a forest fire.

If you smoke, drink a lot, carry a lot of extra weight, never exercise, eat poorly or are constantly stressed, your chances of having some level of chronic elevated inflammation are high. If you are lean, healthy, lead a balanced lifestyle, stay up to date on your vaccinations and wash your hands regularly (since infections trigger inflammation, Shmerling says), you should have less of it.

Lifestyle is the thing you can change fastest and the one thing you can control. Maybe you dread that changes like adding exercise and improving your diet will be unpleasant. But heart surgery is probably much more unpleasant. And isn’t attacking one enemy—**inflammation—a lot easier than worrying about dozens of them?** **R**

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TAKING THE PLUNGE IN MY THIRTIES

*My son was terrified of the water.
But before I could help him face his fear,
I had to overcome my own*

BY *Pavithra Jaivant*

ILLUSTRATION BY *Siddhant Jumde*

A FEW MONTHS AGO, my nine-year-old son, Chirag,* won his first silver at a swim meet. Watching him that day, as he calmly dived into the pool and took off with graceful strokes, it seemed like he could swim before he could walk. His dad is a competitive swimmer and a former champion, so surely it must be in his genes? Wrong! Until a few years ago, he was terrified of water. It wasn't his fault. His dislike came from my own childhood phobia.

One summer, as children, my

brother and I went to a pool with my father, to learn the basics of swimming—how to stay afloat, a little kicking and some forward crawls. All that went well and soon it was time for proper lessons. A coach was hired and he agreed to do a trial round. He took us to the deep end to 'see what we knew' and asked us to swim across the breadth of the pool and just left us there.

While my brother stayed calm and made it across unscathed, I, on the other hand, took an instant distaste

*NAMES CHANGED UPON REQUEST



to the task. It was my first time in such deep waters, and the bottom of the pool seemed so intimidatingly far away that I panicked. I was convinced I would drown. My lungs felt like they were about to burst from lack of air, until miraculously I put my hand out and touched the wall. At that very moment, I decided that swimming wasn't for me. From now on, my feet would remain firmly on the ground.

FAST FORWARD TO my thirties. I am a mother of two young boys and living in a country where beaches and waterbodies are in abundance. At the time, my younger son Siddharth* had not yet started school but Chirag had, and swimming was compulsory in his school curriculum.

Every Wednesday—the day for the weekly swimming lesson—was a nightmare. From the previous evening, he would be anxious and teary-eyed about going to school. It turned out I had unwittingly passed on my anxiety about swimming to my little boy.

I was constantly worried about

keeping my children safe around water and was starting to realize that the best way to do that was by making them learn how to swim.

Family trips to the pool to allay Chirag's fears didn't help. He chose to stay close to me, and I chose to stand at the shallow end. It was evident that he needed professional lessons to help build his confidence—but then, so did I. I needed to face my own insecurities to ensure they didn't hold back my kids.

I signed up for classes and for the first few lessons, Chirag came to watch. This time round, the coaches were not only proficient, they were also patient—they knew when to hold back and when to push. Still, my son chose to sit outside the pool for his first few lessons. The swimming instructor reassured me that he would be fine. He just needed time.

Meanwhile, Chirag continued coming to my classes, which had been progressing well until we got to 'The Day'. My instructor felt that I was skilled enough to now venture into the deep end.



**IF HE SAW ME
SUCCUMBING
TO FEAR, HE
WOULD DO THE
SAME. I TOOK
A DEEP BREATH,
SAID A PRAYER
AND STEPPED
OFF THE EDGE.**

With him beside me, of course, he asked me to jump in to the water. My old fear washed over me. I stood at the edge of the pool, almost paralyzed. This was easily one of the most terrifying things I could face—the memory of my first encounter with the deep end surfaced and every fibre of my being screamed at me to abandon the entire venture.

JUST THEN, I looked up to see Chirag watching me intently. As I caught his eye, he smiled, and I realized that I had to do it. If I didn't, if he saw me succumbing to fear, he would do the same thing. I took a deep breath, said a prayer and stepped off the edge, into the water.

To my utter amazement and relief, I didn't drown! I had not panicked.

No one was more proud of my jump than Chirag, and that made it completely worth it. Soon after, my once-hesitant son stopped sitting outside the pool during his classes and plunged in to the water.

Things were easier after that. It took me close to two years to get over my fear. Now, I don't worry about jumping in or swimming the length of the pool. Anxiety and fear have given way to empowerment and achievement. If I do have a day when I am feeling nervous, there is always Chirag to boost my confidence. Suddenly, even the scariest, deepest unknown doesn't seem so frightening. **R**

Pavithra Jaivant is a management graduate and former finance professional who now wields a pen



Canadian Wits

Doing nothing is very hard to do, because you never know when you're finished.

LESLIE NIELSON

Behind every great man is a woman rolling her eyes.

JIM CARREY

My theory is that all of Scottish cuisine is based on a dare.

MIKE MYERS

I'd walk through fire for my daughter. Well not FIRE, because it's dangerous.
But a super humid room. But not too humid, because my hair.

RYAN REYNOLDS

The people who influenced me the most were the people who said I would never make it. They gave me a thirst for revenge.

COLIN MOCHRIE



DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

HELP! ***CAN ANYONE*** ***HEAR ME?***

*Trapped in her car down an embankment,
Corine began to lose hope of being found*

BY *Lisa Fitterman*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Steven P. Hughes*

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

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CORINE BASTIDE GENTLY locks the door to her boyfriend's apartment, not wanting to wake him. It is 11 p.m. on 23 July, 2019, still humid after a day that reached 31°C. Restless after an argument earlier with her ex-husband about their three sons, there's no way she will be able to sleep. So, she has decided to drive home, an easy 36-kilometre trip along the motorway from Liège to her place in the village of Wanze in Belgium.

As she gets into her car, she tucks a strand of long auburn hair behind an ear and absently smooths her colourfully green-patterned dress. Rivulets of sweat run down her neck.

There is little traffic. Corine grips the steering wheel as she concentrates on both the road and thoughts of her boys, who live with her half the time: Hadrien, 18, a track-and-field fan who is determined to help victims of crime as his life's work; Audric, 16, a champion high-jumper; and Dorian, 12, her 'Dodo' and a budding athlete in his own right.

Without them, I'd be nothing.

Lost in her thoughts, she only notices the car vibrating after she has been driving for about 20 minutes.

I told you to have the brakes serviced, she imagines David Bartholomé, her boyfriend of five months, telling her. There is so much

going on in her life—a divorce and caring for the boys while working in a local cafeteria—that getting the car checked wasn't a priority. Until now.

Get off the motorway. The slower the car is going, the easier it will be to stop. The sign for the exit to the town of Saint-Georges-Sir-Meuse is right up ahead. She guides the car into the exit lane and starts to pump the brakes. Gently at first, then hard, harder. Nothing's working!

Her little grey Fiat Bravo hatchback keeps picking up speed, careening as she tries to steer. She hits something. The car is in the air, then sliding down a slope that feels steep as a cliff, studded with jagged rocks, thick tree trunks and overhanging branches. It takes seconds, minutes, forever. Then a terrible crunching noise, metal folding in on metal and the sound of smashing glass.

Corine lies on her back, disoriented. She doesn't realize the car has flipped over. Somehow, she has managed to undo her seat belt. There is the sound of breathing, shallow, fast and loud. *Is that me?* It must be nearing midnight. She should have been home by now. Somewhere in the car, her mobile phone rings. Thoughts are jumbled together: *Am I alive? Please help me! Did anyone see me go over?*

And yet, there is one thought that is the clear and constant chorus to the clamour of the others.

My boys are my lifeline.

Then she passes out.

DAY ONE

THE SOUND OF the mobile phone jars Corine awake. Unthinking, she reaches out for it, casting blindly. All of a sudden, reality hits. She is lying on the inside of her car's roof, the driver's seat suspended above her. A branch sticks through the gap that was the front windshield. Silently, she recites, as if to pin herself in time, her name, the date, her sons' names. *There was an accident. I am alive.*

she loses count. For sure, David is trying to reach her. And maybe Hadrien, with whom she speaks or exchanges messages nearly every day.

After about two hours, the phone stops for good, its battery dead.

She lies here, waiting for someone to find her. By now it is past noon and even hotter than the day before.

David must think I'm angry with him. And he must have phoned Hadrien. What do they think has

SOMEONE HAS TO SEE ME. THE TRAFFIC IS SO CLOSE. SHE CAN HEAR IT. "HELP ME!" SHE CRIES.

Shards of exploded glass glitter throughout; the contents of her handbag are strewn everywhere.

"Hunh!" She grunts, trying to shift. But she can't because her left leg and her back are embedded on the bits of glass. Oh, the pain! Although she doesn't realize it then, her back is broken in several places, and her entire left side is paralyzed.

Someone has to see me. The traffic is so close. She can hear it. "Help me!" she cries, loud as she can. "I'm down here!"

She calls out until her voice can call no more. No one hears her. Although she has not fallen far—maybe two metres at most—the traffic is too loud and the car is too well-hidden by the woods. In the meantime, her mobile phone rings again and again;

happened to me?

She drifts off in the early evening. As she sleeps, David, who has tried Corine's mobile repeatedly, calls Hadrien.

"Have you heard from your mum?"

"No," comes the reply. "Is something wrong?"

DAY TWO

IT DAWNS EVEN hotter, the hottest day of the week so far. Corine stirs, her limbs numb but feeling new resolve. Today, she is going to help herself. She is a runner. She knows what it is to hit the wall and move through it. The car is her wall, and the brambles and the embankment. She has to get out of the car, struggle up the embankment and wave down a passer-by.

"Please call the father of my

children," she imagines telling her rescuer. "They need to know I'm okay."

That's how she thinks of Stéphane. *The father of my children.* The man she was with for 23 years after moving to Belgium from Mauritius more than a quarter century ago.

Funny, but she doesn't feel hungry or thirsty. She looks around for a way out of the car. With the bent and twisted chassis, it's not obvious but—there! Yes. She will use the seat belt looped above her like a rope to pull herself through the jagged gap in the

metre to reach the ground, which is covered in gnarled roots and sharp rocks.

Launching myself out head first could end with me breaking my neck.

Disheartened, she lies there, gathering what strength she has to shift back into the car. By the time she is settled, the sky is starting to change colour.

Sleep, she tells herself, exhausted. There's always tomorrow.

IN THE MEANTIME, Hadrien and

DESPERATE, CORINE BRACES HERSELF AND TRIES TO KICK OPEN A CAR DOOR. IT DOESN'T BUDGE.

front. Gritting her teeth amid blinding pain, she shifts her body; with every movement the shards of glass in her back and legs cut deeper. It takes about 15 minutes to advance just a centimetre or two.

Hadrien, Auric and Dorian. They are her mantra.

"Come on, you can do it," she says out loud, imagining that Hadrien is speaking to her.

