

Reader's Digest

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OUR STORIES
AS PODCASTS

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About Tears

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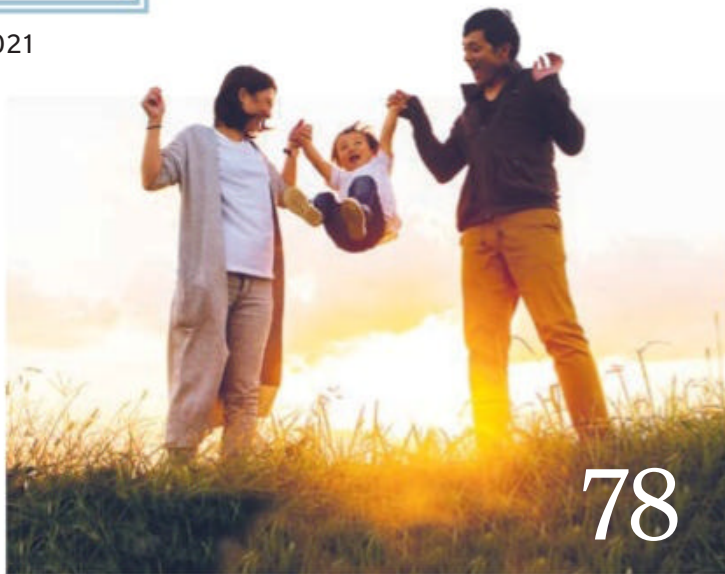
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EDITOR'S NOTE

The Moon's Future

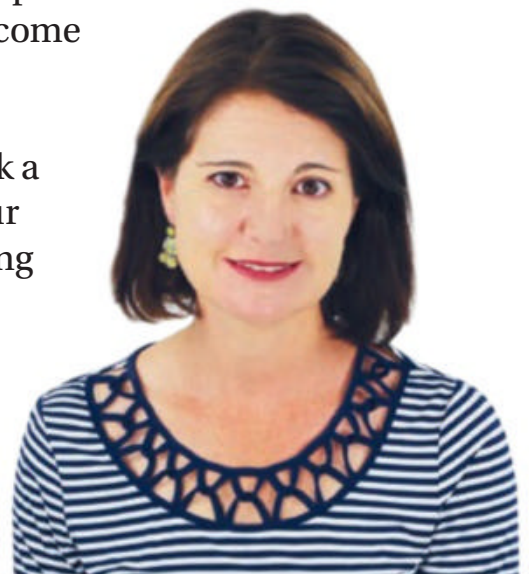
THE NEXT TIME YOU GLANCE UP into the night sky and marvel at the beauty of a full moon, try to imagine its surface cluttered with scenes of industry – scenes of mining, to be precise. Sounds like some intriguing, yet unlikely scenario from a science-fiction film? Not according to our feature ‘Saving the Moon’ (page 98). Science writer Ceridwen Dovey investigates the new space race currently taking place between space and resources companies. Their goal? To mine the moon and use its natural resources to fuel exploration of the frontiers of space. It leaves us wondering, just how much are we prepared to risk?

My favourite article, ‘You Call That a Compliment?’ (page 68), is classic Digest – funny, relatable and shareable. This compilation of short real-life stories from readers reveals some hilarious moments when, thanks to a fumbled delivery, words-of-praise end up being received as a slight. Awkward, amusing and priceless moments we’ve all experienced – and later come to see the lighter side.

These stories, and much more, are in this month’s edition. Stories guaranteed to spark a conversation between every member of your family. We hope you enjoy the many amazing stories in this month’s magazine.

Louise

LOUISE WATERSON
Editor-in-Chief



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LETTERS

Reader's Comments And Opinions

What a Surprise

I normally read my Reader's Digest from beginning to end but wasn't looking forward to 'Indonesia's Snake Bite Doctor' (March) as I don't like snakes!

To my surprise, I found the Bonus Read most interesting with some fantastic previously unknown facts.

Dr Tri Maharani – known as Maha – must have saved hundreds of lives by passing on her toxicology knowledge to other doctors.

A wonderful lady. SHIRLEY APLIN



Roany's Good Nature

Pam Houston's story 'He Trots the Air' (February) brought tears to my eyes. It so beautifully and eloquently reflected her love, respect and compassion for her horse, Roany, and his intelligence and loyalty to Pam. I felt like I was experiencing Roany's life and dignified ending first-hand. COLLEEN J. ATKINSON

Sustainable Vehicles

The race to reduce landfill is being won by Dutch researchers who have developed an electric car made from recycled waste (News Worth Sharing, March). This means sustainable vehicles could soon become a fact instead of science fiction – an exciting look at what our world might look like.

Let us know if you are moved – or provoked – by any item in the magazine, share your thoughts. See page 8 for how to join the discussion.

The only road block standing in our way is ourselves.

MICHAEL WOUTERS

Words to Live By

‘An article a day...’ used to be part of the tag line of Reader’s Digest and to date I am sticking to that. I read just one article a day so that the magazine lasts till I receive my copy for the next month. It gives me pleasure and satisfaction to keep it by my bedside and read it before I go to sleep. SALEEM RAZA

Broader Horizons

I have been a reader and subscriber of Reader’s Digest for at least 50 years. At the age of 14, I left my home in Staffordshire, England, during the school holidays and caught a train to my



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YELLO?

We asked you to think up a clever caption for this photo.

I would really have preferred an Apple phone.

JINI GREEN

Always a fruitful call!

LEONARD MERRIFIELD

That banana is not real.

It’s a phoney.

LEIGH DUFFETT

Peel-Free to Dial me!

KAMALRAJ RASAMANICKAM

This phone is for monkey business only.

PATRICIA LONG

Congratulations to this month’s winner, Jini Green.



CAPTION CONTEST

Come up with the funniest caption for the above photo and you could win

\$100. To enter, email

asiaeditor@readersdigest.com.au

or see details on page 8.

READER'S DIGEST

grandmother's place who lived in the south of London. Before catching the train, I bought a copy of Reader's Digest from a small shop.

Over the years I have been fortunate enough to travel to many parts of the world and in most cases have taken the latest edition of Reader's Digest with me.

The magazine has given me a wider outlook on life as the articles cover so many different areas that influence a life. I will continue to look forward to future editions.

MIKE HILTON

Saving Species

Your excellent articles, 'Tracking the Tiger Butcher' (February) and 'Pooches versus Poachers' (March), give encouragement that all is not lost when it comes to the environment. Commitment and courage are being harnessed to save endangered species.

EULALIE HOLMAN

Family Finance

The article in your Parenting section, 'Navigating the Money Lesson' (February) has really taught and provoked me to rescript my approach to money. As I am going to start my family life by getting married in the near future, the article helped me realise that I have to deal with financial matters along with my family.

AAMIR PERVAIZW

CONTRIBUTE



READERSDIGESTASIA

Anecdotes and jokes

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Send in your real-life laugh for Life's Like That or All in a Day's Work. Got a joke? Send it in for Laughter is the Best Medicine!

Smart Animals

Up to \$100

Share antics of unique pets or wildlife in up to 300 words.

My Story **\$250**

Do you have an inspiring or life-changing tale to tell? Submissions must be true, unpublished, original and 800-1000 words.

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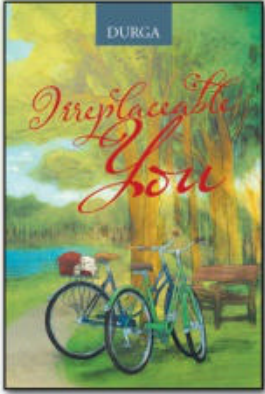
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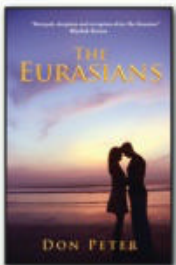
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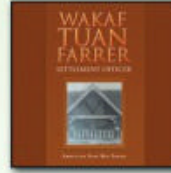
Suhana and Jin are polar opposites, however, they balance out one another with their dissimilar personalities. Hana sooner or later, realizes that her mutual feelings for Jin had developed from admiring him as a friend into a romantic emotion. A roller coaster of anger, confusion; sorrow. The heartbroken friends progresses on a rocky journey about life, family matters, newfound love and remorse.



The Eurasians Don Peter

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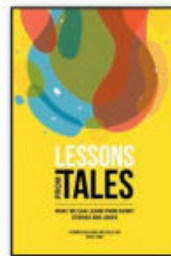
A man end up in Borneo with no intention of staying until he find the woman to love. He is wooed by the wonders of the island environment. A first ever English romance-thriller from Borneo.



Wakaf Tuan Farrer Settlement Officer Abdullah Sani Bin Ismail

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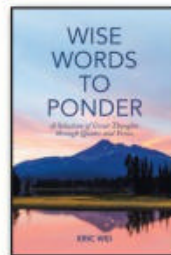
In his life as the founder of settlements, Abdullah Sani Bin Ismail chanced to be in all sorts of characters, gathered experiences and heard stories. This book reveals it all.



Lessons From Tales *What We Can Learn From Short Stories And Jokes* Eric Wei

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Lessons From Tales is a compilation of 180 meaningful short stories and jokes with underlying insights or lessons you can learn from.



Wise Words to Ponder *A Selection of Great Thoughts through Quotes and Verses* Eric Wei

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Meant to inspire and uplift, *Wise Words To Ponder* is a selection of more than 700 wise and witty sayings through quotes and verses.

NEWS WORTH SHARING



Feeling Stressed? Try Watching a Cute Animal Video

Do you get captivated by cute videos of cats and dogs on the internet? Watching them may actually be doing you some good. Scientists already knew that hanging out with pets in real life can relieve stress, but now a small UK study suggests that watching adorable animals on a screen can trigger a similar effect on your heart rate and blood

pressure. Subjects watched videos of quokkas, a small but engaging marsupial, but YouTube has countless sweet videos of a variety of animals, from puppies to piglets and pandas and even baby hippos. The next time you're feeling a bit anxious, spending some time online with these cute creatures might help you relax.

COMPILED BY VICTORIA POLZOT

Sensory Room Improves Inclusivity

Holidays provide a wonderful break from routine. However, for families with children on the autism spectrum, the sudden absence of all things familiar and the disturbance to routine can be unsettling and overwhelming.

The Reilly Room Project was founded by special education teacher Gail Watts in honour of her son Reilly, who lived with Asperger's Syndrome and passed away in 2018. Watts wanted to establish more inclusive holiday settings for people with autism. The Big4 Adventure Resort in the Whitsundays has become the fourth in Australia to incorporate a Reilly Room in their holiday park.

Designed by Watts, the sensory room has all the features expected in an autism-specific educational setting such as a hammock, weighted blankets, calming music, a variety of tactile experiences and a toy box.

Whitsunday regional councillor, Jan Clifford, says that she hopes this spreads to other properties and organisations.



Kiwi Designs Skylight That Desalinates Water

Drinking water is scarce for the 110,000 families living in shanty towns along Chile's coast. Windows are also often boarded up which removes almost all natural light. But not for much longer.

New Zealander Henry Glogau, who recently graduated with a masters degree specialising in architecture for extreme conditions, wanted to create a sustainable, passive, and striking feature inside the dark homes, and has designed a solar-powered lighting fixture that desalinates water. Inexpensive to manufacture, one light can purify 440 ml of water per day, and the leftover brine is used in batteries that power an LED light.

Glogau's invention is one of six finalists in this year's Lexus Design Award. Even if he doesn't win, his device has already won the hearts of Chileans.

MY STORY

Shocking Secret of the Gown

*A childhood act of mischief leads to
almost half a century of guilt and sadness*

BY Patricia Scott

My aunties all said my mother was a very beautiful debutante; shy, demure and dressed in the most exquisite lace gown.

As the partner chosen by her parents to escort her to the 1938 Debutante Ball at St Margaret's College, my father fell in love with her that night and eventually they married, and the rest is the unfolding history of our family.

But my story is about my mother's beautiful ball gown.

She had carefully wrapped it in tissue paper and placed it in a cardboard box – carried from house to house in Christchurch, as over the years my parents had upgraded their dwellings – and it was hidden away in a top cupboard. From time to time it would be lifted out of its box and shown to us, and as small girls we would ogle over it and imagine the day when we might

be allowed to try it on. That never happened.

The top cupboard where the dress was stored happened to be in my bedroom in the Knowles Street house. One day, when I was around the age of nine or ten, I climbed up on a chair and reached into the cupboard and took down the box containing the beautiful dress.

I placed the box on my bed and lifted the lid off and carefully, full of breathless anticipation, unfolded the tissue paper to reveal the lacy gown. Tentatively, I fingered the white lace, then carefully lifted the dress from the box, letting it unravel itself until it unfolded floor-length. I had an irrepressible urge to try it on. My mother was not at home, so I had time.

I quickly undressed and then pulled the gown over my head, easing it down over my girlish frame. I was tall for my age and it was not overly long on me. My mother's waist must have been extremely tiny as it fitted my waist with little room to spare.

Then I found the little jacket and

put that on. It had puffed sleeves and a little Peter Pan collar and fastened with a hook and eye at the neck. I entered my mother's bedroom to view myself in her long mirror. A long pause of mesmerised examination ensued as I looked at myself in the gown from all sides. I felt like a princess and convinced myself that I looked like a princess too, gawky and unattractive though I was.

I looked at the cute little flap falling from the waist at the back. Then at the large appliqué floral pattern on the front of the dress, the spider web pattern of the lace

broken at intervals by the creamy satin ribbon which was sewn horizontally across the fabric. The satin lining and the little domed placket at the side were all exquisitely sewn by

FROM TIME TO TIME, I'D TAKE DOWN THE GOWN FROM THE WARDROBE

a dressmaker, on a treadle sewing machine. It was so beautiful.

Suddenly, reality hit, and I realised that my mother would be home soon, so I hurriedly undressed and placed the gown carefully back in the cardboard box among the tissue paper, put on the lid and placed the box back on the upper shelf in my wardrobe. Mum came home soon after.

From time to time, I would take down the gown from the wardrobe and try it on and daydream – until

Patricia Scott, now retired, lives in Whangarei, New Zealand. She is keen on writing and is part of a writer's group. She also enjoys making personalised, humorous cards for her friends, and gardening.

one awful day disaster struck. I accidentally spilt a bottle of ink over the bottom of the dress and the lining. I was shocked and scared. I knew I would be in big trouble should my mother discover it. It didn't occur to me to try to remove the stain. Instead, shaken and trembling, I stuffed it into the box and shoved it back onto the wardrobe shelf, never to be tampered with again, and never, never, never to be forgotten.

I lived with the dread throughout my teenage years that it would eventually be discovered with traumatic consequences.

At 21, I moved to Auckland, married, and got on with my life. The years passed into decades and my mother grew old and became ill. She lived alone in Christchurch now and was not managing, so I made the decision that she would come to live in a nursing home near me.

As she was still in hospital, it fell to me to sort through and move her belongings. I uncovered so many memories as I pulled out box after box, for my mother never threw anything away. She had kept all the cards and letters we had sent her, ornaments and presents and all of her beautiful dresses.

Finally, I came to the familiar box, now much tattier, and opened it.

There was the beautiful gown with the dreadful ink stain. My heart sank in sorrow for my mother. I was overwhelmed with terrible guilt and sadness. I put it aside to bring with us, along with mum's other treasures.

As she was leaving Christchurch probably forever, I decided to arrange an afternoon tea with a group of

her closest friends.

We had a wonderful time and Mum and her friends reminisced about their past days. Somehow the conversation turned to the debutante dress and my mother said

she never could understand how it got a terrible ink stain on it.

Suddenly, at the age of 60, I found myself in front of my mother and her dearest and oldest friends - owning up, red-faced, the culprit, guilt and shame washing over me. I was so embarrassed and stunned that my worst fear was finally being realised that I don't remember the outcome.

I am sure my mother would have forgiven me, as mothers do, and at last I was released from that awful secret carried deep inside me from my childhood. It was never mentioned again.

I KNEW I'D BE IN BIG TROUBLE SHOULD MY MOTHER DISCOVER IT

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SMART ANIMALS

*Interaction between humans and animals
leads to special moments*



Four Little Ducks

REBECCA JULIAN

Last October, my husband and I travelled an hour or so from our home to attend his uncle's funeral. It was a very hot day so we decided to pull into a fast food restaurant to freshen up before the service.

The restaurant carpark covered quite an expanse and had several

pedestrian crossings, one of which was located close to where the carpark backs on to a childcare centre. My husband stopped at this crossing but from the passenger's

You could earn cash by telling us about the antics of unique pets or wildlife. Turn to page 8 for details on how to contribute.

seat I could not see why. There were no people crossing and I told him to move on and park. He suggested I look over the dashboard and what I saw was delightful.

A father wood duck (judging by the markings on the wings) was crossing with four little ducklings in tow. The mother duck waited patiently but noisily by the side of the crossing for the last of the ducklings to waddle off before following. They headed straight for the bushes near the childcare centre, no doubt bringing much joy to the children watching from behind the fence. It was lovely to see that, regardless of the species, all parents look out for their young.

Appreciate the Help

JENNIFER FYN

Returning home from a fortnight's holiday, we noticed there had been a lot of rain in our area. As I was checking out some post holes that my husband, Peter, had dug, I noticed that they were a quarter full with rain. I was surprised to see that a little hedgehog had fallen into one of them. I am still amazed that he did not drown. Peter put some gloves on, reached in and pulled the poor thing out. It was quite late in the evening so we put him near the compost heap and gave him some chopped-up lettuce and some water, although I'm not sure he needed any more water. The next morning



when Peter went out to check on the hedgehog, he was nowhere to be seen.