The sun is high in the sky when she finally pokes her head outside. Gazing up, she sees snippets of blue sky through the canopy of broken branches. Turning her head and glancing down, she cries out in frustration: The car is perched on a small ledge and there is a drop of half a

David are calling everyone they know. But no one has heard anything from Corine.

"There isn't even anything on Facebook," Hadrien says. "If a morning goes by without a post from her, something is very wrong. It's time to call the police."

By the end of the second day, they have learnt that the last location for Corine's mobile phone signal was in the region of Saint-Georges-sur-Meuse. But there are so many farms and little communities there, and the small population is spread out over 20 square kilometres, much of it covered in forest. By now, she could be anywhere. She could be kidnapped. Or dead.



DAY THREE

THE WEATHER IS the same, hot and sticky, with not a cloud in the sky. This morning, Corine, desperate and determined, shifts her body to brace her shoulders and arms against one door in an attempt to kick open the other one. Again and again, grunting with effort. But she is weak and the doors are so damaged, they do not budge.

What next? Corine looks around. Her gaze lands on the back door, which the crash left partially open. What if she tries to squeeze through feet first? But does she have the strength?

Tomorrow, she thinks.

DAY FOUR

CORINE WAKENS TO wetness. It's raining on and off, the water coming in through the broken windshield to soak her dress, which is already damp from her urine. Time is reduced to light and dark, day and night, the difference between living and dying. All she can do is lie here, listening to the traffic, the rain and the whistle of the wind.

On Facebook, Hadrien begs for anyone who has information to please call either him or the police, and the family puts together a poster to be put up everywhere over the next few days.

"We will find you," he vows. "We need you."

DAY FIVE

A TORRENTIAL DOWNPOUR turns the car into a makeshift bathtub so that Corine is half-submerged, her long hair floating around her. If only she could sink under and have it all go away.

Hadrien, Audric and Dorian.

"You are going to see your boys again," she says aloud. "Live."

She tries to collect water from the downpour, first in an empty chewing gum container but the cardboard simply absorbs it. She looks again at the branch sticking into the car, its leaves now dripping.

Without thinking, she tears her dress in a frenzy, crying out as the material takes pieces of her skin with it. Then she lies still, realizing she has to get a grip—fast. "You can't sleep because if you do, you will die from the cold," she says aloud to herself. "Please, find me soon. I don't know how much longer I have."

DAY SIX

IT IS SUNNY again, with a light breeze. Perfect for a run or attending the boys' many athletic competitions. But not for this. At the end of her rope, Corine, an observant Catholic all her life, has

LAURENCE SPOTS WHAT LOOKS LIKE AN OVERTURNED CAR: "IT COULD BE CORINE. LET'S CHECK IT OUT."

Carefully, she lifts her head, her mouth open, and guides the branch down to it with her right hand. She sucks like a baby, coaxing enough water from the branch to moisten her mouth.

Her dress has ridden up in the water and her thighs are exposed and burning from their myriad cuts. She is shivering uncontrollably, partly because the temperature has dropped and her wet dress is freezing.

With nothing to eat for five days and only the rainwater to slake her thirst, she is becoming hypothermic; as her body starves it starts to consume its own fat cells to keep her going.

a conversation with God.

"Lord, if you can see anything I haven't tried, help me find a solution," she says. "Because I can't do any more on my own."

In the meantime, parents of a friend of Hadrien, Laurence Lardinois and her husband, Olivier Lechantre, are out that afternoon doing errands. Corine is on their minds. Earlier that day Olivier had helped his son put up 'missing' posters in the neighbourhood.

They are driving slowly on the exit to Saint-Georges-sur-Meuse when Laurence, in the passenger seat, spots what looks like an overturned car to



Corine with
Audric, (left),
Dorian and
Hadrien,
Christmas 2019

the right, at the bottom of the embankment, so covered in vegetation and mud, it looks as though it was abandoned a long time ago.

“But it could be Corine,” she says. “Let’s go check it out.”

They park and carefully descend, Olivier leading the way because there are so many stones, branches and roots to trip over. Suddenly, they hear a faint voice.

“Help me,” Corine calls. “I’m down here!”

“Are you Corine?”

“Yes! How do you know my name?”

“A lot of people have been looking for you! It’s a miracle,” comes the answer. “It’s a miracle!”

Laurence phones the police, and about 10 minutes later, an ambulance arrives and a helicopter lands

in the adjoining field to take Corine to hospital in Liege. Workers have to cut through branches and then pry open the car door to get her safely out.

At the hospital, doctors diagnose multiple fractures in her spine, a severe weakness in her left side, a collapsed lung and hypothermia. When she comes out of surgery, David and her sons are there.

“You scared us,” David tells her.



Her neck and spine supported by a brace, her body torn and battered, she cries. “You thought I’d abandoned you?” she says.

Then she turns her head to the boys, who are standing there, awkward. They want to hug her hard and never let her go—but they can’t.

“It was thoughts of you that got me through,” she tells them. **R**



RD CLASSIC



Adding up to Happiness

Solutions to many of our most perplexing personal problems can often be found by applying a kind of creative arithmetic

BY *Fredelle Maynard*

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OVER LUNCH RECENTLY, an old friend and I talked about life. She admitted that she'd been lonely since her husband died. "Yet I can't complain," she said. "I had a good marriage. The kids are on their own. My job isn't exactly thrilling, but it's secure, and I retire in 15 years. So what else is there?"

What else indeed! A woman of 50—able, experienced, attractive—assuming, in effect, that her life is over. I've seen this often, and in much younger people—the resigned conviction that change is impossible. What many of us fail to realize is that it's possible at any age to improve the quality of our life.

But we have to initiate the process

ourselves. By taking a new job or moving to a new locale, we can propel ourselves, forcibly and excitingly, into the stream of life. It's like pruning an overgrown tree: The result is new growth and more fruit. A widow I know sold her house and bought a van so she could travel the country showing her silverwork at craft fairs. She has made friends from Maine to Florida; she winters in the south and summers in the north and looks 10 years younger. "There's so much I haven't seen yet," she said. "It's not too late."

It's almost never too late to do, on some scale, what you've always wanted to do. The key is to move forwards, to make changes. The path many of my acquaintances have taken to greater happiness may be thought of as a kind of creative arithmetic, with additions, subtractions, multiplications and divisions. Chances are these steps will work for you, too.

Add to your life by trying something new. Remember the first-day-of-school challenge? That annual shake-up obliged you to mix, reach out, discover. Last winter, I decided to take a plumbing course. Like most girls of my generation, I had been programmed to be hopeless with tools, but very soon I found I was intrigued by vises and wrenches and the fact that I could use them.

When I consider which of my friends seem happiest, most alive, I observe they're the ones who are constantly expanding their skills, interests and

knowledge. Ronnie had never grown so much as a cactus when she was asked to tend a neighbour's prize pink African violet. One day she found a leaf that had broken off and stuck it in water. Now she has a unique collection.

Add to your life by turning limitations into opportunities. If your life has a built-in constraint, struggle against it, or use it to your advantage. When an industrial accident confined Martin to a wheelchair, he was overwhelmed by the feeling of uselessness. One day I asked if I could give his telephone number to my daughter's teacher, in case there should be an emergency when I couldn't be reached. Soon he was performing a similar service for other working mothers. Word got around, and now he runs an answering service. The money he earns helps pay for extras his pension wouldn't cover. "Above all," he says, "I'm doing something, and touching other people's lives."

SUBTRACT FROM YOUR life possessions that are a burden, activities that you no longer enjoy. When I was growing up, I admired my mother's wedding china, which stood in a cupboard and was brought out only for dusting. "Someday this will be yours," mother said. During my young married years, when I longed to entertain with style, that fine china remained in her cabinet. When it all came to me last year, I realized that at this stage of my life I don't want possessions requiring



**ADD TO YOUR LIFE
SOMETHING NEW.
SUBTRACT ACTIVITIES
YOU DON'T ENJOY.**

special care. So I passed the china on to my daughter. She's delighted; I'm relieved of a chore.

Multiply your points of contact with other people. My life has been enhanced since I began trying to know people whose assumptions and lifestyles are unlike mine. For example, because I cultivate friendships with the children of friends, I have been introduced to music, poetry and ideas I otherwise would never have understood.

A woman I know 'adopts' grandparents. Usually she finds them through volunteer work, but sometimes she makes a direct approach. "I met Harry in the supermarket," she told me. "He seemed to have trouble reading prices, so I offered to help. I ended up driving

him home; he asked me in for tea and now we regularly shop together. My children love Harry's stories. Harry thinks we do a lot for him, but he gives our family something priceless, a sense of the past."

MULTIPLY YOUR CONNECTIONS with the life around you. "My wife was the social one," Philip told me. "After she died, I was terribly lonely. Then it occurred to me that I met lots of people every day. I just hadn't been seeing them." He struck up a conversation about fly tying with the hardware-store manager and discovered a shared interest; the two men have since gone on several trout-fishing expeditions.

Whether you live in a city or a village, it's possible to find friends in the course of routine activities, just by taking an active part in the community. But you must make the special effort, whether it be to help out at a youth centre or distribute campaign literature.

Divide your responsibilities into manageable units and delegate some of those units to others. Living well is partly a matter of making wise choices and compromises. If you want more time, more freedom or simply more help, accept the fact that some things won't be done the way you'd like. My friend Connie, who returned to her profession in middle age, arranged to share home duties with her husband

on an alternating basis: Each takes total responsibility for shopping, meal preparation and laundry every other month. When I asked how things are going, Connie laughed. "His cooking runs from flavourless to terrible. But I honestly don't mind. That month of freedom is so marvellous!"

Divide seemingly intractable problems into segments that can be tackled one at a time. Jenny left college, over her parents' objections, to marry a musician. Two years and two children later, he vanished, leaving her with a mountain of unpaid bills. "I used to lie in bed in the mornings," she told me, "unable to face the day." She began to gain strength when, instead of contemplating the whole discouraging picture, she isolated priorities. Convinced that her best hope lay in completing her education, she listed things to be done, one at a time. "Sell car for money to tide us over. Find out about educational loans. Reapply to university. Find apartment in safer neighbourhood. Find good day-care centre. Write to Mom and Dad. Get in touch with creditors and arrange to pay when I can." By the time she contacted her parents, who'd cut off communication when she married, Jenny couldn't help but impress them with her resourcefulness.

Raise your effort level to the n^{th} power. I used to wonder why TV advertisers repeat the same commercial so often. But of course repetition—intensification—has a special force. The principle of raising to the n^{th} power

works in all areas of life. Take home decoration. For years I've collected wicker. Scattered through the house, it added up to very little. Yet when I gathered every bit in one room, massing the rattan furniture and covering one wall with baskets, the impact was stunning.

IN HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS, where it matters most, intensification of effort may produce important gains—as it did for my friend Paul. He lives far from his mother's nursing home. Though he regularly sent long, newsy letters, his mother was always querulous when he telephoned. "I was beginning to wonder if I had a son" was her usual greeting. Paul would protest he'd just written; she would insist she'd had no word for weeks. So he gave up the letters, concluding that his mother's concentration wasn't equal to them. Now he sends a daily greeting, very short. Sometimes it's just a postcard, a snapshot, a note saying, "Thinking of you." He never misses a day—and the change in his mother's attitude has been remarkable.

Happiness is always an individual matter, and so is the path to happiness. To live better, you surely won't pursue all the courses suggested. If your problem is inertia, boredom or loneliness, you'll benefit most by adding or multiplying. If your days are too frenetic, you may need to subtract or divide. The most important thing, if you're not satisfied now, is to act. **R**

AS KIDS SEE IT



"A little high and inside."

My five-year-old, Matt, worked with a speech therapist on the 'ch' sound, which came out 'k'. The therapist asked him to say chicken. He responded with kitchen. They tried again and again, but it always came out kitchen.

Undeterred, she pushed him for one more try. Matt sighed and said, "Why don't we just call it a duck?"

— PAMELA SPINNEY

Me: You know better than to use that bad word.

Five-year-old: Yes.

Me: Then why did you?

Five-year-old: My brain said not to, but my mouth does whatever it wants.

— @LHLODDER

One summer day, my kids and their grandmother walked the family dog, Stella, through a park. Stella suddenly

bolted from my daughter's grasp and took off joyfully with the leash in her mouth.

"Well," my son observed, "at least Stella understands the park's rule that dogs must be on leash at all times!"

— ANITA BARTY

Reader's Digest will pay for your funny anecdote or photo in any of our humour sections. Post it to the editorial address, or email: editor.india@rd.com



Following my husband's death, I found myself in charge of the African nature reserve we created together. I didn't know where to begin



An Elephant in My Kitchen

BY *Françoise Malby-Anthony*

FROM THE BOOK AN ELEPHANT IN MY KITCHEN



Young Tonic and his mother, Induna, lead the herd on a stroll through the Thula Thula reserve.

I grew up a city girl, a Parisian through and through, who could tell the quickest way to Saint-Germain-des-Prés but who knew nothing about animals. Our family never even kept pets. Living and working in the city, even a beautiful one like Paris, leaves no time to notice nature. It's *métro, boulot, dodo*, as they say in France, when life is a relentless treadmill of commute, work, sleep. Yet, even as I pounded the Parisian treadmill, somewhere deep inside of me I always felt that I would end up in a foreign country.

But living in the sticks in Africa? Not that foreign.

And yet, here I was, in the sticks, all by myself.

It was my husband Lawrence Anthony, a South African, who brought out the wanderlust in me. I'd met him in London in 1987, and a year later I gave up my job and my chic Montparnasse apartment and moved to South Africa. I started a fashion business in Durban, but we were drawn to the bush, and eventually we bought a game reserve—a beautiful mix of river, savannah and forest sprawled over 1,500 hectares of the rolling hills of Zululand, KwaZulu-Natal. There was an abundance of Cape buffaloes, hyenas, giraffes, zebras, wildebeest and antelopes, as well as birds, crocodiles and snakes of every kind.

We named our preserve Thula Thula. We added elephants, rhinos and hippos, and soon we were working to save our Noah's Ark from the

predations of poachers and hunters who roamed the countryside for fun and profit. We built seven luxury chalets under the acacia and tambotie trees on the banks of the Nseleni River and opened the Elephant Safari Lodge in June 2000. I employed some locals, taught them about office-work, dealing with guests and cooking French dishes. Lawrence handled everything to do with the reserve—he mended fences, monitored security, improved the dirt roads and cleared the vegetation.

Then in March 2012, at age 61, Lawrence died of a sudden heart attack. And now here I was, alone, burying my husband and I didn't know where to begin.

DANGEROUS DAYS

By then I had been in South Africa for



I WAS SHOCKED THAT POACHERS HAD BREACHED OUR FENCE IN BROAD DAYLIGHT.



over 20 years. We had expanded Thula Thula to three times its original size. And though a part of me yearned for the busy familiarity of Paris, I knew my life was in South Africa. I loved Africa and embraced its melting pot of traditions and cultures.

I soon faced my first baptism by fire. It was only a few days after Lawrence passed away when I received a radio call. Poachers. Our rhino calf Thabo, a strapping three-year-old male, had taken a bullet.

When Lawrence was alive, he handled the emergencies. I had no clue what to do. I was simply shocked that poachers had the gall to breach our fence in broad daylight; they hadn't

After her husband Lawrence died in 2012, Françoise ran Thula Thula on her own.

even bothered to use silencers. Perhaps they knew Lawrence had recently died, and assumed that our security would have been dropped.

At that point we had 23 guards who were supposed to watch over the animals, sweep for snares and act as first responders, if poachers entered the reserve. A rumour suggested it was an inside job. Perhaps a guard had been bribed? Maybe someone was trying to frighten me into leaving?

The rangers reported that there was a lot of blood, but Thabo's female companion, Ntombi, wouldn't

let anyone near him. And then the hyenas, smelling blood, began to pester them.

I talked to our vet, who was three hours away by car or 30 minutes and 30,000 rand (about ₹1,36,646) by helicopter. I told him that the rangers had seen Thabo take a few steps. "That's good news," he assured me. "If he's walking and not in obvious pain then the bullet probably didn't damage any bones. He won't be comfortable but it doesn't sound life-threatening. I'll be there in the morning. Keep him safe until then."

No one slept a wink that night. The rangers gave Thabo and Ntombi their space, but kept an eye on them all night. Thabo eventually lay down, while Ntombi stayed vigilant and spent most of her time chasing off hyenas. Rhinos have terrible eyesight but a great sense of smell, so Ntombi knew these small but dangerous predators had arrived long before the rangers did.

By daylight, I'd arranged for two ex-military men to reinforce our security. When the vet arrived, he darted Thabo while the rangers kept Ntombi at a safe distance.

"It's a flesh wound," the vet announced. "The bullet missed the bone by millimetres."

I will always be grateful that those poachers were such useless marksmen.

For weeks afterwards Alyson, a veterinary nurse and one of our main caregivers, cleaned the gunshot wound every day. Thabo was healing well. But, he was still traumatized. He lost weight, cried out in the night and became worryingly lethargic.

One day Thabo lay down at the edge of the dam on the river, with his face completely submerged. Although rhinos are quite good at holding their breath, one of his guards was so worried that he sat next to him on the bank of the dam, cradling his head in his lap until he was ready to get out.

Lawrence was gone. I had a rhino in trouble and security men I couldn't rely on. And since booking after booking had been cancelled after news broke of Lawrence's passing, I also had an empty bank account.

The pressure to deliver was enormous, and I struggled against the scepticism of people who didn't believe in me, who didn't think I could manage. Most thought I would go back to France. But how could I leave Thula Thula, the dream that Lawrence and I had fought so hard for? I worked with the most wonderful people. They were my family and I couldn't abandon them. And



I WORKED WITH THE MOST WONDERFUL PEOPLE. I COULDN'T ABANDON THEM.



there was our special herd of animals, many of whom we had raised from babies. They were family too.

I had a lot to learn, but I slowly found my feet. Everyone did everything they could to help Thabo get better, and eventually he recovered from the trauma. I set up meetings with the staff to go over reserve and animal issues and to agree on priorities. I reorganized the security staff. And I launched our own rhino fund—I realized that without money, the animals wouldn't be safe. Money flowed in, enough to pay for extra guards and buy extra security equipment.

I will never forget those ghastly days after Thabo was shot. But they helped define the purpose of my life

Veterinary nurse Alyson played a crucial role in helping Thabo (pictured with his female companion Ntombi) recover from his gunshot wound.

without Lawrence, and I understood that the mantle of protecting Thula Thula's wildlife had become mine, and mine alone.

BABY ELEPHANT

One night there was a sharp knock on my door. I wasn't expecting a visitor.

"Françoise? It's me," a woman whispered.

I threw open the door. "Tom? What are you doing here? What's wrong?"

Tom, a petite, shy young woman,



was my chef. She motioned for me to come outside. “There’s a baby ellie here.”

“An elephant?”

“She’s right outside your house. She’s tiny and terrified.”

“It must be ET’s one-week-old daughter,” I said grimly.

Tom explained that she’d heard a noise outside her room. She’d taken her flashlight, opened the door a fraction and shined it across the garden. A tiny elephant stared back at her, eyes bulging in terror.

Stunned, Tom had closed the door and climbed out a back window to call me.

Apparently, the baby elephant had somehow slipped under the perimeter fence. But elephants are fantastic mothers; ET would never leave her

Feeding Tom, the baby elephant, turned out to be a messy process.

baby unattended. The whole thing seemed impossible. And a baby elephant in trouble is a code-red emergency. She faced too many dangers on her own—hyenas, crocodiles, snakes, rhinos, not to mention the river. I shuddered. What does a week-old calf know about the dangers of water?

Tom and I had to get her inside to keep her safe until we could get her back to her mother. We found her cowering behind a mulberry bush at the side of the house. Frightened eyes peered out at us through the leaves.

I walked slowly towards the calf. She watched me, paralyzed, but as soon as I was within touching distance she squealed and bolted behind

the house. Tom and I ran after her, but again she hurtled away, trumpeting in panicked shrieks. I was scared she would wriggle under the fence and disappear. If she ran into the reserve we would never find her, and if she got lost she wouldn't survive.

Other staff heard the commotion and came to help. I scanned the bush around the house. Where on earth was the herd? The calf was making so much noise they must have heard her by now, but there was no sign of them. I began to wonder if they'd abandoned her. If they'd rejected her, they would never take her back.

It was at times like this that I felt so alone. Lawrence would have known what to do. I stood in the middle of the lawn and gazed into the blackness, willing the herd to come back and fetch their little one.

Tom and Alyson managed to corner the calf in the parking area. She stood completely still, head down, ears drooping, her eyes flitting anxiously at any movement or sound. I tried approaching her again, and this time she didn't resist, allowing us to gently herd her into my home. Once inside, she panicked again, running around my kitchen in frenzied zigzags, trumpeting in fear.

I kept talking to her, telling her she

was safe and that we would get her back to her mum. Alyson called the vet, who told us the priority was to get her to drink—soya milk if we had it, otherwise regular cow's milk.

We had nothing resembling a bottle, so we adapted latex gloves. Alyson used a needle to pierce a tiny hole in the thumb, and we started a feeding line. Tom warmed the milk. I held the glove open. Tom filled it. I tied it closed. Alyson did the feeding.