We didn't see him again until six months later. It was about 8pm when I heard an unusual grunt and light knocking at the front door. I peered outside, and to my astonishment, there was the hedgehog. I opened the door just a little and he barged straight in. I had read somewhere that hedgehogs carry hydatid tapeworm so I tried to edge him out, I didn't want him walking on my carpet.

The children, on the other hand, were quite excited because usually hedgehogs roll up into balls if you touch them. However, this little fellow did not. After sticking around for a few minutes, he ambled off. I came to the conclusion that he had popped in to thank us for saving him.



Grieving the Loss of a Pet

Allow yourself time to experience feelings of sorrow

BY Dr Katrina Warren

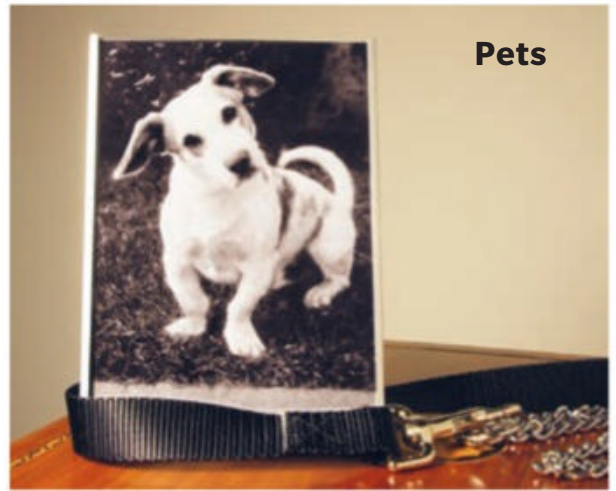


Our regular pet columnist, Dr Katrina Warren, is an established and trusted animal expert.

PETS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR LIVES, providing great companionship and unconditional love. We find so much joy in our relationship with our pets that it is normal to feel intense grief when a pet dies and that special bond is broken. Veterinarian Dr Katrina Warren shares her advice on dealing with the loss of a beloved pet.

DIFFERENT STAGES OF GRIEF It takes time to recover from the death of a pet. You may experience a range of feelings, from sadness to anger, denial to guilt, despair to pure sorrow for a long time. Our sadness is a testament to how much we love and care for our pets. Not everyone experiences grief in the same way, so it's important that you take as much time as you need to process your own personal range of emotions.

TALK TO A SYMPATHETIC LISTENER Pets are increasingly viewed as important family members, so it's not surprising many people view the loss of their pet as comparable to, or even harder, than losing a human friend or relative. For many people, talking to a sympathetic listener can help them accept their loss. Seek help from those who understand or have experienced your emotions and seek professional help if necessary.



Love for your pet doesn't have to end when their life ends

NOT JUST A PET Learning to live without your pet by your side is hard enough, but to make matters worse, sometimes it can be difficult for people who have never owned a pet to understand how much our pets mean to us. You might hear dismissive, ignorant comments such as 'it's just an animal', 'you'll get over it', or 'go get another one'. Your pet is an important part of who you are, and you have every right to grieve.

CONSIDER A CEREMONY The love you feel for your pet never has to end, and they can live on in your heart and memory forever. Although you miss them deeply, it can be helpful to honour them and celebrate the wonderful times you spent together. Many people choose to hold some sort of ceremony. There is no 'one size fits all' response to death and loss. You might have a simple and personal

ceremony between intimate family members and friends, or a bigger, more celebratory occasion that involves a wider circle of friends and, in the case of dogs especially, their friends from the neighbourhood and park. For some of us, having a larger ceremony is a way to express how much a pet is a central part of daily life.

Compiling and printing a picture book of favourite photos of your pet can be another way of remembering them.

CREATING A CEREMONY TO HONOUR YOUR PET

CEREMONY Combine words, music and actions that provide everyone gathered space to share their own experiences of your pet, acknowledge their death and celebrate their life.

PLACE Have the ceremony in a place that you are comfortable in; at home, in the park where you spent time, or a special place you can return to and are able to shed a tear.

INVITATIONS Send an email or drop cards in letterboxes informing friends and family of your pet's death, inviting them to the ceremony and asking them to contribute stories and pictures.

A Hairy Situation

BY *Vanessa Milne*

Sudden bald patches can have many causes but fortunately most can be treated

Hair loss is often begrudgingly accepted as a natural part of life. After all, most people will lose some or all of their hair as they get older. But when hair loss happens suddenly - handfuls coming out in the shower or while brushing - it can be truly distressing. It can also be a signal of a health issue that needs to be addressed.

To understand why unexpected hair loss happens, it's useful to know the growth cycle of healthy

hair. Usually, most of your hair is in a growing phase, during which strands lengthen by about 1.25 centimetres a month. This part of the cycle carries on for between two and eight years.

After that, there's a middle phase, lasting about three weeks, during which the hair isn't getting longer but also isn't falling out. Finally, strands enter a resting phase, where the hair is loosened but sits in its follicle. Then, when the follicle begins to grow a new hair, the old one drops out.

Due to this cyclical process, we all lose up to 100 strands of hair each day. “At any one time, about ten per cent of our hair is in the falling out phase,” explains dermatologist Dr Jennifer Jones. When that balance is disrupted, there can be too much hair in the resting phase – and a few months later, you might find that a large amount of hair comes out all at once.

One of the main triggers for this disturbance is hormonal changes in the body. Oestrogen keeps hair in the growth phase, while androgens shorten the growth cycle. For this reason, giving birth and thyroid issues – both of which shift the balance more towards androgens – can cause hair loss. “Stress is also a massive trigger,” says Dr Jones. “So life events like divorce, bereavement or even moving house have this effect.”

Another common culprit is autoimmune conditions, most notably alopecia. This condition, which affects two per cent of people worldwide, runs in families and can be activated by a stressful event. In some cases, alopecia is subtle; other times, sufferers lose all their hair – including their body hair, eyebrows and eyelashes. Patches of alopecia tend to grow

back, while full-body loss is usually permanent.

Scarring from other autoimmune conditions – including eczema, psoriasis and lichen planopilaris – can lead to patches of hair loss. Similarly, ringworm, a fungal infection, can affect the part of the head that it appears on.

Some people on prescription drugs also experience a disruption of their growth cycle. For instance, hair loss is a known side effect of

some blood pressure medications, statins and hormone replacement therapy, among others. “If you notice hair loss, discuss it with your doctor,” says Dr Jones. “We can often switch medications.”

Treatment depends on the underlying cause. To discover

that, a doctor might order blood tests, perform a small skin biopsy or examine the hairs under a microscope. If the loss is hormone- or stress-related, it is usually temporary and resolves within a few months without any intervention. For cosmetic solutions, topical steroids can help thicken hair, and hair transplants are another option. Some people, of course, simply embrace their baldness.

**ABOUT
90%
OF WOMEN
EXPERIENCE
SOME HAIR
LOSS AFTER
CHILDBIRTH**

HEALTH



Get the Most From a Workout

BY *Emily DiNuzzo*

Making time for exercise can be as challenging as the workout itself. And exercise timing is very subjective, explains physical therapist Bianca Beldini. It might take some trial and error to find what works for your body but don't let timing stop you from working out as exercise has so many benefits. So, although the best time to exercise is when you can, there are extra benefits from working out in the morning.

MORNING WORKOUTS The top reason the morning is the best time to work out is kilojoule burn, according to dietitian Emily Tills. "When our bodies wake up in the morning, our metabolism and kilojoule burn rises as well to accommodate the increase in blood flow to the entire body and 'warm up' the muscles for the day," Tills says. Exercising in the afternoon or evening still burns kilojoules, but since your body will soon rest during sleep, it doesn't capitalise on the extra activity throughout the day like a morning workout, Tills says. Austin Martinez, a strength and conditioning specialist, adds that there are other physiological benefits to working out in the morning, like increased blood flow which helps with mental capacity and prepares the body for the day ahead.

AFTERNOON OR EVENING WORKOUTS If exercising in the morning isn't an option, it's still well worth adding a workout to your day in the afternoon or evening. For many people, exercising is most convenient after work. The bottom line is the best time to work out is during a time that you can stick with that also feels best for you. Consistency is key. "Our bodies are hardwired for routine and habits, so if you create a consistent routine for your workout times, this will yield positive results," Martinez says.

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*TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLY

News From the

WORLD OF MEDICINE

VEGETARIANS NEED TO KEEP BONES STRONG

In theory, you can get the nutrients you need without eating meat or dairy. Yet, a British study found a significantly increased risk of hip fractures in vegetarians, pescatarians and especially vegans. Protein and calcium, which are both essential to bone health, are found in certain plant-based foods such as beans, lentils, broccoli and cabbage, so be sure to include them in your meals.

STRESS-RELATED DENTAL PROBLEMS ON THE RISE

If you wake up with a headache or sore jaw, you might be grinding your teeth in the night – and you're not alone. Stress often triggers this problem, and a survey conducted last year in Israel and Poland found that the pandemic is making the issue more widespread. In fact, during Israel's first lockdown, the rate of people who suspected they were grinding jumped from ten per

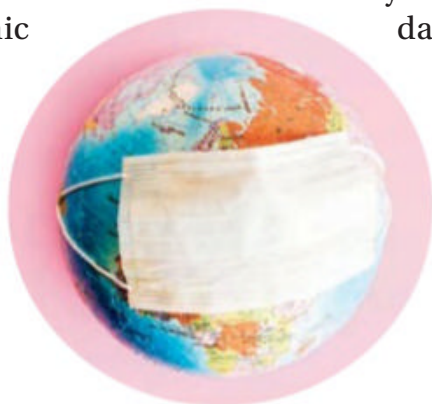
cent to 35 per cent. To prevent tooth damage, a dentist can make you a bite guard to wear at night.

And, to reduce the stress at the root of this habit, many activities can help. These include a workout, meditation, deep-breathing exercises, watching a comedy, or simply indulging in a leisure activity that you enjoy.

BREAKING CHRONIC PAIN'S VICIOUS CYCLE

People living with lasting pain often avoid regular exercise. While understandable, that habit can be counter-productive, as physical inactivity can make pain worse. A Pennsylvania State University study of people with knee osteoarthritis found they were more sedentary and avoided physical activities

they usually enjoyed on days when they fixated on their pain. A psychologist can coach people living with chronic pain in avoiding this pitfall, along with other techniques to improve wellbeing.



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MARY & CECIL

The Rookie Writer and the Established Author



CONNIE & SUSAN

The Red Belt and the Opponent Who Kicked Her



JANA & TINA

The Second Wife and the First Wife



BILL & GIOVANNI

The Octogenarian Gentleman and the 23-Year-Old Oreo Lover

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY MARY POTTER KENYON. COURTESY SUSAN LISS. COURTESY GIOVANNI PAZ VILLA. COURTESY JANA FISHER

My Most **UNLIKELY FRIEND**

*Would you hang out with your spouse's ex?
Or befriend someone who kicked you in the face?
These readers did and found lifelong companions*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY **ISTVAN BANYAI**

BILL & GIOVANNI

I met my best friend, Bill Cervenka, at work. I was 23, and he was 85, but it seemed I had more in common with him than with any friends my age. We were both really stubborn. He always had an umbrella, and whenever it was raining after work, he used to say, "Let me walk you to your

car." I would always decline the offer, but he would say, "I'm walking you to your car whether you like it or not."

Bill and I always took the same lunch break. He didn't recognise some of my dishes and often asked what I was eating. I always offered him a taste, along with some of my Oreo biscuits. Eventually it became our tradition that every time a new

READER'S DIGEST

limited edition Oreo flavour was released, we waited to try it together.

Bill passed away in April 2019. I miss him every day. Now I always carry my umbrella and make sure people without one don't get wet. And when someone declines my offer, I say, "I'm walking you whether you like it or not."

Giovanni Paz Villa

JANA & TINA

Tina is my best friend. She is also my husband's ex-wife. When we first met, she and Bob had been divorced for more than 12 years, and he and I had been dating only a short time. We didn't become close friends right away. It took years of getting to know

each other and seeing each other for who we truly are. We've stood together through difficult times and family hardships. We've shared wonderful celebrations, and we were together to see the birth of our first grandson. Even though we now live 2400 kilometres apart, Bob and I still take holidays with her and her husband, and Saturday is our 'phone call' day. She has brought so much joy and love into my life. I don't know what I'd do without my best friend.

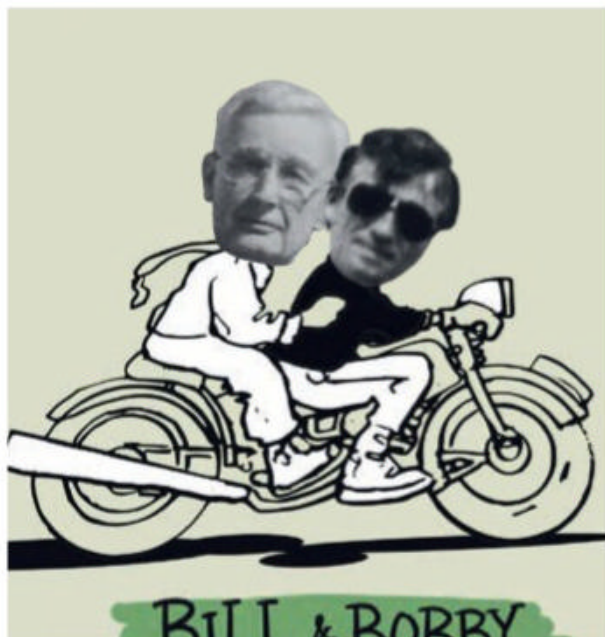
Jana Fisher

BILL & BOBBY

Bill Greenhaw was a retired school principal who looked rather stern. He was an organist and highly respected in our parish. I wore leather jackets and rode a motorcycle. One day, I jokingly asked him if he would like to go out to lunch with me on my bike. To my surprise, he accepted!

He was the opposite of me in so many ways, but he enjoyed riding with me on my bike. We took many rides together, but he never told anyone about them. I think it brought out a sense of adventure in him, and I was the only person he felt comfortable sharing that side of himself with. He was shy around most people. At his funeral, I told his family about our rides, and they were astonished. I miss his kind and gentle character, and our rides together.

Bobby Mills



BILL & BOBBY
The Devout Principal and the Biker Dude

My Most Unlikely Friend

I had walked before him. I sent him portions of my book in progress, and he ended up writing a foreword for that book.

I write him a long letter at least once a month. I ask for his advice on writing, life, faith, even dating. He answers by email, never failing to say exactly what I need to hear. I've saved all of his e-mails, more than 125 of them. I can honestly say that an 87-year-old man is one of my best friends.

Mary Potter Kenyon

SUE & KAREN

We are the same age. And we both like to sing. That's where the similarities stop. The differences go on and on.

We met more than 20 years ago in our local choir. Karen is a lovely, quiet woman who would never think of using make-up. And then there's me. I put make-up on to take out the garbage, and I don't have an inside voice.

So, why are we friends? Because we share our ethics and our music. We love each other for being ourselves and for being good people with good hearts. When we meet for breakfast, I show up in my brightly coloured top, and she comes in with her hair tied back and her charity shop jeans. I sit and sip my coffee with soy milk while she enjoys her glass of plain water, and we talk for hours. We just work together. She is one of my favourite people.

Sue Wallace



SUE & KAREN

*The Fancy Nancy
and the Plain Jane*

MARY & CECIL

It was my husband, David, who urged me to read a book by Cecil Murphey and to apply for a scholarship he was offering for a writing conference in 2012. By the time I learned I had won it, my husband had unexpectedly died. I wanted to meet the man who was responsible for my scholarship, so I attended a conference where he was speaking. When I heard a few months later that his wife had died, I began writing him letters. I may have been nearly 30 years younger than he was, but this was one path

READER'S DIGEST

CONNIE & SUSAN

I met Connie in 1976, when we were both competing in a tae kwon do tournament. Both red belts, we had been paired to compete against each other. As we sat next to each other waiting for our match, Connie began to talk to me. She was friendly and had a wonderful smile. I was struck by how nice she was. Then we got up to compete. Connie suddenly put on the fiercest face you can imagine. This terrified me. Out of self-preservation, I proceeded to kick her in the head - twice - and won the match.

Despite this, Connie and I became close friends. And despite our many differences, we have remained friends throughout the last 43 years. Connie is black and I am white. She was raised in a big city and I was brought up in a small town. Connie is a moderate voter and I am a conservative voter.

Connie now lives on the other side of the country, but we keep in touch through social media. One of her favourite things to do is to introduce me as her bestie who put a foot in her face.

Susan Liss



WAYNE & SUZANNE

In 1977, I was a ten-year-old tomboy growing up on a farm. I still remember Wayne's voice on the phone telling me, "Suzanne, your horses are in the garden again and Dolly [his wife] and Hazel [his mother] are mad!" Wayne kept me company while I got the troublemakers out of the garden.

Wayne was 85 when I introduced him to my husband. Now my husband and I see him every time we return home to the farm. We have a standing birthday breakfast date every year. In 2020, Wayne turned 100.