The elephant drank straight away, gulping down the first glove-bottle and then nudging Alyson's hand for more. We spilled milk on the floor and all over Alyson, and it completely covered the elephant's face. But the baby calmed down and began to inspect us with great interest, surfing her inquisitive trunk all over us, sniffing our faces, poking it into our hair.

She finally dozed off. I contacted the rangers who all got out of bed and started searching for the herd. Then I sat next to the baby on the kitchen floor in case she woke and felt frightened.

I inspected every part of her and found nothing wrong. No open wounds, no swellings, no deformities. She was a perfect little elephant.

Long after midnight, my radio crackled. "We found them," Vusi, my



A BABY ELEPHANT IN TROUBLE IS A CODE-RED EMERGENCY.

chief ranger, said. "They're not too far away. We're on our way back. I'll bring the truck to your door and we'll load her up and take her home."

That was great news. But we still faced a real test. What if her mother ignored her? Or worse, became violent? I'd heard of baby elephants being trampled to death when they'd been rejected by the herd.

We prepared another glove-bottle in case we needed it. And I reassured the baby, "You'll be with your mommy soon."

We heard the rattle of the truck on the dirt track. Vusi had arrived. Alyson fed the calf as Tom and I carried blankets to the truck to soften the ride for her. "How does the herd seem?" I asked.

"Tense and skittish," I was told. They were clearly stressed, yet hadn't come to fetch the calf. All signs pointed to rejection.

The men lifted the calf into the truck. Vusi took the wheel and others climbed in the back, as the calf gave a couple of trumpets. It seemed she now thought she was on an adventure! If she survived, she was going to be a remarkable elephant one day.

I waved them off with dread in my heart. *Please take her back, ET*, I thought, crossing my fingers and

blowing a kiss to the sky.

The herd was slowly heading south, so Vusi drove to a clearing that they would traverse. "Expect visual in five," I heard on the radio.

"Time to offload the calf," Vusi said. "Go, guys!"

They lowered the calf off the back of the truck. The clatter of breaking trees became louder. The herd was nearby. Then the elephants caught scent of the baby and pounded closer. The calf trumpeted in bewilderment. The team leaped back into the truck.

ET skidded to a standstill, her ears pinned back. The herd flocked behind her, silent. Then ET's trunk curled over her daughter and pulled her under her belly. The baby stood still, watching the rangers.

"Time to go," Vusi said in a low voice.

ET trumpeted loudly and pushed her baby into the middle of the herd. A tangle of trunks welcomed her, and then Vusi drove off.

So far so good. They hadn't rejected her. But we couldn't relax until we had seen her suckle.

In the morning Vusi headed to the dam. The entire herd was there. He manoeuvred as close as he could, binoculars trained on the elephants. And that's when he saw the calf suckling.



WOULD THE RANGERS FIND THE BABY RHINO BEFORE THE LIONS DID?



I named the calf Tom in honour of my gentle chef, whose presence of mind in the night saved the little one's life. We monitored baby Tom for weeks to make sure she didn't wander off again, but ET had obviously grounded her daredevil daughter. Every time the rangers saw ET, baby Tom was right there at her mother's side.

“SHE ATTACKED HIM!”

I wanted to build an orphanage to take care of animals whose mothers were killed by poachers or hunters, or who otherwise met their fate in the bush. We received funding from Four Paws, an animal-welfare charity based

The elephant herd comes to Françoise's yard for a visit.

in Austria, and by early 2015 we were putting the finishing touches on the facility—building wallow pools, planting grass and decorating the nursery with stencilled paw prints. We were in a strange no-man's land of waiting for tragedy to happen.

The call came one morning in April. The Zuzuland anti-poaching unit found the carcass of a poached female rhino, but there was no sign of her calf. Hopefully the rangers would find him before the lions did.

We heard nothing for two days.

The clock was ticking for the little chap. At last the orphaned calf was sighted with another female rhino and her infant. It's unusual for a female to look after a calf that isn't her own, but if she allowed him to stay with her he had a good chance of surviving. The orphanage was ready, but the top prize for him was not to need it at all.

Then we got an update. The cow was turning aggressive. The little orphan rhino could smell her milk, could see the other calf drinking from his mother, but he wasn't allowed anywhere near them. The next morning the rangers called us. "The calf's in danger. We're going to rescue him."

"Bring him, we're ready," I said. "When will you get here?"

"Don't know. It's bloody dangerous. The two calves look alike, and if we get the wrong one, the cow will kill the orphan."

They tried for two days. But as soon as the rangers approached, all three rhinos scattered and disappeared into the dense bush. Then I got another call. "She attacked him! She threw him in the air. He's injured and the cow and calf have run off."

With the mother out of the way, the rangers caught the terrified calf at last. They brought him to us in a pickup truck.

We got him inside. The vet sedated him, then inserted a drip into a vein to hydrate him. There were festering wounds on his groin where the female had gored him, and his skin was covered with infected tick bites. The vet cleaned him up and administered a hefty dose of antibiotics.

We named the young rhino Ithuba, meaning 'chance' in Zulu, because he had dodged poachers and predators for a week and now needed luck to give him a second chance. The first night he slept peacefully, due to exhaustion and the sedation. But the second night was hell. His high-pitched squeals of terror pierced every corner of the orphanage. Feeding him was impossible. He was too big and violent for caregivers to go into the room with him, yet he wouldn't take the bottle they held through the barrier.

The caregivers, including Alyson, the veterinary nurse, and Axel, a young man from France, tried to persuade him to take the bottle. But his fear overcame his hunger, and he cowered in the corner away from them.

Axel jiggled a bottle of milk between the bars of the barrier. "Come. You need to eat," he murmured. Ithuba watched him, fear in his eyes.



POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS CAN BE SEEN IN WOUNDED ELEPHANTS AND RHINOS.



Axel splattered some milk on the ground. Ithuba gave a little hungry squeak and shuffled a few steps closer. “A few more steps,” Axel encouraged gently.

Ithuba stared at him, ventured closer. Axel stretched forward and nuzzled the milk bottle gently against Ithuba’s lips. Then, finally, his mouth opened and he latched. His eyes fluttered close and he drank and drank.

An hour later he drank a second bottle. But then colic struck. He began to shiver and jerk about in his

Ithuba (pictured with his carers Megan and Axel) set about testing the limits of every structure in the orphanage.

sleep. Then he woke up and was so scared and confused he spun around the room in a panic, peeing all over the place and flinging himself up against the wall.

The vet told us, “What Ithuba is going through is not surprising. People think post-traumatic stress is only experienced by humans, but we see it in wounded elephants, rhinos and in military dogs as well.”



“What else can we do to help him?” I asked.

“Routine and love,” the vet replied. “And when he starts to feel safe he’ll begin to heal.”

The next day we opened the gate to his outside boma (enclosure) as soon as he finished his bottle. Ithuba trotted to the threshold, nose high to catch the scents, but he didn’t venture any further. Two days of timid inspection followed, then he suddenly headed straight for a tyre lying close

Thabo and Ntombi, now all grown up, go for a stroll with Françoise and her dogs, Gin and Gypsy.

to his open door. He sniffed it with great interest, then gave it a headbutt and tossed it over his head. He was so surprised! It landed with such a thump that he bolted back to his room. Two steps forward, one step back.

Slowly Ithuba’s nightmares became less frequent. His insecurity faded



SLOWLY ITHUBA’S NIGHTMARES BECAME LESS FREQUENT AND HIS INSECURITIES FADED AWAY.

and his appetite exploded. In three months, he doubled his weight and turned into a happy little rhino tank.

With size and confidence he gave himself the job of Quality Control Inspector, and proceeded to expose every construction weakness in the orphanage, usually smashing his way through to prove his point. Soon every door, lock and barrier had been tested, and strengthened and repaired, and no rhino calf was ever going to break out.

Which was just as well, because his days of being the orphanage's only calf were fast coming to an end.

By the beginning of 2016 we had taken in six rhino calves and one baby elephant. We had achieved so much. And for the first time since Lawrence died, I began to feel that all the fires had been put out and I could focus on the animals and the reserve ... and growing Lawrence's legacy.


Françoise Malby-Anthony continues to run Thula Thula, where she acknowledges that there is always more to do to protect the animals. Elephants are poached for their ivory. Hippos are killed for their meat and teeth. And rhinos are being wiped out for their horns. Rhino horn is prized for its medicinal value—which is largely fictitious. Yet, when a poacher sees a rhino, all he sees is money.

In February 2017, five armed men invaded Thula Thula, looking for rhino horn. They killed one rhino,

fatally wounded another and assaulted one of the Thula Thula caregivers. The attack forced Françoise to temporarily close down her orphanage and motivated her to build up her security operation yet again. But, giving up was never in her genes. "I have learnt to hold on to my dreams, always to search for the silver lining," she says, "and that by looking forward the difficulties of the past eventually fade out of sight."

As of last report, Thula Thula's herd of elephants has grown to 29 and counting. The orphanage has been expanded into a rescue and rehabilitation centre for wounded or orphaned wildlife. The elephant Tom is alive and well. Thabo and Ntombi are 10 years old and a happy, inseparable couple. "I'm impatiently waiting for them to make me a rhino granny," Françoise says.

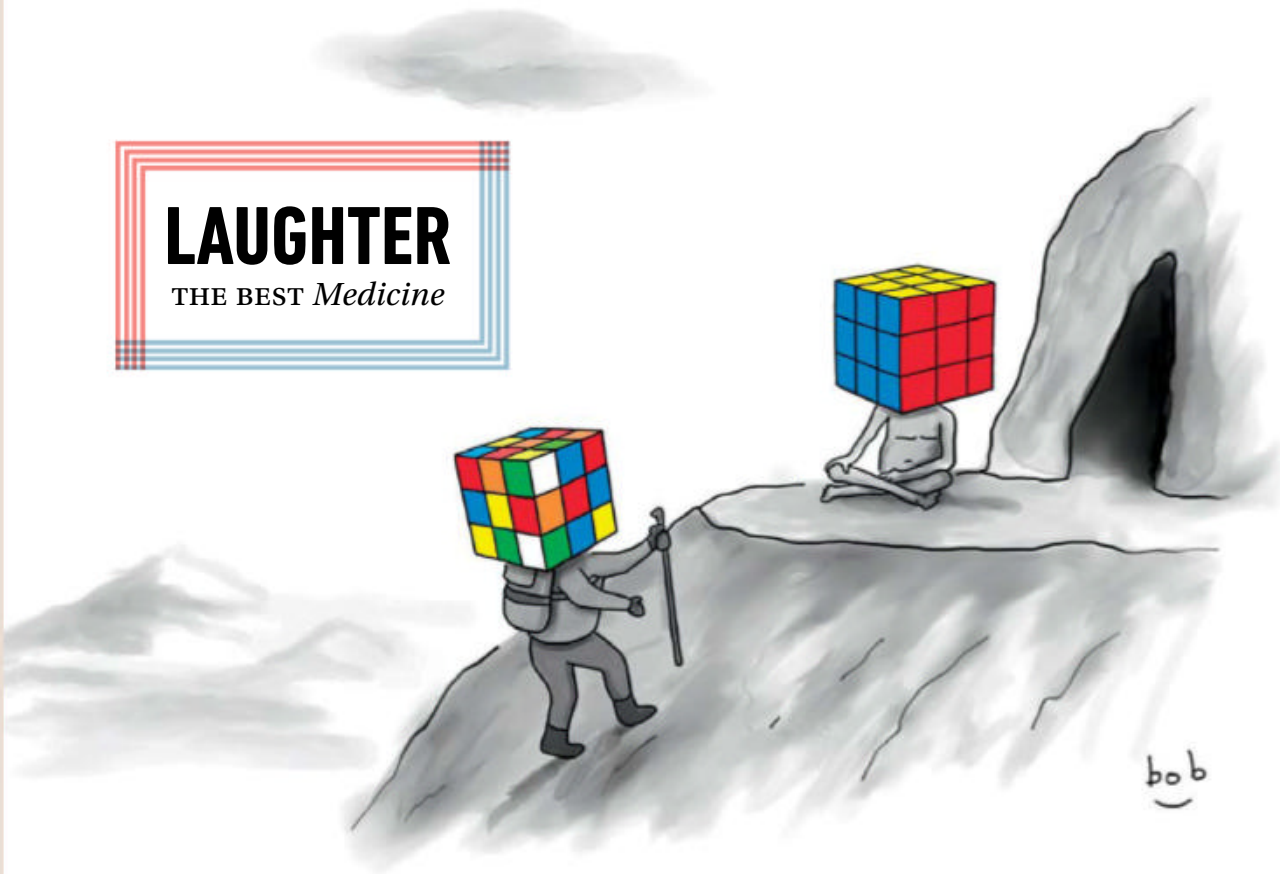
In addition to the main guest-lodge, there is now a volunteer academy near the rehabilitation centre where people from all over the world can learn the ways of the African bush and the value of conservation for the well-being of themselves and the planet.

Thula Thula is just about to be expanded by 2,500 hectares. "We are turning Lawrence's vision of creating a huge conservation area into a growing, sustainable legacy for generations to come," Françoise says. 

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LAUGHTER

THE BEST *Medicine*



A kindergarten teacher was telling her students about different kinds of animals.

“Whales are the largest,” she said, “but they cannot swallow people, because their throats are too small.”

“But in the Bible, it says that Jonah was

swallowed by a whale,” said a little girl.

“You can’t always believe what you read,” the teacher replied.

“Well, when I go to heaven,” said the little girl, “I’ll ask Jonah.”

“And what if Jonah didn’t go to heaven?”

“Then you can ask him.”

—Submitted by
BETTY ALEXANDER

What does a dyslexic, agnostic insomniac do at night? He stays up wondering if there really is a dog.

—*businessinsider.com*

It’s such poor planning that ‘ninja’ doesn’t have at least one silent letter.

— @UNFITZ

I was in a job interview today. The interviewer handed me his laptop

CARTOON BY *Bob Eckstein*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: NG 186, JAN VAN EYCK (ACTIVE 1422; DIED 1441), THE ARNOLFINI PORTRAIT 1434, COURTESY NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON. COURTESY COVID CLASSICS. COURTESY PAUL DIMATTIA. RD PHOTO STUDIO. 670, JOHANNES VERMEER, GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING 1665, COURTESY MAURITSHUIS, THE HAGUE

and said, "I want you to try to sell this to me." So I put it under my arm, walked out of the building, and went home. Eventually he called and demanded, "Bring it back here right now!" I said, "Three hundred bucks and it's yours."

—*blog.zoominfo.com*

Market Fresh

Did you hear how they caught the great produce bandit? He stopped to take a leek.

—*Submitted by*

ANDREW MCCAMMON

◆ A vegan said to me, "People who sell meat are gross!" I said, "People who sell fruit and veg are grocer."

—ADELE CLIFF, *comedian*

A pigeon was anxiously pacing up and down the street when he saw his friend hop up on the curb. "Where have you been?" he asked. "I've been waiting here for hours."

DIY MASTERPIECES

The Getty Museum in Los Angeles challenged people to recreate famous works of art with things lying around their homes. Here are two of our favourites.



—*sadanduseless.com*

"Sorry I'm late," his friend replied. "It was just such a nice day, I thought I'd walk."

—*thayerbirding.com*

Reader's Digest will pay for your funny anecdote or photo in any of our humour sections. Post it to the editorial address, or email: editor.india@rd.com

Living the Dream

High on the success of *Gully Boy*, actor Vijay Varma speaks on how he got into acting and why he is not afraid to play darker roles

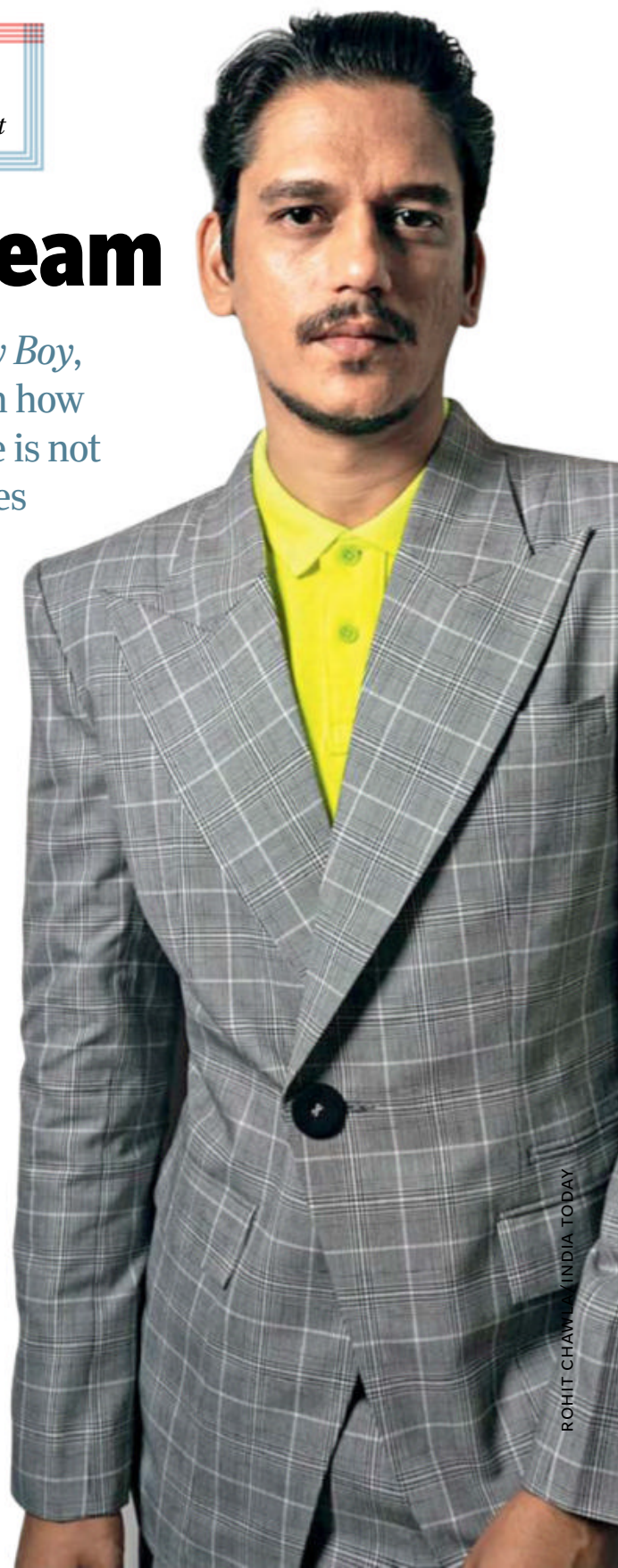
BY *Suhani Singh*

“What drew you to acting?”

I was doing everything I could to not work in the family business. I tried my hand at fashion design, events, sales and marketing, software engineering—even tried being a tattoo artist! I either enjoyed each experience or failed badly at it. My mind and heart lay in acting, but it was impossible to admit it to myself, or to tell another soul that I wanted to be an actor. It was a secret fantasy I harboured—not even a dream at that time.

How much would you credit the Film & Television Institute of India (FTII) for turning that fantasy into reality?

FTII opened a window for me. It was a great accident. Their acting course restarted after almost two decades just when I was trying to find myself. I



saw an ad in the newspaper inviting applications—that clip became my lottery ticket. I'd gone to Pune without any prior acting experience and applied but didn't get through in the first attempt. The rejection hit me really hard. Back in Hyderabad I joined a theatre group—Sutradhar—where Vinay Varma, my teacher and mentor, gave me a platform and taught me the discipline required to become an actor. I did five plays in eight to nine months, which is a lot for an amateur actor. I left everything else I was doing and submerged myself into it fully. The goal was to apply to FTII again. This time, I got through.

Has life changed drastically post the success of *Gully Boy*?

Everything I wanted—that I had waited patiently for—happened after *Gully Boy*: getting more work, having the luxury and privilege to choose jobs and support my family. It made life a much better experience. I am an introvert and I don't like to ask for work, but things are somehow manifesting.

From Ankit in *Pink* to Sasya in the web series *She*, you've done your share of dark characters.

I am not scared of doing negative characters. If they speak to me, I will do it. The further away the character is from who you are, the better it is to perform. I want to be part of the

cinematic universe of film-makers such as Shoojit Sircar, Zoya Akhtar, Imtiaz Ali. It's why I play supporting parts in *Super 30* and *Baaghi 3*—so long as my character has an interesting arc, the length is not important.

EVERYTHING THAT I WANTED—THAT I WAITED PATIENTLY FOR—HAPPENED AFTER *GULLY BOY*.

Many actors today shuttle between streaming shows and films. Do you also want to strike that balance?

I've split my time between the two formats. *She* was my first release on the web and now I have a few more lined up. I am still figuring things out. I want to do work that engages and challenges me—scares me even. The priority is to work with really good directors.

Tell us about your current projects.

There's *Hurdang*, a film—set against the Mandal Commission protests—about the conflict between love and duty. Then there's the second season of *Mirzapur*, *A Suitable Boy* and a sci-fi comedy that's unlike anything attempted before. It's going to be nuts—a gamble even, but the best one I have ever taken. I look forward to resuming work for *Fallen*, directed by Reema Kagti, too. **R**”

RD RECOMMENDS

Films

ENGLISH: Celebrate the spirit of horror this Halloween with the latest offerings from Amazon Prime Video. **WELCOME TO THE BLUMHOUSE** is an anthology of eight horror movies, four of which will stream from 6 October. **The Lie**, written and directed by Veena Sud, is a tale of deception in which a teenage girl's parents desperately try to cover up for and hide their daughter's heinous crime, after she admits to killing her friend. Emmanuel Osei-Kuffour Jr's **Black Box** revolves around an amnesiac man who starts to question his identity after participating in a painful experiment following his wife's death in an ac-



Poster for Amazon Prime's *Welcome to the Blumhouse*

cident. The following week will see the premiere of Priyanka Chopra Jonas' **Evil Eye** on 13 October, in which an apparently perfect romance turns night-

marish when a mother starts believing that her daughter's new boyfriend shares a hideous connection to her own past. The same day will see Zu Quirke's debut

film *Nocturne*, where a music student starts to outperform her twin sister at an elite music academy, when she suddenly comes in the possession of a mysterious notebook that once belonged to a recently deceased classmate.