Suzanne Ryan 

COURTESY SUZANNE RYAN

Coded Message to Mars

The huge 21-metre parachute used by NASA's Perseverance rover to land on Mars contained a secret message. A binary code spelt out 'Dare Mighty Things' in the parachute's orange and white strips. AP



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Garry Maddox:
"I learnt to live in
the moment"



PHOTO: JAMES BRICKWOOD/SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

Surviving My
**SHOCKING
DIAGNOSIS**

*As a young man, I overcame non-Hodgkin
lymphoma. Twenty-six years later,
I faced a terrifying new challenge*

BY *Garry Maddox*

FROM THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

It's late June 2019, and I have no indication of what's ahead. Family life and work as a senior writer for a newspaper in Sydney are going well, and I'm enjoying training for an overseas triathlon. Since taking up the sport six years ago, I've come to love getting outdoors to swim, run or cycle nearly every morning.

I book in to see my doctor about a lump under my left arm. He thinks it's a harmless cyst. I get back to work and training. In early July a second lump emerges on the left side of my chest. The GP thinks it's another cyst but, because it's more noticeable and I'll be away soon, I ask to have it removed. He sends me to a surgeon who wants a biopsy before operating.

So on a wintry afternoon in late July, I have a series of scans and a needle biopsy at a clinic. It goes on much longer than expected. After the doctor glumly studies the X-rays and does another biopsy, I ask if he thinks it's cancer. He nods.

Whatever either of us says next is a blur.

Arriving home, I tell my wife, Heather, as calmly as I can what the doctor said. Just as stunned as me, she's immediately practical: suggesting we wait till we know more, and take things day by day.

I break the news to my son, Kip, 27, who is in his bedroom. He takes it in slowly and calmly. We all know there is no point wasting tears now.

We have a quiet dinner, silently resolved that, as a family, we will do everything possible to beat this thing.

Two days later, the surgeon confirms it's cancer. "If you're lucky, it's lymphoma," he says. "If you're unlucky, it's melanoma."

I still hope to race in five weeks and get treatment when I return home. But after more scans and biopsies, an oncologist calls. It's late on a Friday in August, and I'm walking home after having my biopsy stitches removed.

The doctor admits to being shocked: it's melanoma, metastasised. I ask whether she's shocked because of how much cancer there is or how far it has advanced. "Frankly, both," she says. There are tumours all around my chest, stomach and legs.

It's a sombre walk home.

I talk through the diagnosis with Heather and Kip, trying to stay positive but unable to forget those words, "Frankly, both." We go to a favourite Thai restaurant, and talk about anything but the diagnosis in a bid to stay cheerful. The surreal thing is how fit I feel. Without those lumps, I'd have



From the beginning, Garry Maddox's son Kip and wife Heather were with him in his fight against cancer

had no idea that I was dangerously ill.

I work the following Sunday, write a couple of stories, then tell the executive editor about the diagnosis. It's a tough, awkward conversation for both of us, but I'm relieved and grateful when he offers whatever support I need to get through it.

I have no idea when or where treatment will start. Over the next few days, I steel myself for what I expect will be chemotherapy. I try not to get too distressed. Whatever happens next, it will take time, and that's time I should try to enjoy.

TWENTY-SIX YEARS EARLIER, a similar experience made me grow up fast. After being diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma, I went through six

months of sometimes brutal chemotherapy. The treatment worked, and I came out of the experience a better, more grateful person. Heather and I had just bought a house, and with Kip a toddler I was determined to stay alive to be a good father.

Stepping back from work, I learnt to live in the moment, appreciate what I had and make the most of life. Getting well again, I was determined to live with intensity, give back, have fun.

Now it's a different challenge. Melanoma. "Australia's cancer", as my oncologist calls it. With high UV levels and outdoor lifestyles, Australia and New Zealand have the world's highest incidence of melanoma. Despite decades of sun-awareness campaigns, one Australian is diagnosed with

READER'S DIGEST

melanoma every 30 minutes. It killed more than 1400 in 2018, according to the Melanoma Institute Australia.

The cascade of bad news continues. Five pathologists are unable to specify what type of melanoma I have, other than by a terrifying and indecipherable phrase: “undifferentiated malignant neoplasm with prominent lymphohistiocytic reaction”.

From a form given to me to sign in a waiting room, I discover I have ‘stage four’ melanoma, meaning it has metastasised extensively around the body. Googling on my phone, I’m horrified to learn there is no stage five.

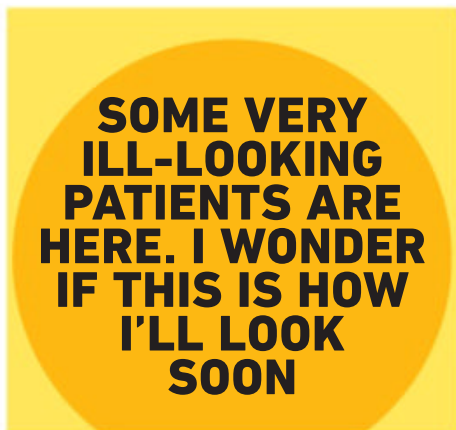
Six weeks after the first lump but before any treatment begins, another lump emerges on my stomach, and my thighs begin to ache ominously.

Strange as it might sound, I realise how lucky I am. Only one tumour – in my lung – is affecting a vital organ, and, crucially, the doctors don’t think the cancer has reached my brain. And there’s a really touching amount of support from family and the friends and work colleagues who know about the diagnosis.

I tell as few people as possible. If a friend is upset when I tell them, it upsets me. If someone says how confident they are I’ll get through it, that

also upsets me. *Don’t they know how serious this is?* In calmer moments, I realise people are just doing their best to respond without knowing what to say.

The nights are the worst. There’s a lot to think about in the darkness: *This will end badly. There will be pain. Why didn’t I do more with my life?* Eventually, sometime past five every morning, our kelpie, Kody, barks to be let in. As he jumps around and follows me back up the stairs, sniffing and snorting, the dark thoughts disappear.



ONCOLOGIST DR ALEX MENZIES

works out of a modern clinic in North Sydney, headquarters for Melanoma Institute Australia, the world’s largest not-for-profit organisation devoted to the disease’s clinical care, research and

teaching.

Energetic, laser-focused and practical, Dr Menzies says that after further testing there’s still uncertainty about exactly what type of cancer I have. He thinks it’s most likely melanoma, and says the best treatment is not chemotherapy but immunotherapy.

Two powerful drugs, Opdivo (or nivolumab) and Yervoy (ipilimumab), will aim to activate my own immune system to kill the cancer cells.



Gary found peace swimming at his local aquatic centre

To start, there will be four treatments, three weeks apart. Only 50 per cent of patients get through all four because of side effects, but even one treatment can have a positive effect.

The staggering \$250,000 cost over two years is covered under the Australian government's Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. The drugs are available at a centre across the road so I can start immediately if I want. I can hardly say "absolutely" quick enough.

Half an hour later, I'm sitting in a leather armchair with a drip in my arm for the first treatment: 30 minutes of Opdivo, 30 minutes of a saline solution, 30 minutes of Yervoy. Some very ill-looking patients – pale and thin – are being treated in armchairs

in various rooms. I wonder if this is how I'll look soon.

Two weeks into treatment it's clear immunotherapy is nothing like chemotherapy. Instead of being knocked flat, then gradually recovering before the next treatment, each day is different. Some days I feel good; others, tired and sick. Sleep is fitful.

I've worked out my own approach to getting well: enjoy every day, stay in the moment, relish time with family and friends, eat well, stay engaged with the world, exercise, have fun and keep mentally stimulated.

I love reading books and watching films when I feel well enough. Swimming is helping, too, even just sliding into the cooling water at a nearby

aquatic centre. Calmness comes as the laps pass.

By late September, a month into my treatment, my side effects have been limited to skin rashes and thrumming aches in my hands, legs and feet, mostly at night. I start the day by walking the dog. Even if I don't feel like it, I head to the pool.

An easy 20 laps becomes 30 some days. I decide on a project: using treatment time to improve my swimming. I try to convince myself – almost trick myself – that there will be a future. I can sometimes stretch to 40, even 50, steady laps.

As the weeks pass, I come to terms with two aspects of having cancer that settle the overnight anxiety. Instead of baulking at being a patient, I accept that I'm part of this twilight world of medical struggle. I start wearing the rubber wristband I've been given that tells doctors and paramedics the drugs I'm taking. Instead of feeling different from other patients, I feel a kinship. I try to smile instead of avoiding eye contact.

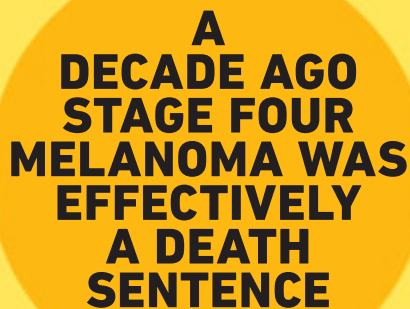
And I decide that it's OK if there isn't a future. I've been a good father and I've made the most of the time I've had since getting through lymphoma.

What really matters is that I'm here now.

In October, after the third treatment, my sleep gets worse as my legs, feet and hands ache again at night. By the afternoon, I need a nap.

Swimming gets me through it. One morning I swim four kilometres. The next week, five. Three weeks later, six. Focusing on a smooth style and a low heart rate, I'm enjoying swimming so much that the laps pass easily.

Soon it's November – time for scans to see how the four treatments have worked.



**A
DECADE AGO
STAGE FOUR
MELANOMA WAS
EFFECTIVELY
A DEATH
SENTENCE**

HEATHER AND I have barely sat down when Dr Menzies breezes into the clinic. The scans, he says, show the treatment is working “spectacularly”. I’m confused. “In a good way?” I ask.

He smiles. Of the possible results from immunotherapy, “This is as good as it gets.”

With further treatment – Opdivo every four weeks – he expects the tumours to continue to shrink, even disappear altogether. He thinks I’m heading towards being effectively cured.

I’m stunned. Heather and I have a coffee in the hospital garden, trying to work out whether to believe what has just happened. I’m relieved but bewildered.

Over the coming weeks, progress continues, and scans show the treatment will need to continue once a month well into 2020. But now when Kody barks to be let in at 5am, it's no longer a relief that the night is over. It's the start of a new day.

It's not until I interview Dr Menzies for this story that I learn exactly how lucky I've been. A decade ago, he says, stage four melanoma was effectively a death sentence. With chemotherapy of little value, I would have been given six to nine months to live, less if it reached my brain.

Dr Menzies says 50 per cent of stage four melanoma patients now survive long enough to be effectively cured. "It's been an absolute revolution," he says.

The two drugs that are saving me, Opdivo and Yervoy, were administered as a combined treatment for the first time in 2016. Among a suite of immunotherapy treatments that are revolutionising the way many cancers are fought, they are proving useful for certain types of breast, lung, head and neck, bladder, bowel

and stomach cancers, as well as melanoma.

According to Dr Menzies, the only cancers this type of immunotherapy is not beneficial for are pancreatic, prostate and brain cancers. "Immunotherapy is the biggest breakthrough in medicine in our generation," he says. "Across the whole body of medicine, it's been the biggest breakthrough potentially since penicillin."

It's 5.30am on a February morning, almost exactly six months since I started treatment, and I feel strong as I arrive at the pool. I start swimming in darkness and keep swimming as a sparkling morning emerges, reaching ten kilometres for the first time. The sky, I can't help but notice, seems especially blue. **R**

FROM THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD (APRIL 3, 2020), © 2020 BY THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

Update: Garry Maddox says that his doctors have given him the all-clear and he has stopped his treatment. In October 2020, he competed in a 'comeback triathlon.'



Million Dollar Dog

It won't be a dog's life for a Tennessee canine whose owner recently died. Lulu, an eight-year-old border collie, will be living the good life in Nashville after inheriting \$5 million in her owner's will. Martha Burton, Lulu's caretaker, said Lulu's owner, Bill Dorris, was a successful businessman who wasn't married. His will states the money should be put into a trust for Lulu's care. AP

I Am the
**FOOD
ON YOUR
PLATE**

Rice Flavourful and Filling

BY *Diane Godley*

I may be small in stature, but I am almighty when it comes to feeding the world. This is no baseless boast. I, unassuming rice, can claim bragging rights as being the most widely consumed staple food on the planet. Some may argue that more tonnes of sugarcane and corn are harvested each year, but large portions of those crops are used for non-edible purposes. Whereas I, the mere seed of the grass species *Oryza sativa*, am the Earth's most important food crop; on average, I provide you humans with one-fifth of the kilojoules you consume daily.

Ranging in size from five to 12 millimetres, I also come in an assortment of colours, varieties and names. After harvest, when my husk is still intact, you choose to call me paddy rice. At this stage I am not edible, as you humans are unable to digest my rough outer layer. When this layer, my husk or hull is removed, my bran layer is revealed. I am now called brown rice, although not all my ancestors are brown when dehulled.

As my colour is derived from my bran layer and germ, or embryo, some of my family are light yellow in colour, some red, while the black grain is a class all of its own. In fact, in ancient China, black rice was out of reach of many hungry mouths. It was known as the 'forbidden rice', as only those belonging to the upper classes could afford to eat it. Black rice,

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

which has a similar amount of fibre as brown rice and a mild, nutty taste, turns deep purple during cooking.

When my bran and germ are intact, I provide you with larger amounts of dietary fibre, vitamins and minerals than when you remove it to eat only my delicate white centre, the kernel. But it would seem taste reigns over nutritional value when it comes to the food you humans prefer to eat, as the vast majority of me sitting on your supermarket shelves has been milled and polished to remove the bran and germ, revealing my pearly white kernel. One advantage of the milling process is, however, that my shelf life is extended, as my outer layers contain more lipids which are susceptible to spoiling – so you may be on to something there.

Different varieties

My length and shape are important factors when choosing the kind of dish you wish to make, as my distinct varieties and size provide very different outcomes after cooking.

Long-grain varieties, such as jasmine (which is mostly grown in Thailand and is named after the jasmine flower) and basmati (mostly grown in southern Asia), expand to more than double their dry length during cooking and deliver a plateful of firm and

fluffy magnificence. While the delicate aroma of freshly cooked jasmine goes perfectly with seafood dishes and is used to make Thai desserts, basmati, which is rich in amino and folic acids and has a nutty taste, is a popular choice for fried rice.

Medium-grain rice is a favourite in Japan, Korea and Northern China and has a soft, moist, sticky texture after cooking. My cousin arborio, also medium in stature, started life in Italy. It boasts a firm internal texture and creamy exterior and is perfect for absorbing flavour and stocks.

Mamas throughout the big boot have been using my good cousin for centuries to make the perfect buttery risotto.

My short-grain family, including glutinous or sticky, has a similar texture to my medium-grain clan and is widely used in Asian delicacies, especially sushi. The grain of my glutinous ancestor (so called because of its glue-like texture, not because it contains gluten – it doesn't!) has a low amylose content, making it sticky when cooked.

Adaptability

But I am eaten in more ways than just a bowl of hot, steamy loveliness. When I am ground, I am turned into a gluten-free flour. With my flour I am used to make rice noodles and South

MY LENGTH AND SHAPE ARE IMPORTANT FACTORS

READER'S DIGEST

Indian pancakes. I can be used to thicken soups and stews, as well as provide an alternative to wheat flour for humans suffering from coeliac disease.

My flour's relatively neutral taste makes it perfect to be mixed with milder flavours. This gives me an advantage over other grains as I am not overpowering and therefore less flavour enhancers are needed. Did I also mention that my flour is hypoallergenic, making it ideal as infant cereal?

But my uses don't stop there. I am

baked and made into the lightest, crispiest rice crackers. I am turned into vinegar, as well as wine and cooking oil. I was even added to the mortar of the Great Wall of China during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) to give it extra strength and help it survive earthquakes. Is there no end to my uses?

Did I mention that I'm also versatile to grow? In fact, I can be grown almost anywhere, as long as I am watered well.

Given my many attributes, it's no wonder that they say 'rice is life'. **R**



EASY VEGETABLE PILAF

Ingredients

- 2 tsp olive oil
- ½ onion, diced
- 1 ½ cups white long-grain rice, uncooked
- ½ tsp garlic salt
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- ½ tsp basil leaves, dried (crushed)
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup peas and carrots mix, frozen
- 1 cup cooked potatoes (if desired)

Instructions

Heat the oil in a deep frying pan with a lid over medium heat. Add the onion and cook 3 minutes, until translucent.

Add the rice and stir, until the rice is lightly toasted. Add the garlic salt, basil and turmeric to the pan and stir until evenly combined.

Stir in the chicken broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer, cover and cook for 10 minutes. Stir in the peas and carrots (and potatoes), cover and cook for an additional 10 minutes. Fluff with a fork and enjoy.

“ Parents' Wish ” -- To Our Dear Child



Special Thanks to ParentsWish.com

On the day when you see us old, weak and weary,
Have patience and try to understand us...

If we get dirty when eating,
if we cannot dress on our own...

Please bear with us and remember the times we spent feeding you and dressing you up.

If, when we speak to you, we repeat the same things over and over again,
do not interrupt us ... listen to us

When you were small, we had to read to you,
the same story a thousand and one times until you went to sleep.

When you see our ignorance of new technologies...
Help us navigate our way through these worldwide webs.

If ever we do not feel like eating, do not force us...
We know well when we need to and when not to eat.

When our tired legs give way and do not allow us to walk without a cane...
Lend us your hand the same way that we did when you tried your first faltering steps.

Some day you will realize that, despite our mistakes...
We always wanted the best for you,
and we tried to prepare the way for you.

You must not feel sad, angry nor ashamed for having us near you...
Instead try to understand us and help us like we did when you were young.

Help us to walk ...

Help us to live the rest of our lives with love and dignity.

We will pay you with a smile and by the immense love
we have always had for you in our hearts.

We love you, child.
~ Mom and Dad

好人好事好米



LIFE'S LIKE THAT

Seeing the Funny Side



Parallel Interests

Looking out of a restaurant window, I noticed a woman struggling to parallel park. After a good few minutes of watching her move backwards and forwards, I went outside to offer my help, which she readily accepted. After I parked her car, a man came over to thank me.

"You're welcome," I said. "Are you her husband?"

"No," he replied. "I'm the guy parked behind her."

SUBMITTED BY MITCHELL PLANTIER

Medical Advice

After she quit smoking, my mother gained 23 kilograms in six months. Concerned, she asked her doctor, "Do you think I have an overactive thyroid?"

"No," he said. "You have an overactive fork."

SUBMITTED BY LORRAINE YOUNG

Taking It Easy

"Gorgeous night for a walk."
Me, moving from couch to chair.

@alyssalimp

Out of Reach

I recently received a call from a telemarketer asking to speak with my husband.

"Unfortunately, that's impossible," I told him. "He's in heaven."

"In that case," he said, "what's the best time to reach him?"

SUBMITTED BY CAROL WHITE



Wise Beyond Their Years

My granddaughter's life philosophy: "Money can't buy happiness, but it can buy cows. Cows can make milk, and milk can make ice cream, and ice cream can make you happy."

SUBMITTED BY JOELLEN TURNER

I was out with my 11-year-old grandson for a picnic in the park and it was a lovely day. I looked up at the sky and asked, "Do you know what clouds are made up of?"

Without looking up from his mobile phone, he retorted, "Sure, Nana, music files!"

SUBMITTED BY DAISY TRUBY

I asked my cousin's four-year-old nephew, "What are you going to be when you grow up?" He replied, "Still me!"

SUBMITTED BY R.M.



THE GREAT TWEET-OFF: FAMILY EDITION

It's all relative for the folk of Twitter.

My little sister discovered we have different dads; now she's trying to say we're just friends ...

@NTNASTYY

Opening gifts that say "From Mum and Dad" and knowing that Dad is going to be just as surprised as you are.

@KELLICOPTER

Instead of 'XOXOXOXOX' my mother ends every email with 'MOMOMOMOM'.

@ERINBODE

My grandmother sewed and crocheted until she was into her 90s and her hands just couldn't do it any longer. So don't expect me to be putting this phone down anytime soon.

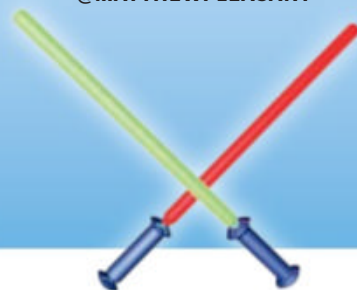
@DARLAINKY

My uncle only polished the front half of his car because it was the only part he saw when he drove it.

@GALGOSRGREAT

My two-year-old nephew learnt to imitate laser beam sounds, a rite of childhood. Getting hit with a lot of imaginary beams, a rite of unclehood.

@MATTHEWPLEASANT





An aerial photograph of a vast desert landscape filled with hundreds of cars, mostly white, arranged in a grid-like pattern. The cars are parked on the reddish-brown sand. In the lower-left corner, a large crowd of people is gathered, some standing and some sitting on the ground. The scene is brightly lit, casting long shadows from the cars and people. A white rectangular box with a red border is overlaid on the top right of the image, containing the text 'SEE THE WORLD...' and 'Turn the page »'.

SEE THE WORLD...

Turn the page »

...DIFFERENTLY



It may be hard to believe, but this particular Saudi Arabian event has nothing to do with vehicles. At the King Abdulaziz Camel Festival in Rumah, held during December and January, it's all about, as the name suggests, camels. Celebrating the culture and way of life of Saudi Arabia and Bedouin traditions, the festival attracts about 300,000 camels and their owners as well as many visitors. Events include a camel beauty contest, races, auctions and exhibitions on the special place camels have occupied in Arab history.

PHOTOS: (PREVIOUS SPREAD)
FAISAL AL-NASSER/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; (THIS PAGE) FAYEZ
NURELDINE/AFP VIA GETTY
IMAGES





PHOTOS: OMOMOM



CRIME

The mutual distrust and hostilities between Russians and Americans is nothing new – but conflict over caviar? When a sting was set up by US fisheries officials to catch illegal Russian poachers of paddlefish, prized for its caviar, the stakes were high. Or were they?



CAVIAR KRAZY

BY *David Gauvey Herbert*

FROM **LONGREADS.COM**

PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY **JOHN RITTER**

MIKE REYNOLDS WAS WORKING AT CODY'S BAIT AND TACKLE

in rural Warsaw, Missouri, when two Russian men entered the shop and began rifling through fishing poles that didn't yet have price tags. Reynolds asked them to stop, but they ignored him.

Reynolds, then 57, had seen plenty of Russians come through the shop. He was tired of them poaching the town's beloved paddlefish.

He removed a .40-calibre pistol from under the counter. The two men looked up, backed out of the store, and never returned.

It was just another dust-up in the long-running war between caviar-loving Eastern Europeans, local fishermen and state and federal government agents that centres on this unlikely town and a very curious fish.

The American paddlefish can weigh more than 72.5 kilograms and measure 2.7 metres long, including its needle-nose snout. Paddlefish eggs taste quite a bit like Russian sevruga caviar. This curious fact explains why, in the mid-2000s, Russian immigrants began descending on tiny

Warsaw (population 2127), paddlefish capital of the world.

For most of the 20th century, connoisseurs considered only the roe of beluga, Russian sturgeon, Persian sturgeon and stellate sturgeon fit for making caviar. But after the fall of the Soviet Union, several factors, including poachers, decimated the Caspian Sea's sturgeon population. Russia restricted commercial harvesting. Prices soared.

The American paddlefish, a distant cousin of the Caspian sturgeon, is a mediocre substitute. The best Russian caviar has a clean pop and tastes of the sea. Paddlefish roe typically has an

earthier flavour with an inconsistent texture.

Yet it's a sign of the desperate times that a 125-gram jar of paddlefish caviar – a by-product that for years local

The new arrivals spent big and drank hard. They developed a reputation for overfishing



fishermen tossed back with fish guts – was selling for US\$60 at the time of writing. A pregnant female paddlefish can carry up to nine kilograms of roe, which was worth more than US\$2100 on the retail market. If a poacher sells the eggs as high-grade sevruga caviar [which is harvested from critically endangered sturgeon fish species], it's worth US\$40,000 or more.

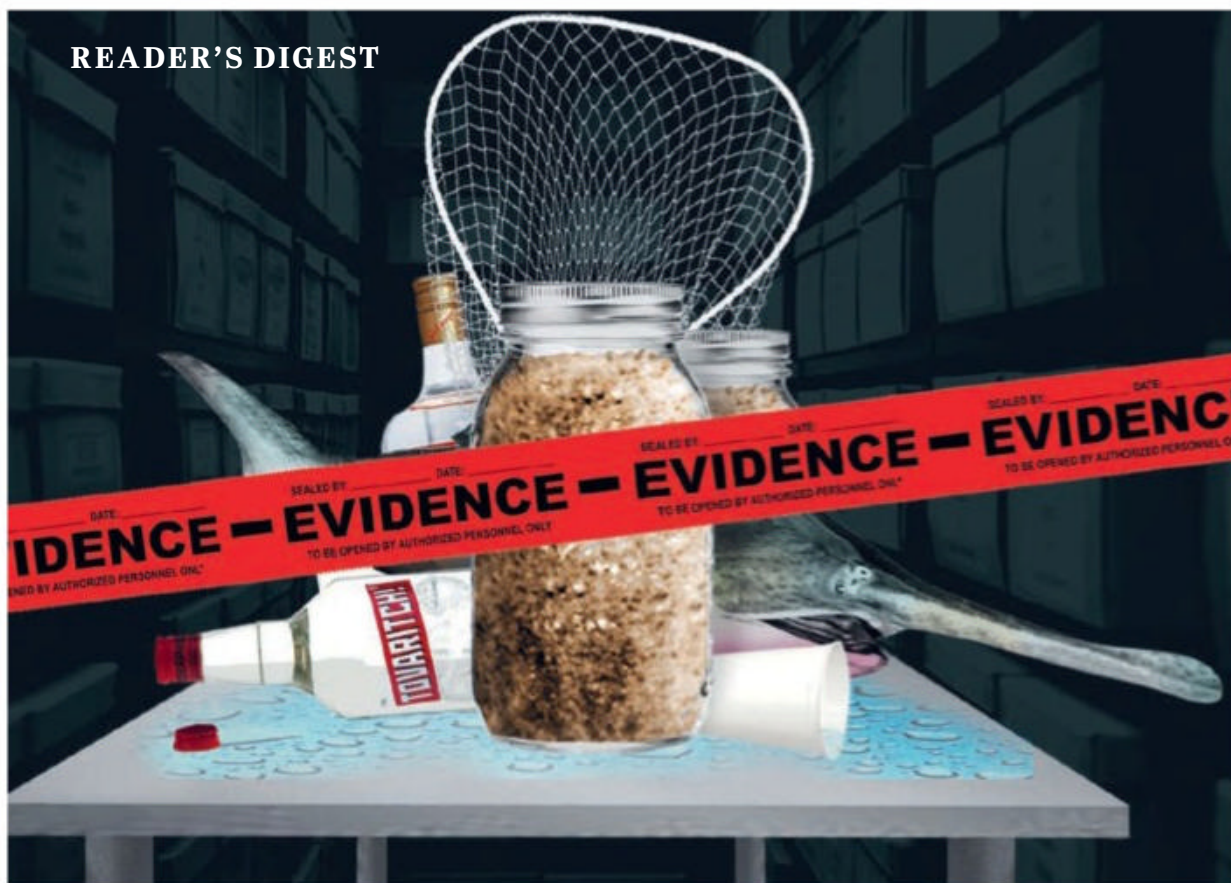
Every spring, tens of millions of dollars' worth of roe sit at the base of Truman Dam, near Warsaw, when paddlefish stack up there like wood.

Eastern European fishermen are a more familiar sight here than one might imagine. Russian and Ukrainian immigrants who live in nearby Sedalia have fished in Warsaw for years. But

by the mid-2000s, a different breed of Russian was arriving in town every spring, driving flashy imported cars with out-of-state plates.

Most of the men didn't have fishing experience, but they'd spend hundreds of dollars on bait and tackle, hire guides, and drink vodka shots with breakfast. And they developed a reputation for overfishing.

"The phone was ringing off the wall," Rob Farr, the local agent for the Missouri Department of Conservation, told me. State law allows fishermen to keep just two paddlefish a day. So locals were angry. "They just ripped open the fish to remove the eggs, and let the carcass sink," a commenter wrote on OzarkAnglers.com.



“A similar punishment should be administered to the poachers.”

Around 2009, Gregg Hitchings, an investigator with the Missouri Department of Conservation, got a call from Farr. Would he make the trip down?

Handing out tickets for overfishing is tough. The perpetrators are often drunk, armed and furious. Over the years, Hitchings found more covert ways to enforce wildlife law.

The two men drove around Warsaw, checking out popular fishing spots, including the Roadhouse, a shuttered restaurant and dock. Hitchings peered into the ruined property. Operation Roadhouse began to take shape. He wouldn't catch poachers by casting out a line and reeling in one at a time.

He'd throw bait in the water. He wanted a feeding frenzy.

When Felix Baravik pulled into Warsaw in the spring of 2012 after an 11-hour drive, the madness had already begun. The chance at landing a paddlefish had drawn anglers from all over the Midwest and beyond, practically doubling Warsaw's population. Baravik and his buddies wanted to snag monsters, too. Females. Lots of them.

Baravik had grown up in Belarus in the Soviet Union. His friends – Arkadiy Lvovskiy, Artour Magdessian and Dmitri Elitchev – were also immigrants from former Soviet bloc states.

Most of the Eastern European fishermen would have heard stories from

their grandfathers about the 1930s, when a tin of caviar only cost twice as much as butter. When stocks dried up, caviar lovers turned to the black market. By the 1990s, overfishing and illegal exports had sent prices skyrocketing. Only oligarchs and gangsters could afford to eat it.

Baravik and his friends rented a cabin, bought fishing licences and hit the Roadhouse, which was brimming with fishermen who paid \$8 a day for a position on the small dock.

None of the fishermen on the Roadhouse dock knew about the investigation that the Department of Conservation was running with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. 'Gary Hamilton', the friendly middle-aged man running the dock, was in fact Hitchings. The Roadhouse 'dockworker' who sold day passes had a hidden camera over his shoulder and was keeping records of their personal information.

Money was changing hands all over Warsaw. Petr Babenko drove around town buying up pregnant female paddlefish. Another man, Fedor Pakhnyuk, bragged that he had sold \$15,000 worth of caviar in 2011. Now he was en route to buying 28 litres of paddlefish eggs.

The Eastern Europeans wanted so many eggs, it was hard to believe they

weren't selling them. Hitchings's idea was that the federal agents would follow the roe to a black market. Who knew what they would find? Russian mafia. An international caviar cartel.

Baravik and Magdessian went fishing with two local guides – actually undercover agents – and landed seven paddlefish, well over the legal limit. Elitchev and Lvovskiy skipped the hassle and bought three females from another agent for \$375.

The Russians drank. A lot. And with so much alcohol and competition over fish, it was only a matter of time until something popped. Late one night, Hitchings, who slept in a camper near the Roadhouse dock, was startled awake by shouting. Rival groups of fishermen prepared for violence, more than a dozen on each side. Weapons

were everywhere. Beer bottles. Fishing gaffs. Handguns. Fists began to connect with dull thuds.

U n d e r c o v e r agents stopped the fight, but the brawl laid bare the stakes. The men who travelled from all over the country for a

shot at knockoff caviar would not be denied.

A few days later, the four Colorado friends returned home. The undercover agents would have been justified in feeling confident. They had helped

Hitchings's idea was that the federal agents would follow the roe to a caviar black market

Baravik and his accomplices illegally buy and catch female paddlefish. The eggs were worth hundreds of thousands of dollars if mislabelled as Russian caviar.

But there was a problem. Most of the men were buying female paddlefish, processing knock-off caviar and ... eating it. Illegal, yes. But the plot of a Russian mafia thriller? Hardly.

Some officers must have realised the miscalculation on March 13, 2013, when 125 state and federal agents descended on poachers across four time zones to make arrests.

During an interview, one poacher said the caviar was for his family to give guests when they came over.

"Why would I want to sell it?" he asked.

"To make money," an agent replied. "Heck, no!"

Of the 112 defendants tagged with state or federal violations, four pled guilty to felony trafficking charges and another eight, including Baravik, pled guilty to lesser misdemeanour charges. Only one case went to trial, that of Petr Babenko, the owner of a gourmet store in New Jersey. He was convicted of felony trafficking of paddlefish and given probation.

Fedor Pakhnyuk, who had openly

bragged about his dream of an ersatz caviar empire, was released and ordered to refrain from drinking. Agents returned his personal effects: a leather jacket, \$36 in cash, a lighter, two sticks of chewing gum and some papers. The head of a caviar cartel he was not.

One poacher said that the caviar was for his family to give guests when they came over

A 2012 conversation during the second and final season of Operation Roadhouse, between an undercover agent and a poacher, was representative. The agent wanted to know how many more female paddlefish his client needed.

"Fifty, twenty, one hundred..." the suspect replied. "Honestly, we'll take them all. We have a big family. We'll stock up on them. Eat it all year."

The Missouri Department of Conservation considers Operation Roadhouse a success.

Paddlefish poaching is way down.

But Hitchings acknowledged that even the men selling were not tributaries to a river of black-market caviar. The state and federal government had spent millions of dollars to protect a fish stocking operation that costs Missouri \$100,000 a year.

A few of their collars were small-time caviar hustlers. But most just really, really liked caviar. **R**

FROM LONGREADS.COM (FEBRUARY 2019),
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11 THINGS

Eye-Opening Facts About Tears

BY Jen McCaffery



1 Tears are generated in the lacrimal gland (*lacrima* is the Latin word for tear), which sits above the eye just under the eyebrow. Humans make three different versions of tears. Basal tears lubricate our eyes; reflex tears form in response to irritants such as smoke and dirt; and emotional tears flow when we're sad or overjoyed. All are made of salt water mixed with oils, antibodies and enzymes, but each also contains different molecules. For example, emotional tears carry protein-based hormones, including leucine-enkephalin, a natural painkiller released when the body is under stress.

2 Onions cause tears because they secrete a compound called lachrymatory factor synthase. To cut down on its release, refrigerate onions before slicing, and use a sharp knife, which reduces release of the compound.

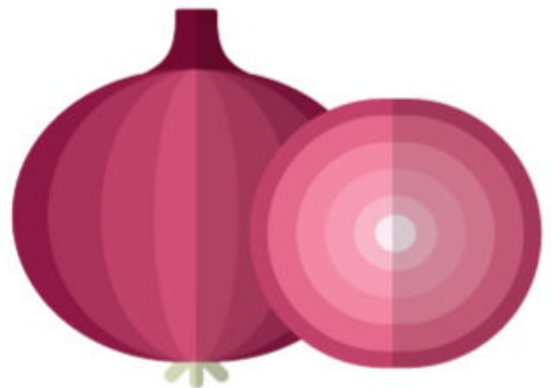


ILLUSTRATION (TOP) BY SERGE BLOCH. PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

READER'S DIGEST

3 Charles Darwin was fascinated by tears. For his book *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, the father of evolution collected observations of South African monkeys and indigenous Australians and compared them with his own kids. Darwin concluded, “We must look at weeping as an incidental result, as purposeless as the secretion of tears from a blow outside the eye ... yet this does not present any difficulty in our understanding how the secretion of tears serves as a relief to suffering.”