HINDI: Comedy buffs can catch Nachiket Samant's **COMEDY COUPLE**, streaming on ZEE5 on 21 October. Starring Saqib Saleem and Shweta Basu Prasad, this rom-com is set against the stand-up comedy scene in Gurugram. In it, a rising comic duo—and real-life couple—Zoya and Deep—grapple with personal and professional conundrums when one of their acts goes viral.

Saqib Saleem and Shweta Basu Prasad in *Comedy Couple*



#WATCHLIST: ON OUR RADAR

Mirzapur Season 2: The much-awaited second season of the crime drama *Mirzapur* will stream on Amazon

Prime from 23 October. With a star-studded cast featuring Ali Fazal, Pankaj Tripathi and Shweta Tripathi, this season will see the gangster Guddu on a quest for revenge against Munna (played

by Divyendu Sharma), who killed his brother and wife at the end of the first season.

Poison 2: Revenge also plays a key role in this thriller series, releasing on ZEE5 on 16 October. Sex, lies, money, gambling and more promise to complicate and muddle waters even further. Starring Aftab Shivdasani, Raai Laxmi, Pooja Chopra, Zain Imam, Vin Rana and Asmita Sood.



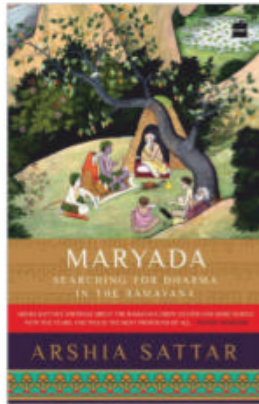
Pankaj Tripathi in *Mirzapur Season 1*

A still from *Space Force*

Books

Maryada: Searching for Dharma in the Ramayana by Arshia Sattar, HarperCollins Publishers India

Renowned *Ramayana* scholar Arshia Sattar explores the existential and philosophical conundrums in the concepts of *maryada* (dignity) and dharma in her latest book. Although Rama is identified as the *maryada* (which carries the dual meanings of 'boundary' and 'propriety of moral conduct) *purushottam* (epitome), the ideal set by Rama is never touted as absolute. The epic shows that there is no one standard of right action. Nor is dharma posited as

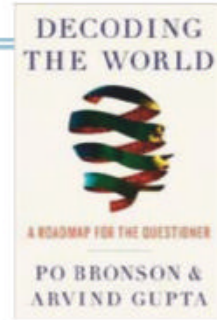


something so lofty as to be unattainable by ordinary humans.

In this book, Sattar shows how the epic inspires readers to seek their own dharma, and why, in this quest, we are as likely to be right as wrong.



YOU MAY ALSO LIKE ... **A Song for the Dark Times** by Ian Rankin (Hachette): In Rankin's latest detective Rebus novel, the inspector is faced with a dilemma: Should he be a detective or a father? As his daughter gets embroiled in her husband's disappearance, Rebus fears that she will become the prime suspect. But the truth may be one the sleuth may not want revealed at all.



Scope Out

Decoding the World (Hachette): Silicon Valley venture capitalists Po Bronson and Arvind Gupta decode daily newspaper headlines to provide a very unique and entertaining view of the world.

Betrayed by Hope (HarperCollins): Namita Gokhale and Malashri Lal's play-script, based on the letters of the maverick Bengali poet Michael Madhusudan Dutt, explores the turbulent inner life of the poet.

The Neil Gaiman Reader (Hachette): Devoted readers select excerpts from the novels, and nearly 50 short stories, of the master storyteller.

Moviemaker

Tigmanshu Dhulia



An award-winning, film-industry veteran, Tigmanshu Dhulia is a man who dons many hats. There's hardly any aspect of the film-making business he hasn't been involved in, since the late '90s. Surprisingly, Dhulia's realization that he was "very bad" at acting—despite his National School of Drama training—helped redirect his focus to other cinematic crafts, including writing dialogue, which he did for the 1998 hit, *Dil Se*.

Dhulia shows preference for crime stories while also investigating

the sociocultural, political and caste-based fault lines that instigate such violence. He also favours the Chambal, which is the setting for a number of his movies.

The director returned to acting with *Gangs of Wasseypur*, in which he was lauded for his portrayal of Ramadhir Singh. He has since acted in more films—*Shahid*, *Manjhi* and most recently, *Raat Akeli Hai*. It seems there's little left for this virtuoso to achieve or add to his expansive repertoire, but whatever it may be, we can't wait to find out.

THROWBACK

Milestones in films, sports and publishing

◆ **The premiere of *Dr. No*:** The first James Bond film, starring Sean Connery in the leading role, releases in the UK on 5 October 1962.

◆ **A milestone for Sachin Tendulkar:** On 17 October 2008, Sachin Tendulkar becomes the highest run-scorer in Test cricket, toppling Brian Lara's record, in a match against Australia.

◆ ***Gulliver's Travels* is published:** Jonathan Swift's iconic novel sees the light of day on 26 October 1726. Its popularity has been such that it has never been out of print.

—COMPILED BY SAPTAK CHOUDHURY

REVIEW

A Musical Affair

The sublime songs are the saving grace of the otherwise terrible *Bandish Bandits*

BY Farah Yameen

BANDISH BANDITS is a 10-episode saga of a musical family, their prodigally musical son, his forbidden and reluctant affair with pop music and every tchotchke of the great Indian soap that makes an appearance at predictable intervals.

The conscientious grandson of the impoverished head of the Jodhpur gharana meets an entitled pop star, and the tired friction between classical and pop music is immediately called to service. Every Bollywood cliché of the uncompromising classical maestro is thrown into Naseeruddin Shah's



The cast of *Bandish Bandits*

character, coupled with a healthy dose of male toxicity. The rest of the family, meanwhile, suffers silently, scrambling to protect his fragile pride and honour.

Sheeba Chaddha and Atul Kulkarni, both spectacular actors in their own right, simply cannot save the day as new characters keep entering and exiting a story that moves only through the contrivance of crises. The lead actors, Ritwik Bhowmik and Shreya Chaudhry, on the other hand, go through their artistic journeys and passionate love affair most unconvincingly.

Luckily, the musical arc of the story is directed by the Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy trio. The second episode has a lovely Kabir rendition by Shankar Mahadevan; Pt Ajoy Chakrabarty's rendition of *Garaj Garaj* and Mahadevan's vocals in Sameer Samant's *Virah* are quite delightful. Although the love affairs, the overwrought drama and artist stand-offs fail to move, the music delivers even when the story doesn't. The ending has set the stage for a possible sequel, but so far, the music seems to be the only thing worth looking forward to. **R**



Facing the Beast

by

K. G. Subramanyan

Gouache on paper,
44 x 51.7 inches, 2010

MANY WORKS of the late artist and Padma-Vibhushan awardee, K. G. Subramanyan, juxtapose mythical figures with real-life ones to offer a unique, unconven-

tional interpretation. In a 2014 interview, Subramanyan tells art historian R. Siva Kumar that he saw himself as a fabulist who transformed images, making them “float, fly, perform, tell a visual story”—all by taking inspiration from ordinary landscapes in towns and villages.

His role is well exhibited in this piece, which heralds the festive season as well. It portrays the goddess Durga descending from

above, surrounded by a flock of birds, to face the buffalo, which represents a “negative power or inertia,” the artist says. The picture has an airy quality to it—especially with the absence of the asura and Durga’s cohort—imparting the sense of a young woman and the pecking birds ‘taming’ the beast rather than ‘slaying’ it, bringing together a divine notion and a commonplace one. **R**

— BY SAPTAK CHOUDHURY

ME & MY SHELF

Mumbai-born **Dharini Bhaskar** was formerly the editorial director of Simon & Schuster India. Her debut novel *These, Our Bodies, Possessed by Light* (2019) has been shortlisted for the 2020 JCB Prize for Literature and the Valley of Words Book Awards, 2020.



Nox

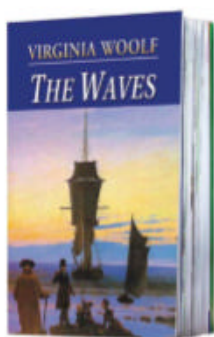
BY ANNE CARSON, *New Directions*, ₹3,639

Of all of Anne Carson's remarkable creations, *Nox* is by far the most awe-inspiring. An elegy to a dead sibling, a genre-defying meditation on loss, an ode to language, an artefact (ah, the accordion folds of the book!)—*Nox* is a world unto itself.

The Waves

BY VIRGINIA WOOLF, *Peacock Books*, ₹195
Are words music?

When Virginia Woolf is the conductor, they certainly are—and no novel highlights this more powerfully than *The Waves*. Each sentence sings; for instance: "I am the foam that sweeps and fills the uttermost rims



of the rocks with whiteness; I am also a girl, here in this room."

Ulysses

BY JAMES JOYCE, *Wordsworth Classics*,

₹295 I fell in love with *Ulysses* on an island in Greece, when I, along with a friend, read aloud each page. What the book achieves is mind-boggling—it experiments wildly with time and space, and infuses new life into the English language. And who can forget Molly Bloom's soliloquy and Gerty MacDowell's confessions?

A Literate Passion: Letters of Anaïs Nin and Henry Miller, 1932–1953, Houghton Mifflin

Harcourt, ₹1,844 A magnificent epistolary collection, spanning more than two decades, *A Literate Passion* chronicles the tumultuous relation-

ship of Anaïs Nin and Henry Miller. These are letters infused with passion; that are unafraid to plumb the depths of love, rage and desire; that offer a window to the minds of two extraordinary writers.

The Little Prince

BY ANTOINE DE

SAINT-EXUPÉRY, *Maple*

Press, ₹95 Here is a

novella that acquires new layers of meaning with each passing year. *The Little Prince* muses

on what we have lost as

we plunge into adulthood and pursue dull pragmatism. "What is essential is invisible to the eye," the book gently reminds us.



The Continuum Concept

BY JEAN LIEDLOFF, *Da Capo Press*, ₹875

Can parenting be synonymous with joy? Jean Liedloff, through her study of the Yequana people of Venezuela, suggests it is possible if we learn to trust our children, tune in to our instincts and keep the continuum—the set of biological expectations babies and mothers come with—unbroken.