4 Babies cry a lot, but don't produce tears until they are seven or eight months old. Women cry the most; studies have found they cry an average of 3.5 times a month, almost twice as much as men.

5 For centuries, people thought tears were created in the human heart. The Old Testament says they're formed when part of the heart weakens and turns into water. In medieval times, crying was perfectly acceptable, even manly. In the Anglo-Saxon poem 'Beowulf', when Beowulf is killed by a dragon, his warriors were “disconsolate/and wailed aloud for their lord's decease.” King Arthur was also known to cry.

6 Crying can be good for you. Some studies have shown it can cause the release of oxytocin and endorphins, chemicals that make us feel better. On the other hand, one study found that people who are prone to crying in general more often feel worse after crying during a movie than people who rarely cry.



7 Speaking of movies, according to *Entertainment Weekly*, the biggest Hollywood tearjerker of all time is *Terms of Endearment*, about how a family deals with a cancer diagnosis. In second place is *Bambi*. The Merriam-Webster dictionary claims the term *tearjerker* debuted in 1912, which happens to be the same year the *Titanic* sank. Incidentally, the movie *Titanic* is 16th on *EW's* tearjerker list.



8 Ever wondered why a cry causes your nose to run? Excess tears produced by the lacrimal glands flow into your tear ducts. From there, they drain into the nasal cavity, where they mix with mucus to give you a runny nose.

9 Tear gas was banned on the battlefield via the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993, spurred by Iraq's use of chemical weapons in the 1980s.

10 As we age, production of basal tears slows, which can lead to dry eyes. Women going through hormonal changes such as pregnancy or menopause are also particularly susceptible. To help the situation, try some lubricating OTC eye drops (also called artificial tears) or use warm compresses on your eyes for a few minutes.

R

11 DOES READING IN DIM LIGHT DAMAGE YOUR EYES?

By Dr Max Pemberton

Nearly every parent has, at one time or another, cited this myth when scolding their children for reading under the covers with only a torch. But it's not true.

There's not a shred of evidence that reading in poor light damages the eyes or the eyesight. Anecdotal reports of people throughout history studying by candlelight and going

blind as a result are wrong. Those people may have lost their eyesight but not because of poor light.

Bad lighting can cause a sensation of having difficulty focusing and it's thought that this may be the source of the myth. Reading in poor light also makes people blink less, which can lead to the eyes becoming dry –

again adding to the belief that they've been damaged. There is, however, no evidence that such eye strain does any permanent harm. While good light will improve your ability to see clearly, it's not essential to protecting eye health.



THE Mattress

From straw to feathers, beds have a long, dust mite-filled history. Today's mattresses promise engineering technology that puts space travel to shame

BY Zoë Meunier

Pretty much as soon as cavemen evolved enough to start sleeping horizontally, they figured out that a 'mattress' of some description was a clever idea. Apparently, trying to sleep with a rock in your back was no less comfortable then than it is now.

The earliest palaeontological evidence of a mattress is from an astounding 77,000 years ago. Found in a rock shelter in South Africa, the ancient bedding was only about two centimetres thick and made with alternating layers of reeds and rushes.

Natural materials – straw, leaves,

grasses covered with animal skin – remained the mattresses of choice for many more thousands of years. Hey, you've got to work with what's available. The Ancient Persians were the first to raise things up a notch, with Persian royalty said to have paved the way for the waterbed trend by sleeping on goatskins filled with water some 3600 years ago. We're guessing they weren't heated to optimum temperature and available in semi-waveless varieties, but it was a promising start.

As humans evolved, so did their sleeping arrangements – at least, the wealthy ones. Sometime between 3000 and 1000 BCE, many cultures,



READER'S DIGEST

starting with those clever Ancient Egyptians, began raising their mattresses off the ground – all the better to avoid sharing the bed with rats and snakes. The mattresses themselves were usually made from wool, while the beds were made from wood – for your average Joe – while your Cleopatra-types preferred a solid gold, jewel-encrusted slumber number.

Throughout the Medieval period, mattresses continued to vary greatly depending on wealth, with the poor still often sleeping on piles of leaves on the ground or on a hay sack, where 'hitting the hay' became a nightly necessity to dislodge bugs from one's bed. While the wealthy opted for mattresses stuffed with down and feathers, the focus was more on the bed frames, which became increasingly ornate and made of carved wood. This era also saw the rise of four poster beds covered with curtains.

Mattresses remained largely unchanged throughout the Renaissance period, although cotton-filled mattresses started to replace down and feathers by the 18th century. It was in 1870 that the next big innovation occurred, with the invention of the first innerspring mattress. The brainchild of German Heinrich Westphal, he adapted metal coils from the seats of horse-drawn carriages to make a mattress with a firm-yet-springy sleep surface. Sadly for Westphal, fame and wealth did not immediately spring forth and he died impoverished, his creation taking a good 60 years to be adopted by mainstream consumers.

By that time, the Industrial Revolution was in full swing, meaning that beds and mattresses could be mass produced. But it didn't take long for people to realise that an open spring coil gone awry in a mattress could be almost as

SLEEP ON IT

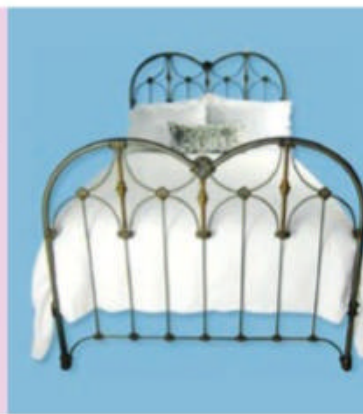
A bit of shut eye over the ages



Medieval poor



Renaissance rich



1920s coils

ILLUSTRATIONS: GETTY IMAGES

uncomfortable as a good old-fashioned rock in the back. This paved the way in the 1920s for English engineer and machinist James Marshall to patent his 'Marshall Coil', the first pocket sprung mattress. Consisting of individual springs in connected pockets of fabric, his concept allowed the coils to function independently of each other, tailoring to individuals' posture and body shape. Thank you James, you saved many a bad back – and probably a marriage or two as well.

Nonetheless, as something we spend a third of our lives resting upon, plenty more attention and innovation has been laid into mattress design over the last century.

The first latex foam mattress was introduced in 1931. Latex comes from the sap of rubber trees. The Dunlop Rubber company spent several years trying to turn it into a foam, until one of their scientists had a lightbulb

moment – and borrowed his wife's cake mixer to whip the liquid latex into a soft foam. The resulting air bubbles gave the foam its unique cushioning qualities. Now, we can't help but think if only there'd been a female scientist in that lab, perhaps they would have figured out that solution a bit sooner.

Another game changer was memory foam, aka viscoelastic polyurethane foam. First invented by NASA in the 1970s to provide better seat cushioning and crash protection for airlines, the first memory foam mattress entered the marketplace in 1991.

Praised for its ability to 'hug' the body, the material offers better spinal alignment and more pressure point relief, becoming an instant hit amongst the bad-back brigade. Its extreme density means it's also resistant to those ubiquitous dust mites and their havoc-causing droppings, making them popular among allergy sufferers, too.



1970s waterbed



2020s technology

READER'S DIGEST

Better yet, memory foam's ability to spring back to shape means you can stuff 'em in a box, which in recent years has transformed the process of buying a mattress. Sales of a 'mattress in a box' have doubled in the past five years.

Meanwhile, bubbling away on the sidelines was the modern-day water-bed, developed by university design student Charles Hall in 1968 as his Master's Thesis (for which we hope he got a High Distinction). Water-bed mattresses, with their sexy, bohemian image and pressure-point free benefits, rode the crest of a (waveless) wave through the 1970s and 1980s, accounting for 20 per cent of mattresses bought by 1986, but their sales sprang a massive leak in the 1990s and are now only five per cent of the market.

Mattresses are still evolving, with new fabrics and technologies still being discovered. Celliant-infused fabric is one of the latest advances in mattresses, with University of California-Irvine research showing people fall asleep faster on them, as it regulates your body temp and transforms body heat into infrared energy.

Other cutting edge materials include sustainable organic latex; latex

with graphite, to enhance fire retardation; AntiGravity foam to provide the ultimate top layer comfort; hybrid creations; and even nanotechnology, in which a very thin sheet of carbon tubes are stacked to create a memory foam-like substance even more superior than the original.



MATTRESSES ARE EVOLVING, WITH NEW FABRICS AND TECHNOLOGIES

And of course, digital technology has also come into play, because who doesn't want a smart mattress? Eight Sleep's The Pod can automatically adjust itself to the perfect sleeping temperature of each individual in the bed, courtesy of its Active Grid hub, which will even regulate the temperature to gently wake you up at the right time.

The ReST bed is like an airbed on steroids, with three separate layers containing special cooling and pressure devices that adjust to suit each area of your body, and can be set to automatically adjust to your needs.

And then you've got the Sleep Number SleepIQ technology, which not only tracks your sleep patterns throughout the night, but contains PartnerSnore Technology ... so when your bedfellow starts snoring, you can press a button to raise their head and stop the drone in its tracks. Now that's progress. **R**



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COLLECTION



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In partnership with ICA, KingKoil has developed and engineered the only **EXTENDED LIFE™ MATTRESS COLLECTION** that provide a good night's sleep.



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LAUGHTER

The Best Medicine

INSOMNIA JEOPARDY

WAYS IN WHICH PEOPLE HAVE WRONGED ME	STRANGE NOISES	DISEASES I PROBABLY HAVE	MONEY TROUBLES	WHY DID I SAY/DO THAT?	IDEAS FOR A SCREENPLAY
\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10
\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20
\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30
\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40
\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50

Wake-up Call

James received a bill for his recent surgery and was astonished to see a \$900 charge for the anaesthetist. He called the office to demand an explanation. "Is this some kind of mistake?" he asked when he got the doctor on the phone.

"No, not at all," the doctor said calmly.

"Well," said James, irritated, "that's awfully costly for just knocking someone out!"

"Not really," replied the anaesthetist. "I knocked you out for free. The \$900 is for bringing you back." SUBMITTED BY ARKY MUSCATO

Making A Noise About It

KID: Mummy, why are all the cars beeping their horns?

MUM: Because there's a wedding going on.

KID: But Mummy, isn't the horn a warning signal?

MUM: Exactly, son.

—Herway.net

Rhyme or Reason

If the person who named walkie-talkies named everything, would ...

- ◆ stamps be lickie-stickies?
- ◆ hippos be floatie-bloaties?
- ◆ pregnancy tests be maybe-babies?

Seen on the internet

Rumour Has It

Is there rehab for gossiping? I don't need it, but I'll tell you who does ...

JEN STATSKY, COMEDIAN

The winning pot of curry at the neighbourhood cook-off was named Gossip. Good to your face, but it talks behind your back!

SUBMITTED BY KATHRYN KITCHEN

Accident or Design?

At the supermarket, a customer buying a lot of groceries was checking out.

As the shop assistant lifted the final bag, its bottom gave way, sending the contents crashing to the floor.

"They don't make these bags like they used to," the assistant said to the customer. "That was supposed to happen in your driveway." GCFL.net



WOONG TECHNIQUE

Three male dogs are walking down the street when they see a beautiful female poodle. They all scramble to reach her first but end up arriving in front of her at the same time.

Aware of her obvious effect on the suitors, she tells them, "The first one who uses the words liver and cheese together in an imaginative sentence can go out with me."

"I love liver and cheese!" the golden retriever blurts out.

"Oh, how childish," says the poodle.

The Labrador tries next. "Um. I hate liver and cheese?"

"My, my," says the poodle. "I guess it's hopeless."

She then turns to the last of the three dogs and says, "How about you, little guy?"

The Yorkie, tiny in stature but big in finesse, gives her a smile and a sly wink, turns to the other dogs, and says, "Liver alone — cheese mine!"

Planetproctor.com

YOU CALL THAT A *Compliment?*

Did you
used to be
good-looking?

*A little
praise is always
nice — except
when it's a
backhander...*

One day, if the stars are aligned and you've worked hard to do the right thing,

you, too, might be lucky enough to receive a lovely compliment like the one Nancy Phelan got a few years back. "When I was visiting my son, his fiancée and her children," Nancy wrote to Reader's Digest, "I made them a specialty of mine: breakfast pizza. After eating several slices, my eight-year-old future grandson leaned back in his chair and proclaimed, 'This is so good, it makes my tongue dance!'"

Alas, life isn't always so sweet. In fact, we sometimes get treated to a more stinging kind of praise — the backhanded compliment. We asked you for some of the favourite backhanders you've heard or endured. It's OK to laugh. We did.

I HAD JOINED AN AEROBICS CLASS

made up mostly of older women like me. At first, it was difficult to follow all the steps, but after a few weeks I felt that I had a good grasp of the routines. One day, a fellow classmate stopped me to say, "I've been noticing you. You're very coordinated." I couldn't have been prouder. "Thank you," I replied. "Yes," she continued, "your shirt matches your pants, and your pants match your socks."

Joyce Thomasson

WHEN I WAS IN MY 20s, I had a streak of grey hair. One day, a complete stranger noticed and said, "I really like your grey hair. Where did you get it done?"

"Oh, thanks," I said. "It's natural."

She recoiled. "Oh my, what are you going to do about it?"

Donna Calvert

A STUDENT STOPPED ME in the hallway to say that she'd just learned that her mother had had me as a teacher. Then, after looking me up and down, she asked, "Did you used to be good-looking?"

Bob Isitt

READER'S DIGEST

AS A WANNABE MUSICIAN, I took advantage of an opportunity to play with a local recorder group. During a break in our first rehearsal, the woman sitting next to me, an accomplished musician, said, "You have a beautiful vibrato!" I was basking in the glow of her praise when she added, "You're not supposed to." *Vicki Morrison Goble*

WHEN I MET MY BROTHER'S NEW FATHER-IN-LAW, he took my hand and said warmly, "You look just like your brother. He has a big nose, too." *Marie Ball*

ONE MORNING shortly after we got married in our 60s, my husband and I were sitting on the bed putting on our socks and shoes. Out of the blue, he reached over and patted me on the knee, saying, "I am so glad we got married."

He was being romantic, and I appreciated it. "Me, too," I said.

He continued, "Do you have any idea how nice it is to open my dresser drawer and find my underwear and socks all folded nice and neatly?"

K.C. via email

MY GRANDMA USED TO TELL ME, "There's no conceit in your family. You've got it all." *Devon Christenson*

"HAPPY BIRTHDAY! You don't look 60, but I remember when you did!"

Susie Barr

AFTER I SANG A SOLO in church, an elderly gentleman offered me his highest compliment.

"I liked your song for two reasons," he said. "You sang it well, and you didn't sing too long."

Ann Abernathy

IN HIGH SCHOOL, a female classmate told me I'd "make a really handsome guy."

Kimberley Coleman





You Call That a Compliment

Case in point, the time she tried to praise me for being outgoing and having lots of friends.

With a great big smile she declared, “When I grow up, I want to be a big mouth just like you!”

Amy Reynolds

AMONG MY ALL-TIME FAVOURITE MOVIES

is *Babe*. For years, whenever I wanted to compliment someone, I’d quote the film’s famous line: “That’ll do, Pig, that’ll do.”

Recently, I finally got my husband to watch the movie with me. When that scene came on, he turned to me, stunned. “It’s a compliment?”

All these years I thought you were insulting me!”

Tiger Miller

SOMEHOW, A FRIEND and I got on the subject of age, which led him to ask how old I was.

“Thirty-seven,” I said.

He cocked his head and asked, “Is that all?”
Mary Carruth

WE ADOPTED OUR DAUGHTER

from China when she was nine, and we soon discovered that common English-language phrases and idioms didn’t always come easily.

OUR BOSS AT THE FACTORY was a grump with a management philosophy that harked back to the sweatshops of old. A shift without being sworn at multiple times was considered a win. But one day, after I spotted and corrected a problem with one of the machines, he offered me the highest compliment he could think of. “Rich,” he said, “you’re stinking less at this job all the time.”

R.P. via rd.com

READER'S DIGEST

BACK WHEN MY DAUGHTER

was an infant, I was out pushing her in the stroller when a woman stopped us on the street.

“My goodness, what a beautiful baby!” she remarked. “Does she look like her father?” *Peggy Greb*



FROM A REFERENCE LETTER written by my first boss: “Sarah is very lazy. When given a task she immediately figures out the easiest and quickest way to complete it. This tends to make her highly efficient.”

S. J. Garner

I WAS TAKING MY FOUR-YEAR-OLD

grandson out of his car seat when he gazed into my eyes and delivered this bit of wisdom: “Papa, you’re old. But at least you’re not dead yet.”

Owen Wilkie

A CLIENT WAS SO IMPRESSED with my work, he made a point of calling to tell me that he had named his new puppy after me.

Sheila Compton

AFTER READING A POEM

I’d laboured over, my mother said, “This is good. Really good!”

I was beaming!

Then she felt compelled to ask, “Are you sure you wrote it?”

Theresa Baumbach 

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

Lockdown or Lockup?

A man in the UK who was wanted by police handed himself in so he wouldn’t have to spend another moment in COVID-19 lockdown with the people he lived with. Sussex police officers said the man was wanted for recall to prison and gave himself up to get some “peace and quiet”. The man told officers that he would rather go back to prison where at least he could have time on his own. **REUTERS**

QUOTABLE QUOTES

People can't drive you crazy if you don't give them the keys.

MIKE BECHTLE, AUTHOR

WHATEVER WORDS WE UTTER SHOULD BE CHOSEN WITH CARE FOR PEOPLE WILL HEAR THEM AND BE INFLUENCED BY THEM FOR GOOD OR ILL.

BUDDHA



"WE SHOULDN'T LET WHERE WE COME FROM DETERMINE WHERE WE CAN GO."

JASMINE SOKKO

TRUE WISDOM LIES IN GATHERING THE PRECIOUS THINGS OUT OF EACH DAY AS IT GOES BY.

E.S. BOUTON, EDITOR

Those who cannot feel the littleness of great things in themselves are apt to overlook the greatness of little things in others.

OKAKURA KAKUZŌ,
JAPANESE SCHOLAR



When I show my daughter she can be anything she wants to be, she wonders why I ever thought she couldn't.

CANDACE PARKER, ATHLETE

HOW TO

Lift Your Own Spirits

*We all feel down
now and then,
especially lately.
These techniques
can help you
bounce back*

BY *Courtenay Smith
and Samantha Rideout*

On a freezing winter's evening, Ashley Austrew sat in her car in a carpark working up the courage to go into a comedy improv class. For about 20 minutes, the 33-year-old journalist and mother of two sat with swirling thoughts of self-doubt: *OMG, I can't do this. I'll be the worst one.* Then she turned off the engine, took a few deep breaths, and went inside.

For Austrew, trying improv was the first small step to improve her self-esteem. "All my life, I've lacked confidence," she says. "I didn't have the courage to try anything new." So she made a list of all the things she was afraid to attempt and then asked herself, *What if I didn't let my excuses win?* Improv was her biggest target.

Her fear dissolved as soon as she walked into the class. Her classmates were also beginners,



PHOTOS: JOLEEN ZUBEK

and she discovered that she was perfectly capable of earning a few laughs and making new friends.

Over the next two years, Austrew went on to tackle other what-ifs, including writing a book. “Self-esteem is like a muscle – you have to work it constantly,” she says.

Some people are blessed with a seemingly unshakable positivity, but most of us need to learn how to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps.

Psychologists say we tend to experience our lowest self-esteem in adolescence and spend much of our adult lives slowly building it back up. Staying positive has been tough in the past year. Since the pandemic began, three times as many adults have reported symptoms of depression or anxiety (the malevolent cousins to low self-worth) compared with 2019.

Thankfully, like Austrew, we can learn to feel better about ourselves and strengthen our feelings of hope. (Of course, anyone experiencing severe or persistent symptoms should seek professional help.) Here are seven science-backed strategies to improve your relationship with the person in the mirror.

EMBRACE THE UPSIDE OF FEELING DOWN First, realise that negative emotions aren’t inherently bad – they can be useful. “That ping of anxiety gets my attention and says, ‘Hey, you need to focus

on this,’” says psychologist Ethan Kross, author of *Chatter: The Voice in Our Head*. If you need to deal with an immediate problem – say, reining in overspending – that call to focus is helpful. But negativity spirals into something harmful when a particular thought circuit just won’t shut off. If you can’t sleep because of it, feel physically stressed all the time, or keep rehashing the same situation, those are signs you need to employ tools to break the cycle, says Kross.

ENGAGE IN SMARTER SELF-TALK In his lab at the University of Michigan, Kross asks subjects to talk to themselves in the second person, and to use their own names. Instead of saying, “I’m so nervous about this meeting on Tuesday,” for example, say, “[Your name], you seem pretty nervous about this meeting.”

Kross’s research shows that this simple shift in language gets people into problem-solving mode more quickly. “They turn into coaches and start advising themselves, taking stock of the problem and figuring out if they have the resources to meet it,” Kross says.

CHANGE YOUR VIEW – LITERALLY If you are looking out the window lost in a thought loop, walk to a different window. Alternative perspectives help us digest our experiences, and

changing our physical view intuitively jogs a different emotional one as well. “When I’m stuck feeling a certain way and I choose to walk away and look for something better – that’s a choice to do something good for myself. That itself is a treatment,” says Sasha Storaasli, an end-of-life counsellor to terminally ill transplant patients.

BELIEVE THAT YOU MATTER

To matter is the bedrock belief that you are important and worthy of consideration, and according to a 2020 study, it is linked to joy. Strong personal relationships are the best aids to believing you matter. Spend time with loved ones, and remind them you offer a shoulder to cry on. Maintaining a sense of control, especially over your healthcare issues, also boosts that sense of importance.

REMINISCE While some research suggests happiness increases with age, studies also suggest that self-esteem peaks at age 60, then declines. As people get older, the loss of loved ones, professional identity or independence can threaten the sense of who they are. Telling someone stories from the past may bolster self-esteem at this key moment. Take a trip down memory lane by looking through a photo album with loved ones or playing music that reminds you of meaningful moments.



REPEAT A TASK YOU'RE GOOD AT

Psychologist Patrick Keelan plays piano every day. When he’s helping people with low self-esteem, he suggests they routinely engage with activities that use or improve their skills. “When you’re doing something that you’re good at or getting better at, it gets harder to think negatively about yourself,” he explains.

GET MOVING There’s no silver bullet for improving low morale, but exercise is the closest thing we have. It is good for stress management and general mental health and provides a sense of competence and accomplishment. Dozens of studies have indicated that exercise has a significant impact on physical self-worth. The activity you choose matters less than enjoying it, sticking to it, and getting at least a moderate challenge out of it.



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CAREFUL, *You Shouldn't Say That*

*When it comes to adoption, the words we
use and how we say things matter*

BY *Jen Babakhan*



ADOPTIVE PARENTS ARE just like any other parents. They're crazy about their kids, stretched too thin between responsibilities and get tired. But there are some things you may not know about adoption that adoptive parents wish you did.

Don't ask us why we didn't have children of our own

The topic of adoption can become an unwanted focus during conversation for adoptive parents, especially when the children in question are present. Asking adoptive parents why they didn't have children of their own is not only quite nosey, but it assumes that adoption was the last resort to grow their family. Adopted children can understandably become sensitive to these kinds of assumptions, and no parent wants their child to feel as though they are a consolation prize or a last resort. Adopted children belong to their adoptive parents – they are their own children. There is no need to ask this insensitive question, ever.

Don't ask where the child came from

Julia and her husband adopted their daughter domestically, and yet they

are still asked about her country of origin, presumably because her daughter is a different ethnicity. Julia says, "People should know that not all children that are ethnically different from their parents are from a different country," she says. "As my daughter gets older, these conversations will be even more difficult for us to explain to her." Questions about a child's birth country can make some children feel like they don't belong in their adoptive family, which can be detrimental to self-esteem. It's best to check your motives when asking any questions of adoptive parents, and ask yourself if your inquiries could be insensitive. Better yet, wait for information to be volunteered. That is most polite and appreciated by adoptive families.

Adoptions begin with change for the child

No matter the circumstances behind an adoption, it begins with the life-changing event of separation from a birth parent or parents of the child. This can be an incredible loss, particularly if the child is older, and the trauma of the separation can stay with children even after adoptions are official. Brynn Contino, a mother of six who adopted a daughter from a different ethnic background, says,

“With adoption comes great trauma and loss,” she says. “My daughter is four and it’s only been ten months, but she’s very smart. I let her express her feelings as much as she wants and we often talk about her biological mother.” If this happens in your presence, it may make you uncomfortable to witness, but be respectful.

Every adoption experience is different

Just like no two pregnancies are the same, so it is with adoption. While some adoptive parents wait years to be chosen by a birth parent, others might be called for a placement within months.

Don't tell us that our children are 'lucky'

One more thing on the list of what not to say to an adopted child or their parents, is that the child is lucky to have found such a great adoptive family. Not only is this rude, but it also has implications that extend beyond its well-meaning surface. Julia runs into this comment often, explaining “Telling kids this makes it seem like their birth family wouldn’t have been good parents to them, and this is not true at all. If anyone is lucky, it is us. Her birth mother chose us to raise her, and we will be forever grateful for that.” The

bottom line: if you want to make an adopted child feel special, why not tell their parents how lucky they are to have found such an amazing son or daughter?

Asking about the cost of adoption is rude

Adoption can be expensive, and the costs associated with international adoption are often widely discussed. Even so, asking adoptive parents about the money spent on the adoption of their child is tactless. If the adopted

Families with adopted children don't consider themselves different from any other family

children are present when it is asked, it implies that their lives have a monetary value, and may bring up more complex feelings and discussions than their parents want to handle. Julia says of the many questions she and her husband are often

asked, “Overall, people are curious about the experience, but unless the information is offered, it’s rude to ask people why they adopted, how much they paid, and the information behind it, as this is personal and private.”

Drop the 'adopted' before son or daughter

Most families with adopted children don’t consider themselves different from any other family. Parents with children they’ve adopted don’t think of them as an ‘adopted daughter’ or

‘adopted son.’ They are their children, their sons and daughters. When referring to children in a family that have been adopted, it is safe to assume that it’s just fine to refer to them as only their daughter or son.

Don’t ask if they worry about the future


Asking an adoptive parent if they worry that their child will search for their biological parents when they are older is insensitive at best. Like anything else, all parents differ in their feelings on the issue, and some may welcome or encourage their child to seek their birth parents when the time presents itself. Others, like Jessica, might be hesitant. She says, “As an adoptive parent, I struggle with feeling that she will eventually want to know her biological parents and fear that she may choose them over me.” This subject is one that is best left alone, and most adoptive parents can at least agree on that much.

They need support

Every parent needs a supportive group of people surrounding them to carry them through the jungle

that is parenting. Adoptive parents are no different, and for single adoptive mothers the value of a supportive community is paramount. Jessica, a single adoptive mother, says of having a support network, “If you choose to make the decision to adopt as a single mother, make sure that you have a solid support system of friends and family as you will need to lean on them when you need help with childcare, emergency contacts and just general support.” You can be supportive to adoptive parents just as you would any other parent by offering to babysit or picking up items at the supermarket when you’re there.

Love is the common thread of all family types

Deciding to raise a child is an important decision in any person’s life, and it is something to be celebrated. Adoptive families deserve to be celebrated and acknowledged for the unique contributions they provide to our communities. Jessica says of her daughter, “The love I feel for this child is beyond words, and no one could ever tell me she was not meant to be my daughter.” 



Toddling Along

Sorry we’re late. Our toddler spent 30 minutes with water in their mouth that they wouldn’t drink, spit out, or walk with.

@MOTHERPLAYLIST

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

Humour on the Job



Hard to Please

Client: Hi, how much does a brochure cost to print?

Me: Before I answer, I need a bit more information, such as size, pages, and how many ...

Client: Well, if you want to be that difficult, I'll just find someone else.

clientsfromhell.net

Classical Mistake

As a high school Latin teacher, I'm used to fielding questions about my subject, which some find arcane and

ancient. However, I was surprised when someone asked, “Do you have any native speakers in your class?”

Sadly, that person was the principal. **SUBMITTED BY KEITHA ITO**

For Starters

A colleague at our car sales auction was having trouble starting one of the cars. Looking defeated, he complained, “The only thing that's working is the blinker on the check-engine light.”

SUBMITTED BY DENNIS MARQUARDT



Animal Distribution

Our local pet store's pandemic rules were laid out on a sign that read, "Please maintain two metres between you and others. That's two Great Danes, four cats or 16 guinea pigs." SUBMITTED BY PEGGY HOLT

Not Sew Young

My friend has owned a sewing machine shop for decades. Recently, a customer he hadn't seen in years came in to buy a new machine.

Looking around the small shop a bit befuddled, she asked, "Whatever happened to that young man who used to work here?"

My friend smiled. "I got older."

SUBMITTED BY JAMES METZ

Completely Floored

The first day of university can be disorienting, even for returning students. I was walking in the lobby of one of our main buildings when a second-year student stopped me. "Excuse me," he said, looking lost. "Is the third floor still upstairs?"

SUBMITTED BY KAREN LOVE

LEST YOU BE JUDGED

At times, evaluations meant to put professors in the firing line reveal more about the students who wrote them:

"There was too much maths expected of us." Course title: *Maths for Special Education Teachers.*

@njbailey17

For a *European History to 1500* course, a student was upset that I didn't include more about China during World War II.

@quinnkl

"Too many women writers." Course title: *American Women Writers.*

@maryloeff

The student evaluation that I remember to this day:

"He knows more than I do and that makes me feel bad."

@Normie_Salvador

"She should wear more green."

@Deborah_T7

"Professor wanted to be here less than we did."

@CarlLPalmer



Clear as a **BELL**

*Tracking device, metronome
or submersible — bells can do
more than just chime a tune*

BY *Cornelia Kumfert and Zoë Meunier*

As anyone who's ever heard a peal of bells in full flight can attest, the sound is at once wondrous, majestic, holy and a bit deafening. While bells are renowned for calling the faithful to prayer, it's interesting to learn that bells actually came from China, where they were the measure of all things. Their sound helped to find the correct pitch, their diameter was considered a measure of length, their hollow space a unit of measurement for corn and their weight even used to calibrate scales. Even today, you'd be surprised just how versatile a bell can be.





▲ **Gloriosa, the Glorious**, is one of the largest free-swinging bells in the world. Several of its predecessors were destroyed, often by fire. The present-day Gloriosa has been hanging in Erfurt Cathedral in Germany since the 15th century. She is also no stranger to damage. On December 24, 1984, for example, a 60-centimetre-long crack temporarily silenced the bell. It took expert welding to give Gloriosa back her voice.

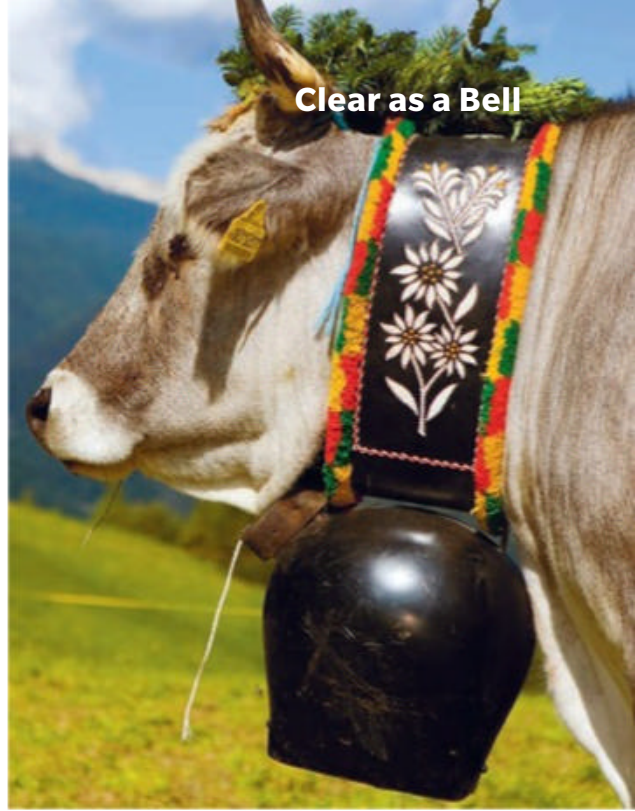


► **The *Almabtrieb*** is a marvellous Alpine event that takes place every autumn in Switzerland, Austria and Germany to celebrate the return of cattle from their mountain pastures. The lead cows are singled out to wear the most elaborate headdresses as they make their way down into the valley. The large cowbells around their necks herald the coming of the herd far and wide. As these massive bells are extremely heavy, the cows only wear them for a matter of hours. The bells they wear on the mountain pastures during the summer are much smaller and lighter. Their clanging noise lets the herdsman know where the herd is and helps them find injured animals.

◀ **Setting the beat** is easy for Indian dancers because whenever they perform, they always have their metronome with them – on their feet. *Ghungroos* are leather or cotton ribbons covered with lots of small bells and tied around the ankles. Every dance step creates its own particular sound, and as the tinkling bells barely resonate, they help define the rhythmic movements of the dance for the audience.

► **How do you keep your feet dry** while enjoying the fascinating underwater world of the Baltic Sea? Inside one of the largest diving bells in Europe, that's how. Up to 30 visitors at a time can descend beneath the waves inside the bell-shaped gondola in Sellin, north-east Germany. With a bit of luck, you will be able to spot some grey seals, flounders and eels. The pressure inside the diving bell remains the same on land and under water, even at a depth of four metres.

Clear as a Bell



READER'S DIGEST

► **These delicate little bells** not only thrive in warm climates, the colourful flowers also grow in Arctic regions. There are about 500 different species of *Campanula* and they all have one thing in common – the flared shape of the flower's head. Which, no doubt, gave rise to their romantic name – bellflower.

►► **A carillon** is a musical instrument that contains at least 23 stationary bells. Australia's National Carillon, located on Aspen Island, Lake Burley Griffin, Canberra, has 57 bronze bells each weighing between seven kilograms and six tonnes. A gift from the British Government to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the national capital, it is played regularly, its 50-metre-high tower allowing the sound to drift over the lake to nearby parks.

► **Altar bells ring three times** during a Catholic mass, immediately before the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. In earlier times, the bells were rung to let the worshippers know when they ought to kneel as mass was read in Latin right up until the 1960s. The priest would stand with his back to the congregation as he performed the holy rite and the ringings of the bell signalled the moment in which this transformation took place.







QUIZ

Napoléon **BONAPARTE**

May 5 is the 200th anniversary of the death of Napoléon Bonaparte. Can you answer 12 questions on the life and work of perhaps the most famous French leader?