Wave: A Memoir of Life After the Tsunami

BY SONALI DERANIYAGALA, *Virago*, ₹499

When the author loses everyone she cherishes—her husband, sons, parents—to the 2004 tsunami, she confronts an abyss. "My boys," she writes, "I

don't have them to hold. What do I do with my arms?" Unflinchingly honest, *Wave* is one of the most profound books on grief I've read.

Aerogrammes: And Other Stories

BY TANIA JAMES, *Vintage*, ₹1,232

A hauntingly written collection of short stories, here's a book by an Indian-American author that moves beyond questions of diasporic angst. It considers the human condition, the isolation of our times and the fragility of all relationships.

Collected Poems

BY JACK GILBERT, *Kindle edition*, ₹1,499

Jack Gilbert's collected poems traverse love, loss, pain, solitude—but ultimately, they hold within them a sense of wonder. *We look up at the stars and they are / not there. We see memory / of when they were, once upon a time. / And that too is more than enough*, Gilbert writes. Elsewhere, he says, *We must risk delight*. Yes.

Big Wolf & Little Wolf

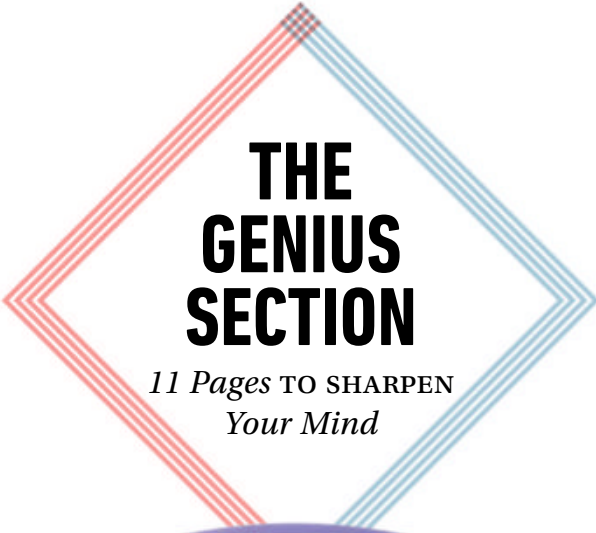
BY NADINE BRUN-COSME, *Enchanted Lion*

Books, currently unavailable One of my favourite books by one of my favourite children's book publishers, the story of a big wolf's tumble into companionship is many-layered. It is a meditation on vulnerability and loneliness, and an affirmation that sometimes there's beauty in knowing the world with another.

—COMPILED BY SAPTAK CHOUDHURY



Book prices are subject to change.



THE GENIUS SECTION

*11 Pages TO SHARPEN
Your Mind*



IN PRAISE OF HITTING REPEAT

Surprising benefits of 'Been there, done that, love it'

BY Leah Fessler

ADAPTED FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

SCROLLING THROUGH social media feeds can quickly convince you that everyone's life is more interesting than yours is. During a particularly adventurous week on Instagram some months ago, I saw waterskiing in Maui, hiking in Yosemite and swimming with wild pigs in the Bahamas. Wild pigs!

Impulsively, I started googling flights to new places, imagining adventures. Then I ordered food from the place I eat at every week and ... felt bad about not trying somewhere new.

This 'fear of missing out', or FOMO, is rooted in a common tic: Evolutionarily, we're disposed to find novel experiences more exciting and attention-grabbing than repeat experiences, according to research in the *Journal of Experimental Biology*. That's our fight-or-flight psychology at work. Because our brains can't process all the stimuli around us, we evolved to pay attention to potentially

dangerous new things more intently than to familiar things, which we've already established won't hurt us.

What's more, words such as 'repetition' tend to be associated with more negative emotions than words like 'novelty', says Michael Norton, PhD, a professor at Harvard Business School.

"Classic research shows that when we think about upcoming experiences, we think about variety," says Norton. "If I ask you right now to select a yoghurt for each day next week, you'll pick your favourite flavour—say, blueberry—a few times, but you'll mix in some strawberry and peach. Because who wants to eat that much blueberry yoghurt? Over the longer term, though, as the original experience fades in time and memory, repetition can become more pleasurable."

He adds, "We're simply more boring than we'd like to admit." Yet because few of us have the time or money to regularly indulge in new

experiences, we feel bad about our lives' monotony.

Recent research about repeat and novel experiences in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* suggests that we ought to reconsider those negative feelings. Ed O'Brien, PhD, a professor of behavioural science at the University of Chicago, Booth School of Business, launched a series of studies on the topic. Many of us happily listen to our favourite song on repeat, he notes, or rewatch favourite movies and TV shows.

"There's a general belief that if you want to seem like an interesting, cultured person, the best thing you can do is to showcase that you're open to new experiences," he says. "That may be true, but I think we take for granted the other value of really digging deep into one domain."

To test this hypothesis, O'Brien and his team exposed all participants to the same stimulus, including museum

"COFFEE WILL NEVER TASTE AS GOOD AS IT DOES IF YOU QUIT IT FOR A MONTH."

visits, movies and video games. Next, some people were asked to imagine repeating the experience, while others actually did repeat what they had done. The researchers found that across the board, participants said that repeating experiences was often far more enjoyable than they had predicted.

There is joy in repetition partly because every human mind wanders. Consequently, we miss a substantial part of every experience.

"As I'm enjoying a museum or a beer, my mind is also thinking about emails I need to send, phone calls I need to return and the name of my third-grade teacher," Norton says. "So repeating things can really be seen as another opportunity to actually experience something fully." This is especially true when the experience is complex, such as going to a museum or watching a movie, leaving ample room for continued discovery.

"Our studies show that people are too quick to assume that they've 'seen all the layers' even in those cases where they haven't," O'Brien says.

It's safe to assume there are more explorable layers in any experience, according to Ellen Langer, PhD, a




professor of psychology at Harvard University who is known as the ‘Mother of Mindfulness’. That’s because the process of looking for new insights is fulfilling in and of itself.

“When you’re noticing new things in any experience, neurons are firing, and that’s the way to become engaged,” Langer says. “All you need to do is approach whatever task is at hand by searching for the things that you didn’t see in it the first time around.”

If you’re unsure about how to be more mindful in repeat experiences, Langer offers three tips. “First, recognize that everything is always changing, so the second experience is never exactly the same as the first experience,” she says. “Second, if you’re looking for novelty, that’s itself engaging, and that engagement feels good.” And third, you must realize that events are neither positive nor negative. “It’s the way we understand events that makes them positive or negative,” she says. “So that if we look

for ways the experience is rewarding, exciting, interesting, we’re going to find evidence for that. Seek and ye shall find.”

Beyond helping us feel excited at the prospect of strolling around the neighborhood rather than jet-setting to a tropical beach, O’Brien’s research suggests we should think twice about our cultural obsession with doing and accomplishing as much as humanly possible.

“Coffee will never taste as good as it does if you quit it for a month. So it’s true that novelty is fun, but given enough of a break in between, repeat experiences regain that initial buzz,” Norton says. “This is why people do seemingly crazy things, like creating time capsules. If you looked at your third-grade report card every day, you’d get sick of it—but if you bury it in a time capsule and unearth it 20 years later, that’s fascinating.” 

The New York Times (7 November 2019), Copyright © 2019 by the New York Times, nytimes.com.



The Hardest Word to Guess in Hangman Is ...

... jazz. According to mathematician Jon McLoone, who built a computer program to simulate nearly 15 million games of hangman, players are far more likely to guess vowels than uncommon letters such as j, q, x and z. Because jazz has three uncommon letters—and shorter words give guessers fewer chances at being correct—it’s a statistically perfect word for annoying your friends.

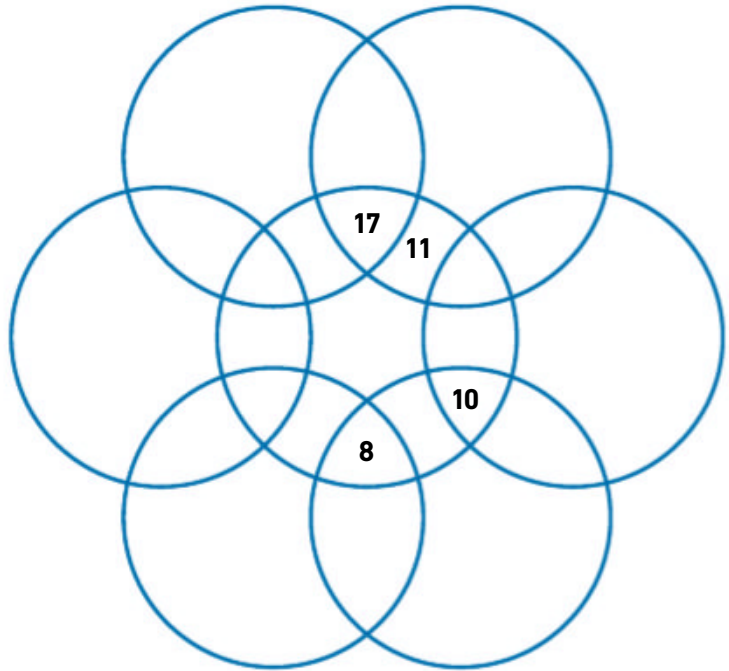
WOLFRAM.COM

BRAINTEASERS

Bubble Math

Moderately difficult

Assign a whole number between one and seven to each of the seven bubbles. Each number occurs once. The sums of some of the numbers are revealed in the areas where their bubbles overlap. Can you figure out which number goes in each bubble?



	4	1	0	2	1	1	2	1
2								
2						↙		
1			↖					
2		←				→		
1	↘				↖			
1	↗		↖					
1								
2		↗			↗			

Treasures

Easy Can you locate 12 hidden treasures in the empty cells of this grid? The numbers outside indicate how many treasures there are in each row or column. Each arrow points directly toward one or more of the treasures and does not share a cell with one. An arrow may be immediately next to a treasure it points to, or it may be further away. Not every treasure will necessarily have an arrow pointing to it.

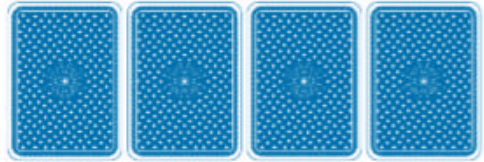
	C	C	
			A
	B		A
		A	

Set-Free

Difficult Place an A, B or C in each empty cell. No three consecutive cells in a horizontal, vertical or diagonal line may contain a set of identical letters (such as B-B-B) or a set of three different letters (such as C-A-B). Can you ensure a set-free grid?

Here's the Deal

Moderately difficult Four playing cards, one of each suit (a red heart, a red diamond, a black spade and a black club), lie in a row on a table. They are a three, a four, a six and a seven.