BY *Caroline Friedmann*

QUESTIONS

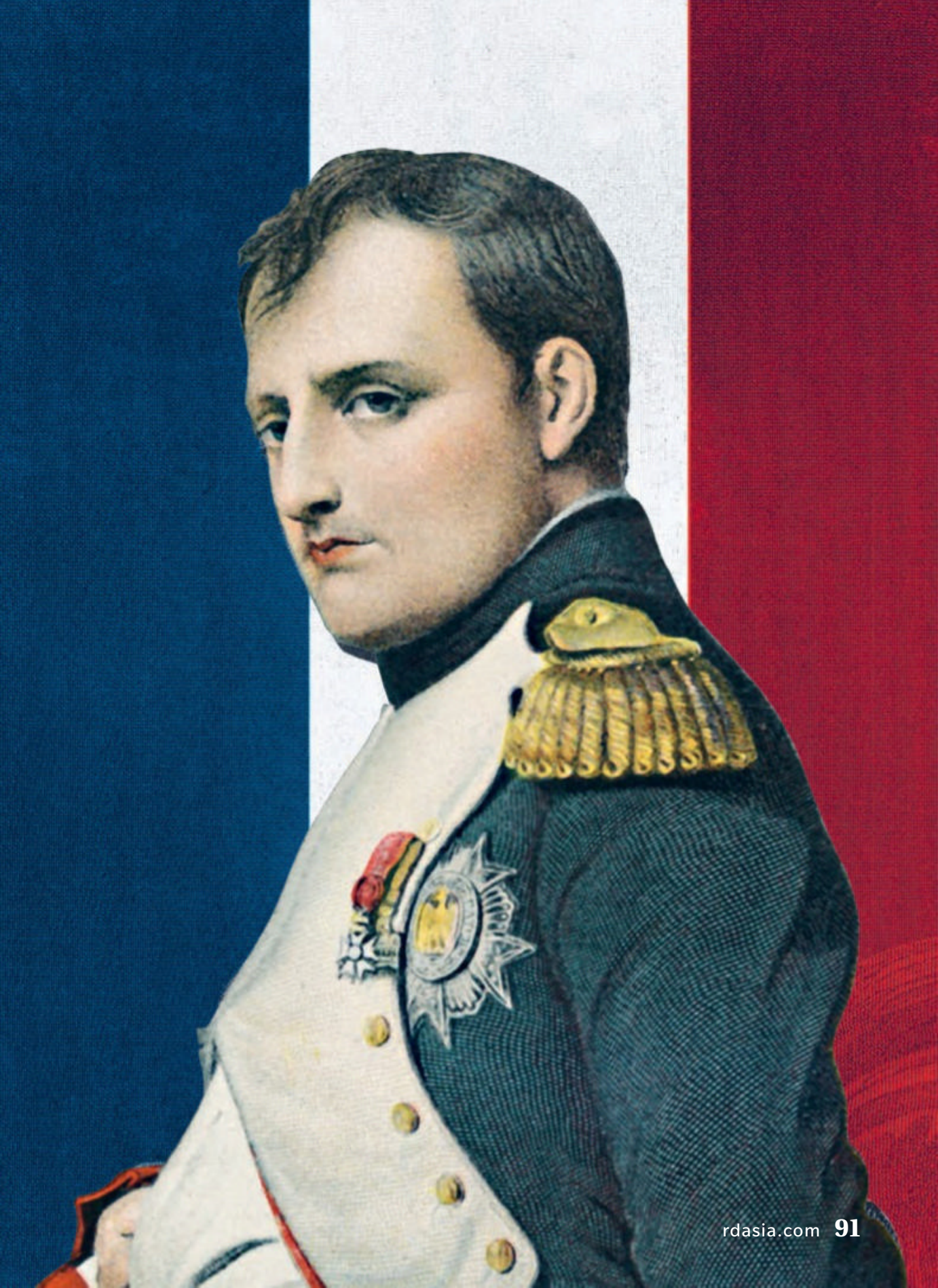
1 Napoléon Bonaparte was born on the island of Corsica in 1769. Possibly the most famous Frenchman of all time nearly did not turn out to be French at all. Why?

- a.** He was the illegitimate son of an Italian woman and only became French after he was adopted
- b.** Corsica was part of the Republic of Genoa until 1768

c. His Moroccan parents became French citizens just days before he was born

d. His parents never registered his birth

2 Napoléon rose up the ranks of the French army during the French Revolution. He then became a brigadier general at the age of 24, before leading the Italian



READER'S DIGEST

campaign as commander-in-chief at 26. He is celebrated as a national hero in France. What event made him First Consul and supreme ruler in 1799?

- a.** The death of the king
- b.** A coup d'état
- c.** Free elections
- d.** Luck

3 In 1796, Napoléon married Joséphine de Beauharnais – the daughter of a naval officer. He married for love and gained entry into Parisian society. He divorced Joséphine in 1809, before marrying



Marie Louise, Duchess of Parma, in 1810. What did he expect to gain from it?

- a.** Money for his campaigns
- b.** An alliance with Austria
- c.** An heir
- d.** Both b and c

4 Over his 20-year military career, Napoléon fought many great battles. In October 1813, one raged for several days near Leipzig, Germany and became known as the 'Battle of the Nations'. Why did Napoléon lose this battle?

- a.** The French army was severely weakened by a cholera outbreak
- b.** The Austrian army used new long-range cannons
- c.** The French army was outnumbered by Allied troops and artillery
- d.** The French army was kept awake all night by Russian soldiers banging drums

5 On March 21, 1801, the Napoléonic government enacted the Napoléonic Code, also known as the Civil Code. To this day, the laws of many countries are based on this system of law. What does the Civil Code specify?

- a.** The equality of all citizens before the law

The widow Joséphine de Beauharnais became Napoléon's first wife



The ill-fated invasion of Russia is portrayed in *Napoléon Bonaparte in Burning Moscow* by Albrecht Adam (1841). His army found the city deserted, on fire and without supplies

- b.** The freedom of all citizens
- c.** The protection of private property
- d.** All of the above

6 Archaeologists can thank Napoléon for a momentous – yet accidental – achievement. During one of his campaigns, an officer found the Rosetta Stone, which later allowed scholars to do what?

- a.** To develop a remedy against the plague
- b.** To decipher hieroglyphics
- c.** To produce artificial light
- d.** To locate ruins of a Roman village

7 During Napoléon's rule, France controlled large parts of Europe. As great as his military skills were, physically speaking, he is often described as short. What was his actual height?

- a.** 1.50 metres
- b.** 1.60 metres
- c.** 1.68 metres
- d.** 1.75 metres

8 The French Revolution in 1789 left the relationship between church and state in tatters. In 1801, Napoléon soothed matters with the Vatican by signing the Concordat, a state-church treaty that defined the status of the Roman



An idealised portrait titled *Napoléon Crossing the Alps* by Jacques-Louis David (1801-05). Napoléon crossed the Alps on a mule, not a horse

Catholic Church in France. What caused the break with Pope Pius VII less than ten years later?

- a. The Pope refused to close Vatican-owned ports to the English navy
- b. Napoléon refused to introduce a church tax
- c. Napoléon's divorce
- d. All of the above

9 As a leader, Napoléon aspired to rule all of Europe; as a private person, he harboured artistic ambitions. What discipline of art did he enjoy?

- a. Sculpture
- b. Composing
- c. Writing
- d. Painting

10 Napoléon is famous for some witty remarks. Which of the statements below is attributed to him during the retreat from Russia?

- a. 'The best is the enemy of the good'
- b. 'Man is born free and everywhere is in chains'
- c. 'From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step'
- d. 'Such is life'

11 In 1814 Napoléon was exiled to the Italian island of Elba, following the annexation of Paris by Allied nations. He returned to France briefly in February 1815 and took back command. What is this 'comeback' known as?

- a. The Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre
- b. The Reign of a Hundred Days
- c. The Reign of Terror
- d. The Great Comeback

12 Charles Louis Napoléon Bonaparte ruled France as President of the Republic from 1848 to 1852, becoming Napoléon III, Emperor of France in 1852. How was Napoléon III related to Napoléon Bonaparte?

- a. Napoléon III was his nephew
- b. Napoléon III was his step-grandson
- c. Napoléon III was his illegitimate son
- d. Both a and b

>> Turn to page 96 for quiz answers

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ANSWERS TO BONAPARTE QUIZ

1 b. Corsica belonged to the Republic of Genoa until it became part of France in 1768.

2 b. In 1799, the French government was brought down by a coup d'état supported by Napoléon's military. A new constitution was drawn up under Napoléon - appointing him as First Consul.

3 b and c. Hoping to strengthen the alliance with Austria, in 1810 Napoléon married Marie Louise, the eldest daughter of Emperor Franz I of Austria. The long-awaited heir to the throne was born a year later.

4 c. The Battle of Leipzig (16-19 October, 1813) was the largest single battle of the Napoleonic Wars. The French had an estimated 190,000 soldiers and Austrian, Prussian, Russian and Swedish forces almost 330,000 and more artillery.

5 d. The Civil Code upholds the following principles: the freedom of all citizens, the equality of all citizens before the law and the protection of private property.

6 b. In 1799, during the Egyptian campaign, one of Napoléon's officers found the Rosetta Stone. The same text is carved three times: Egyptian demotic, ancient Greek and Egyptian hieroglyphic. Using the Rosetta Stone, Egyptologists

were later able to decipher the hieroglyphs.

7 c. At 1.68 metres, Napoléon was an average height for men of the time. A calculation error caused the rumour that he was only 1.58 metres tall.

8 a. Among other demands, Napoléon wanted to close Vatican-owned ports to the British Royal Navy. When the Pope refused, the French leader directed his troops to invade the Papal States. When, in 1809, Pius VII excommunicated Napoléon, he had the Pope arrested.

9 c. Napoléon wrote a novella, *Clisson et Eugénie*.

10 c. 'From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step,' is considered to be one of Napoléon's most famous witticisms.

11 b. After about a year of exile on the island of Elba, Napoléon returned to France for the 'Reign of a Hundred Days,' although his 'comeback' lasted 110 days.

12 d. Napoléon III was the nephew and step-grandson of Napoléon Bonaparte. Napoléon III's father was Napoléon Bonaparte's brother, and his mother, who was adopted by Napoléon Bonaparte as a child, was a daughter from Joséphine de Beauharnais's first marriage.



THAT'S OUTRAGEOUS!

BY *Rebecca Philips*

STICKY SITUATION Two men were arrested and charged after doctoring a scratch-off lottery ticket to make it appear they had won \$100,000. Mississippi authorities said they used super glue to affix winning numbers to a losing ticket in an attempt to cash in. “They cut some numbers off a second ticket and super glued them to this one,” said a spokesperson.

RUNNING OUT OF TONER

A Texas library apparently failed, for quite some time, to notice its printer was running out of toner at a suspiciously fast pace. A former employee of the Austin Public Library is accused of fraudulently buying \$1.3 million worth of printer toner, which he then allegedly stole and re-sold online. Surveillance video showed the employee carrying printer toner to his car.

MUSIC TO HER EARS

Last autumn, Dagmar Turner, a violin player in the Isle of Wight Symphony Orchestra, learnt that a brain tumour she'd had treated six years earlier was growing again,

close to an area that controls the fine movement of her left hand. She needed surgery, and Professor Keyoumars Ashkan, a brain tumour specialist at King's College Hospital in London, was the person to do it. His plan: rouse Turner during the surgery and ask her to play her violin to ensure they didn't damage any crucial tissue. Turner was awake for about two-and-a-half hours during the successful operation, in which time she played the scales, 'Bésame Mucho' and 'Summertime'.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT When Steffen Schwarz, a farmer from Germany, decided to propose to his fiancée last year, he had his best man program a seed drill to leave empty areas in his cornfield. Once the crops grew around those spaces, the words “*Willst du mich heiraten?*,” or “Will you marry me?” would be written across an area 200 by 100 metres.

When the corn grew tall enough, he persuaded his girlfriend to fly a drone over the field. Her reply to the surprise proposal? A big yes.





BONUS READ

SAVING THE

M O

What protections exist for the Moon as private



ON

industry rushes to mine our ancient satellite?

BY Ceridwen Dovey

No matter where in the world we are, when we look at the full Moon we see something that has remained unchanged since our ancestors first gazed at it. Unlike Earth's surface, in constant flux due to the effects of the atmosphere, changing weather patterns, shifting continents and moving water, the Moon's features have remained mostly the same for more than four billion years.

Since 2019's anniversary hullaballoo celebrating 50 years since Neil Armstrong took his "small step" onto the Moon and left a boot-print behind on that ancient landscape, the voices calling for a new golden age of space activities have grown louder, fuelled by the recent discovery of water-ice on the Moon.

The presence of lunar water-ice was initially theorised after a 1998 NASA mission, but in 2019, NASA confirmed there are significant ice deposits on the Moon. Water means the possibility of human habitation, and it can also be split into hydrogen and oxygen for rocket fuel. A permanent Moon base would be the first step in any plans to extract resources or launch missions elsewhere, especially to Mars.

All the major spacefaring nations now have designs on the Moon. In January 2019, China landed the first probe on the Moon's far side. The US, India, Russia, Europe, South Korea and Japan will send up robotic

spacecraft in the next few years, and some are gearing up for crewed Moon missions: NASA's Artemis programme is ambitiously aiming for 2024; the European Space Agency and China National Space Administration say they'll establish a joint Moon Village sometime in the 2020s, and China also plans to build its own lunar base by 2030.

Added to the mix, for the first time, are private companies, following a move by Western space agencies to form public-private partnerships to commercialise space activities and reduce costs. NASA has authorised nine US companies to bid on commercial payload deliveries to the Moon over the next decade. Japanese company ispace wants to mine the Moon and establish a settlement named Moon Valley as a base from which to mine asteroid belts. An American company called OffWorld plans to establish robotic mining and manufacturing workforces both "on and offworld".



An artist's impression of a mining operation on the Moon

Morgan Stanley analysts have estimated the global space industry – currently worth around US\$350 billion – will be worth more than US\$1 trillion by 2040. Goldman Sachs Research has predicted the world's first trillionaire will make their fortune mining asteroids.

Untold riches

These new space-mining corporations are keen to get in early on what they see as an emerging market of untold riches. Water-ice is not the Moon's only potentially lucrative resource. It's believed there are also rare-earth metals such as yttrium, samarium and lanthanum, all used in modern electronics, as well as platinum-group metals, and possible future energy sources like Helium-3. The current

buzz phrase is 'in situ resource utilisation', which means rather than bringing lunar resources back to Earth they would instead be used on the Moon to enable settlement and onward journeys, including forays to resource-rich asteroid belts.

Silicon Valley tech titans have funded several space start-ups. In May 2019, spaceflight company Blue Origin (owned by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos) unveiled its lunar lander. Another company, Moon Express, has attracted major investment from Paypal co-creator and Trump backer Peter Thiel's Founders Fund. And, of course, there's Elon Musk's company SpaceX.

"Water is the oil of the solar system," Moon Express's website reads, "and the Moon will become a gas



Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic aims to provide spaceflights to space tourists

station in the sky". Space commerce boosters often describe space as the new Wild West, enthusiastically comparing the Moon boom to gold rushes of times past, with little awareness that this is not the most inspiring analogy for those aware of the social and environmental harm – and economic inequalities – caused by resource grabs on Earth.

The trouble is, when it comes to mining the Moon, the pro-mining camp likes to claim that they are the ones who will save the Earth.

On Moon Express's website, they say their mission is to return to the Moon, "Earth's 8th continent, a new frontier," and unlock "its mysteries and resources for the benefit of humanity". The website claims that "expanding Earth's economic and

social sphere to the Moon is our first step in securing our future," so that "a new generation will look up and see lights on the Moon, and know that they are part of a multi-world species."

Richard Branson, founder of Virgin Galactic, promotes his space tourism company by saying, "We can truly bring positive change to life on Earth", while Mars Society founder Robert Zubrin believes we must go to space so we don't go to war with each other on Earth over dwindling resources.

It's powerful, rousing stuff. Life on Earth has certainly been enhanced by space innovations, including GPS, weather forecasting and wi-fi. There would be genuine advantages

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

from other space dreams, such as continuous solar power beamed from on high. One large metallic asteroid supposedly holds enough quantities of certain metals to sustain human use on Earth for millions of years.

Those who propose mining space resources describe them as ‘near infinite,’ and say once we’re released from the prison of resource scarcity, world peace will automatically ensue. In a 2014 *New Republic* article, Rachel Riederer called out these would-be space miners for believing that a sky “full of infinite riches and abundance” would create peace on Earth. “Why wouldn’t riches from the heavens cause conflicts and problems?” she writes. “Their vulgar terrestrial cousins always have.”

It does seem dangerously naive to believe that, when space exploration ramps up, we’ll be our best selves out there. Margaret Weitekamp, curator of space history at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC, observes there has “always been this sense that space is aspirational, perfecting, different. But it’s an extension of who we are on the ground, run through this lens of great expense and great danger.”

American climate change activist

Bill McKibben thinks it doesn’t make sense to spend time or money on space. “The least hospitable square inch of Earth is ten times more hospitable than the most hospitable corner of the rest of the galaxy,” McKibben says. “That we’re going elsewhere in order to have a pristine Earth is absurd. It’s more likely that the ... idea of an exit gives us permission to wreck this place.” Other commentators counter that investing in space science and technologies does not equate to giving up on Earth, and that those innovations could well improve life as we know it in ways we can’t predict.