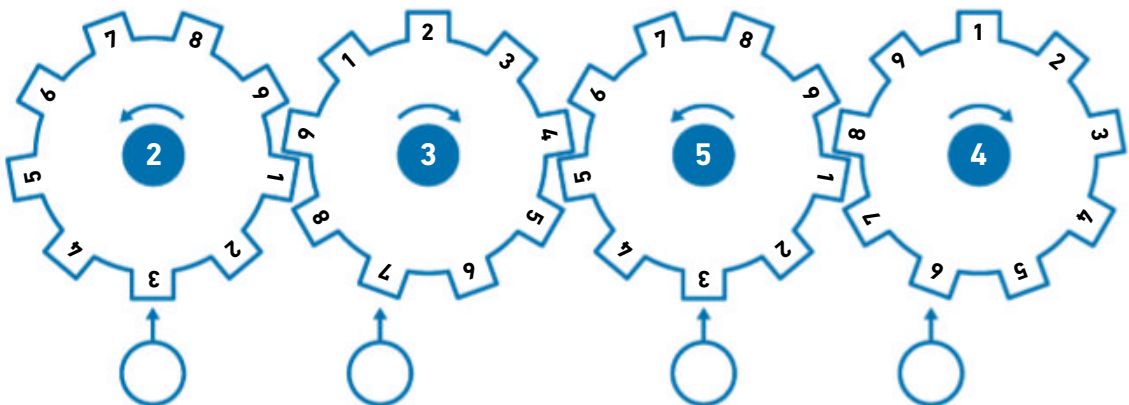


Using these clues, can you determine the cards and their order?

1. The cards on either side of the four are black.
2. The club is somewhere to the right of the three but is not next to the diamond.
3. The middle two cards add up to an even number.

Cogs

Moderately difficult These four cogs are going to help you crack a safe. Imagine you turn the first cog two teeth (protruding bumps) in an anticlockwise direction. Naturally, this motion moves the other three cogs, as well. Next, you turn the second cog three teeth in a clockwise direction. This, too, moves the other three cogs. Finally, you move the last two cogs as indicated. The four teeth that are now positioned next to the four circles reveal a four-digit safe combination; what are they?



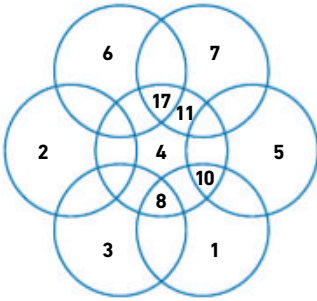
For answers, turn to PAGE 112

(SET-FREE; HERE'S THE DEAL) FRASER SIMPSON; (COGS) JEFF WIDDERICH; (PLAYING CARDS IMAGE) ISTOCK.COM/MAREK TRAWCZYNSKI

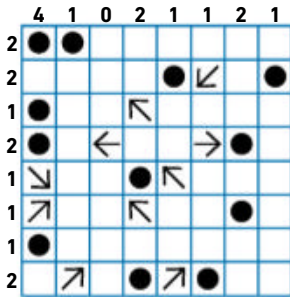
BRAINTEASERS ANSWERS

FROM PAGES 110 & 111

Bubble Math



Treasures



Set-Free

A	C	C	B
B	C	C	A
B	B	A	A
C	C	A	C

Here's the Deal

(From left to right): Three of diamonds, six of spades, four of hearts, seven of clubs.

Cogs

8, 2, 8 and 1.

JIGSAW SUDOKU

BY *Jeff Widderich*

					7		5	8
3	4		6					
5	7							1
		6		3	8	1		
4							9	6
	2				6		7	4
	5		9					

To Solve This Puzzle

Put a number from 1 to 9 in each empty square so that:

- ◆ every horizontal row and vertical column contains all nine numbers (1-9) without repeating any of them;
- ◆ each outlined, irregularly shaped zone has all nine numbers, none repeated.

SOLUTION

3	9	2	4	5	1	6	8	7
2	1	7	3	8	6	4	5	9
4	5	7	4	6	9	8	3	1
6	9	8	5	1	2	7	3	4
7	4	1	8	3	5	6	9	2
1	2	3	6	9	4	8	7	5
5	8	6	2	7	9	1	4	3
8	5	8	6	2	9	7	4	3
9	4	3	6	9	4	8	7	5


WORD POWER

All rise! This month, we're taking you to court. The law has a language all its own, as you'll witness in our quiz, and your score is contingent on your knowledge of legal lingo. After you've made your case, turn to page 114 for the verdict.

BY *Sarah Chassé*

1. bailiff *n.*

('bay-lif)

- A** law clerk.
- B** court officer.
- C** local sheriff.

2. indict *v.*

(in-'dite)

- A** prove guilt.
- B** hold in contempt.
- C** charge with a crime.

3. exculpate *v.*

('ek-skull-payt)

- A** banish from a country.
- B** settle quickly.
- C** clear of blame.

4. affidavit *n.*

(af-ih-'day-vit)

- A** written declaration.
- B** first offence.
- C** star witness.

5. perjury *n.*

('per-juh-ree)

- A** failing to appear.
- B** lying under oath.
- C** skipping jury duty.

6. sequester *v.*

(sih-'kweh-ster)

- A** cross-examine.
- B** approach the bench.
- C** isolate.

7. remand *v.*

(ri-'mand)

- A** return to custody.
- B** pay a small fine.
- C** overrule an objection.

8. docket *n.*

('daw-ket)

- A** witness stand.
- B** list of court cases.
- C** ceremonial gavel.

9. appeal *n.*

(uh-'peel)

- A** higher court's review.
- B** plea deal.
- C** damages awarded.

10. deposition *n.*

(deh-puh-'zih-shun)

- A** parole hearing.
- B** testimony.
- C** lawyer's brief.

11. negligent *adj.*

('neh-glih-jent)

- A** careless.
- B** honourable.
- C** jailed.

12. writ *n.* (rit)

- A** stenographer.
- B** formal document.
- C** judge's collar.

13. punitive *adj.*

('pew-nih-tiv)

- A** involving money.
- B** in the Constitution.
- C** related to punishment.

14. lenient *adj.*

('lee-nee-unt)

- A** merciful.
- B** biased.
- C** bankrupt.

15. presume *v.*

(prih-'zyoom)

- A** return from a recess.
- B** believe without proof.
- C** give evidence.

The Long Arm of Latin

Because ancient Roman law is the bedrock of Western legal systems, today's attorneys know a lot of Latin: for example, *mens rea* (criminal intent, or literally 'guilty mind'), *bona fide* ('in good faith'), and *in re* ('in the matter of'). Many everyday legal terms are also rooted in the dead language. *Alibi* is Latin for 'in another place', and *exonerate* is descended from *exonerare* ('to unburden').



Word Power ANSWERS

1. bailiff (B) *court officer.*

The bailiff escorted the accused man into the courtroom.

2. indict (C) *charge with a crime.* Citing the overwhelming evidence, the grand jury indicted the mobster on three counts of tax fraud.

3. exculpate (C) *clear of blame.* I'm not trying to exculpate myself—I admit that I snuck a cookie!

4. affidavit (A) *written declaration.* Anirban submitted a sworn affidavit to support his claims.

5. perjury (B) *lying under oath.* "Ladies and gentlemen, this woman has committed perjury—you can't believe anything she says," the prosecutor began.

6. sequester (C) *isolate.* Jurors were sequestered for months during the high-profile trial.

7. remand (A) *return to custody.* The defendant has been remanded to prison until her sentencing.

8. docket (B) *list of court cases.* "What's on the Supreme Court's docket this morning?" asked the reporter.

9. appeal (A) *higher court's review.* After losing the case, the defence team decided not to seek an appeal.

10. deposition (B) *testimony.* In his deposition, Colonel Mukherjee claimed that Professor Patel committed the murder.

11. negligent (A) *careless.* The negligent driver caused a three-car pile-up.

12. writ (B) *formal document.* A search warrant is a type of writ.

13. punitive (C) *related to punishment.* "Our teachers use positive reinforcement instead of punitive measures," explained the principal.

14. lenient (A) *merciful.* Charu hoped the judge would be lenient about her many parking tickets.

15. presume (B) *believe without proof.* In the American legal system, people are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Vocabulary Ratings

9 & BELOW: scofflaw

10–12: barrister

13–15: chief justice



QUIZ

BY *Paul Paquet*

1. In 2012, what became the first movie to win both the Oscar for Best Picture and France's César Award for Best Film?

2. HD 140283 is one of the most ancient of known stars, at over 13.5 billion years old. It also has what biblical name?

3. New Zealand's largest city, home to over 142,000 Maori, is known as *Tamaki Makaurau* in Maori and what in English?

4. Who built a private apartment near the top of the tower named for him and entertained Thomas Edison in it?

5. Banknote collectors call it 'banana money', after its artwork. Which country issued it in some of the territories that it

occupied during the Second World War?

6. In 2007, purported remains of which saint were found to be from an Egyptian mummy instead?

7. What app, a monster hit in 2016, has been credited with teaching Americans the metric system?

8. Cricket stars Clyde Walcott, Everton Weekes and Frank Worrell were all born in which city within 18 months of each other?

9. What singer staged a comeback with *The Emancipation of Mimi*, the second-best-selling album worldwide in 2005?

10. The unofficial *Weißwurstäquator*, or 'white sausage equator', separates Bavaria and the

south from the rest of which country?

11. Sahti is a type of beer that's traditionally flavoured with juniper. You're most likely to find it in which country?

12. Which actor won the inaugural Razzie Redeemer Award by going from a flop (*Gigli*) to hits (*Argo* and *Gone Girl*)?

13. There are an estimated 1,864 of which bear species in the wild?

14. A poorly supported, yet persistent, rumour has it that Denmark's King Christian VIII, not a shoemaker, was who's father?



15. In which national capital can you find around 2,00,000 gers (traditional round tents) alongside other kinds of housing?

Answers: 1. *The Artist*. 2. Methuselah. 3. Auckland. 4. Gustave Eiffel. 5. Japan. 6. Joan of Arc. 7. Pokémon GO. 8. Bridgetown, Barbados. 9. Mariah Carey. 10. Germany. 11. Finland. 12. Ben Affleck. 13. The giant panda. 14. Hans Christian Andersen. 15. Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

I think humour is humans' way of bonding against bad fate.

Biswa Kalyan Rath, *comic*

I have never considered compassion a finite resource.

Roxane Gay, *writer*

Our major obligation is not to mistake slogans
for solutions.

Edward R. Murrow, *journalist*



Want your brand to grow faster? Focus on consumption rather than purchase.

JAGDEEP KAPOOR, brand guru



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*In-vitro lab data on indicative organism. **AC Nielsen Data (Dec 2019) *As per Clinical Trial No. DRF/AY/5004/CT-2 carried out by Dabur India Limited. **Helps fight 7 dental problems with regular brushing.