Until now, however, there’s been hardly any consideration of the space environment as something worth protecting. This is partly due to the unknown environmental effects of mass space tourism,

rocket launches or Moon mining. It’s also the result, writes Australian space archaeologist Alice Gorman, author of *Dr Spacejunk vs the Universe*, of the general tendency to see space “as a resource to be exploited [rather] than an environment to be managed”. She has called for the establishment of “international environmental impact assessments” to be required for “all proposed space projects”.



There's already evidence that rocket plumes may deplete ozone, and vaporised space debris could affect the chemistry of Earth's atmosphere. Hydrazine fuel, often released unburned in the early stages of lift-off, is known to cause diseases in people living near rocket launch sites.

Possible pollution

Worse, nuclear power is once more being touted as the only viable option for Moon missions. NASA and the US Department of Energy recently tested a nuclear fission reactor prototype, called KRUSTY (the Kilopower Reactor Using Stirling Technology), as a power source for long-duration lunar missions, heralding a new era of supposedly "safe" and "efficient" nuclear-powered space exploration. Over the past half century the Soviets have sent more than 40 nuclear reactors into space.

Historically, many prospective space 'colonists' have been untroubled by the risk of contaminating the Moon's environment. Marshall T. Savage, a space settlement fanatic who penned a book about "colonising the galaxy in eight easy steps", wrote in a 1995 *Space Governance* article: "We can't really mess up the Moon, either by mining it or building nuclear power plants. We can ruthlessly strip mine the surface of the Moon for centuries and it will be hard to tell we've even been there. The same is true of atomic power. We could wage unlimited

nuclear warfare on the surface of the Moon, and be hard pressed after the dust had settled to tell anything had happened."

But he's wrong: we can mess up the Moon. Its 'surface boundary exosphere' - now recognised as a very fragile, thin atmosphere - is vulnerable to being altered. NASA has acknowledged that "irreversible pollution of the lunar atmosphere is a real possibility". Philip Metzger, an American planetary scientist, says that with "many, many landings on the Moon, eventually you'll put so much [exhaust] gas into that environment that the atmosphere is no longer a collision-less atmosphere", in which the constituent gas molecules never collide with one another. "Then it becomes a layered atmosphere. Once that happens, suddenly it takes a very long time for all that gas to escape back to space, hundreds of years."

One environmental risk all stakeholders agree on is that posed by space debris. There's already about 5000 satellites in orbit around Earth, of which roughly 2000 are operational, plus hundreds of millions of tiny pieces of debris. Ninety-five per cent of the stuff in low-Earth orbit is classified as 'space junk'. More space debris makes accessing space costlier in terms of loss of equipment (and possibly of human life). There's also the risk of the Kessler effect: a cascade of collisions,

Companies plan to launch large numbers of satellites into very low orbits, which are the most valuable slots

to the point where the most useful orbital slots become permanently clogged.

“We are in the process of messing up space, and most people don’t realise it because we can’t see it the way we can see fish kills, algal blooms or acid rain,” Michael Krepon, an expert on nuclear and space issues, said in 2015. Maybe we’ll understand only when it’s too late, “when we can’t get our satellite television and our telecommunications ... when we get knocked back to the 1950s”.

The current clashes over space are rooted in the nitty-gritty of international space law. There are five multilateral UN treaties governing space, most importantly the 1967 Outer Space Treaty (OST), which has been ratified by 109 states, including all

major spacefaring nations. It defines outer space as a global commons, the province of all humanity, free to be used and explored “for the benefit and in the interests of all countries”, “on a basis of equality” and only for “peaceful purposes”.

Article II of the OST has become the major sticking point in the new space race. It forbids “national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means”. No nation can make a territorial claim on the Moon or on any other celestial bodies, such as asteroids.

While the OST contains no explicit ban of appropriation by private enterprise, Steven Freeland, a professor specialising in space law at Western Sydney University and Australia’s representative to the UN Committee

READER'S DIGEST

on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), says discussions at the time of the OST negotiations clearly show the states parties, including the US, were “of the opinion that Article II prohibited both public and private appropriation”.

Yet this perceived legal uncertainty is the loophole that commercial companies are now exploiting. They've actively lobbied for an interpretation of OST Article II in the domestic space law of certain countries, to allow for private ownership of resources extracted from the Moon or other celestial bodies. They argue that, because the OST declares all humans are free to “use” space, companies can exercise this right by mining anywhere they like. They won't claim ownership of the land itself, but will claim ownership of the resources they mine there.

They've already had a major win in this regard. The space industry lobby in the US put pressure on members of Congress to reinterpret the US's obligations under international space law, to become more ‘business friendly’. The outcome was the *2015 Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act*, signed into law by President Obama. Since then, companies owned by US citizens have been given the right to claim ownership of – and sell – any resources they mine off-Earth.

Further emboldened by the Trump administration, the “commercial [space] industry is becoming far more aggressive in how it lobbies for its own

interests” in the US, Freeland says. There have been Acts proposed in recent years to enable a corporate space culture of “permissionless innovation”, with little regulatory oversight. In a 2017 speech, President Trump's space law adviser Scott Pace said, “It bears repeating: outer space is not a ‘global commons’, not the ‘common heritage of mankind’, not ‘*res communis*’ [area of territory that is not subject to legal title of any state], nor is it a public good.”

Even if you accept the US government's interpretation of Article II – that space resources, but not the territory on which they're located, can be owned – what happens if someone mines an asteroid out of existence, which is an act of outright appropriation?

Should the public trust that companies mining in space will do the right thing? We're still uncovering the full extent of terrestrial mining companies' cover-ups. For instance, in-house scientists at Exxon – now Exxon-Mobil, one of the biggest oil and gas companies in the world – knew long ago that burning fossil fuels was responsible for global warming, but they actively buried those findings and discredited climate change science for decades.

We live in a world where ‘meta-national’ companies can accrue and exercise more wealth and power than

traditional nation-states. Silicon Valley is believed to be becoming more powerful than not only Wall Street but also the US government. Branson and other space billionaires like to reassure the masses they're "democratising" space: just as plane travel started out for the wealthy and gradually became cheaper, so too will space travel. Yet this conveniently overlooks the fact that railroads, airlines and now space industries have all been heavily subsidised by taxpayers. "When we take a step back and notice that private corporations are often even less accountable than governments, then it seems mistaken to say these decisions have been democratised," Ryan Jenkins, an emerging sciences ethicist at California Polytechnic State University, says. "They've merely been privatised."

Lenient supervision

In 2017, Luxembourg – already a corporate tax haven, complicit in international investor tax avoidance and evasion – followed the US's lead and passed a space-resources law that allows companies to claim resources they extract from space as private property. *Guardian* journalist Atossa

Araxia Abrahamian recounted a chilling comment from an American space executive: "We just want to work with a government who won't get in the way." Companies anywhere in the world can stake resource claims in space under this new law; their only requirement is an office in Luxembourg.

This sets a murky precedent of 'regulatory forum-shopping', where companies choose to incorporate in

states where they'll be most leniently supervised. In 2018, a Silicon Valley start-up called Swarm Technologies illegally launched four miniature satellites known as CubeSats into space from India. They'd been refused launch permission in the US due to safety concerns over whether the satellites could be tracked once in orbit. Fined US\$900,000

by the US Federal Communications Commission, the company was subsequently given permission to start communicating with its satellites, and launched more CubeSats as part of a payload on a SpaceX rocket that November. In January 2019, the company raised \$25 million in venture capital.

Space start-ups that are prepared – unlike Swarm Technologies – to play





An artist's impression of what asteroid mining might (possibly) look like

by the rules are nonetheless still proposing to launch their own swarms of hundreds or thousands of satellites into very low orbits around Earth. SpaceX has already launched over 1000 internet-beaming Starlink satellites, aiming to have a constellation of at least 30,000 in orbit eventually. The UK's Royal Astronomical Society said these satellites will "compromise astronomical research" due to light pollution, and questioned why there'd been no proper consultation with the scientific community before launch.

What protections exist for the Moon? After the Moon landing in 1969, there was a growing sense in the international community

that the Outer Space Treaty did not go far enough towards establishing rules of lunar engagement.

A new treaty was proposed, which came to be called the Moon Agreement. This received unanimous approval from the UN General Assembly, and opened for signature in 1979. In stark contrast to the 1967 OST, however, the Moon Agreement has only 18 states parties to the treaty, of which one is Australia (India and France have signed but not ratified the treaty). None of the spacefaring nations with a crewed space programme would sign it.

The Moon Agreement reaffirms many of the same general principles as the OST: that the Moon is the "province of all mankind", to be used and explored only for peaceful purposes.

But in Article 11, the Moon Agreement states the Moon and its natural resources are the “common heritage of mankind”, which means something quite different to “province of mankind”, explains Joanne Gabrynowicz, editor-in-chief emerita of the *Journal of Space Law*. The term *province of mankind* affirms that space is for the use and exploration of all humans (gender-biased language notwithstanding). *Common heritage of mankind* is a term yet to be clearly defined, but suggests the Moon is the repository of many varied forms of human heritage, not just economic but also historical, religious, cosmological, cultural and scientific – all of which must be taken into account when deciding what can be done there. “This was the first source of controversy in the Moon Agreement,” says Gabrynowicz.

The next controversy was that, while in theory the Moon Agreement allows for the use and exploration of the Moon, the conditions on this use (and any proposed mineral extraction) are stringent.

The Moon Agreement calls for the states parties to establish a more detailed international governance regime once the exploitation of the natural resources of the moon is “about to become feasible”. Consideration must be given to environmental risks. Most significantly, there must be mandatory and “equitable sharing ... in the benefits derived from those resources, whereby the interests and

needs of the developing countries ... shall be given special consideration”.

In spite of the rhetoric of all humans being comrades on Spaceship Earth, when it came down to it, the wealthy, spacefaring nations were not prepared to contemplate the possibility of sharing the financial or other benefits of space-resource prospecting with poorer nations.

Treaties

Australia’s ratifying of the Moon Agreement wasn’t so much to do with divvying up space resources, but to support the principles of non-nuclear proliferation. The Moon Agreement put in place stronger prohibitions against nuclear weapons in space and on the Moon than the OST, and Australia’s representatives to the UN understood these were security and arms control treaties more than space treaties.

Kerrie Dougherty, former curator of space history at Sydney’s Powerhouse Museum, says it’s often forgotten that Australia held the chair of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space’s Scientific and Technical Subcommittee for more than 30 years, and was “therefore influential in the development of many aspects of the space regime that is governed by the various UN treaties”. Now that the Australian Space Agency has been established, she believes the country is in a strong position to play mediator once again.

Since the establishment of the Australian Space Agency in 2018, those who strongly support the growth of local space commerce have been hinting – rather loudly – that Australia should consider withdrawing from the Moon Agreement.

“The train is moving very quickly for the space industry here, and we’re concerned that developing a regime through the UN is not going to be a fast process,” William Barrett, of the Space Industry Association of Australia, said at a discussion of the Moon Agreement hosted by his association. “People in industry want to know: can I protect my assets? And I’m not sure how long they’re prepared to wait for an answer on that.”

However, when Alexandra Seneta, the Australian Space Agency’s executive director of regulation and international obligations, was asked at the same event if Australia might consider withdrawing from the Moon Agreement, she responded emphatically. “No. These treaties are black-letter international law. We are committed to multilateralism, not unilateralism, when it comes to space.” Along with Steven Freeland, Seneta represents Australia at meetings of UN COPUOS. The Moon Agreement, in her view,

“expresses the desire to prevent the Moon from becoming an area of international conflict”.

Many of the most passionate advocates for privatising space believe it will transform what has been mostly a military domain, governed by secrecy, into a place of free trade.

Others believe, just as passionately, that allowing commercial opera-

tors to undermine the principles of non-appropriation encoded within international space law is a sure-fire way to hasten global conflict in space. Nikki Coleman, an Australian space and military ethicist, returned from the UN Institute for Disarmament Research’s Space Security Conference in Geneva in 2019 feeling concerned at “the glacial

pace at which we make and change laws regarding space” compared with the “breakneck pace at which commercial groups are now entering space”.

In 1997, the US Space Command (disbanded in 2002 but re-established in 2019 under President Trump, with responsibilities for space-warfighting) laid out their future for space in their ‘Vision for 2020’: “Historically,



military forces have evolved to protect national interests and investment – both military and economic ...

“Likewise, space forces will emerge to protect military and commercial national interests and investment in the space medium.”

There is no separating “the militarisation, weaponisation and privatisation of space,” says Bruce Gagnon, an American activist who has rallied for social justice and peace in space for almost 30 years, and in 1992 founded the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space. “It’s a seamless web.”

Many people within the wider Australian space community believe, like Dougherty, that Australia should use its position as a party to the Moon Agreement to play a leadership role in restarting a crucially important

global conversation about space governance and security.

Annie Handmer, a scholar of the history and philosophy of science at the University of Sydney, has studied both the Antarctic Treaty System and the outer space treaties. She believes Australia’s track record using science diplomacy in Antarctica is something it should draw from as a global leader in space diplomacy.

In centuries past, the Moon was thought to be two-faced, to have a dual personality. It could be welcoming and serene, or the harbinger of lunacy and mayhem. The Earth has two faces to show to the Moon, too. Which one will we choose when the time comes? **R**

THIS IS AN ABRIDGED VERSION OF AN ESSAY ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN *THE MONTHLY* MAGAZINE’S JULY 2019 ISSUE AS ‘MINING THE MOON’.

Puzzle Answers

From pages 122-124

SUDOKU

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

NO MORE SCISSORS

Earth does. To be balanced, each element must win against two other elements and lose against two. We already know that metal is defeated by fire and water, and it can’t win against itself, so it must beat earth and air. Now earth has lost to air and metal, so it must beat water and fire.

BREAKFAST PLATES 15.

TREASURES

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PIC-A-PIX: PENNY

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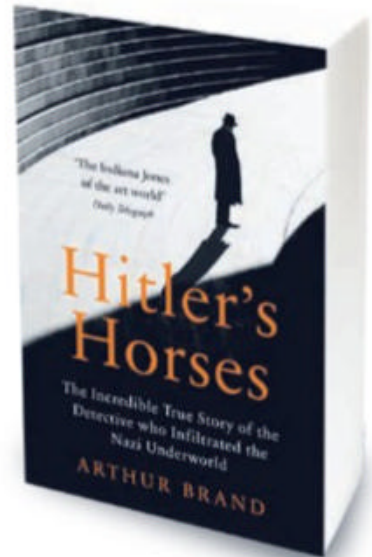
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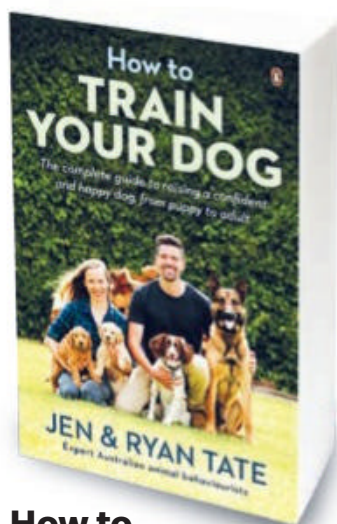
Hitler's Horses

Arthur Brand PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE

Author Arthur Brand is an art detective who recovers lost treasures. *Hitler's Horses* is the true story of how Brand went undercover to investigate one of World War II's unexplained mysteries: the disappearance of the three-metre-high *Striding Horses* – Hitler's favourite statues that stood sentinel outside his window in the Reich Chancellery in Berlin. During his investigations, Brand discovers a terrifying world where neo-Nazis and former KGB agents work in collaboration to sell Nazi art and forgeries worth millions of dollars.



COMPILED BY DIANE GODLEY



How to Train Your Dog

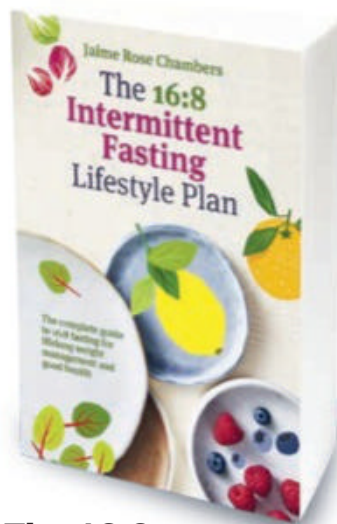
Jen & Ryan Tate
PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE

Whether you're thinking of getting a pet pooch or you acquired one during the pandemic, this comprehensive guide to raising and training dogs of any age is an indispensable resource. Ryan and Jen Tate are respected dog and animal behaviourists with 30 years' experience between them. In this book they offer practical advice so you can stay in control and enjoy your dog. Topics include resolving behavioural issues such as barking, digging and chewing, and learning for adult dogs.

The Husband Poisoner

Tanya Bretherton
HACHETTE

After WWII, women who had gone out to work and contributed to the war effort suddenly found themselves disenfranchised – freedoms lost and troublesome husbands regained. When some of these women headed back into the kitchen, they did so with sinister intent. In her fourth non-fiction title, sociologist and critically acclaimed author Tanya Bretherton investigates women in post-war Sydney who looked for deadly solutions to what they saw as impossible situations. A fascinating read.



The 16:8 Intermittent Fasting

Jaime Rose Chambers
PAN MACMILLAN

Unlike most diets, the focus on intermittent fasting (IF) is on *when* to eat, not so much on *what* you eat. According to Chambers, an accredited dietitian, it really is as simple as fasting for a period of the day (mostly overnight) and eating within a certain window. Providing expert advice, recipe inspiration and meal plans – removing the daily dilemma of what to eat and when – Chambers' quest is to help people turn IF into a long-term lifestyle.

The Cat with Three Passports

CJ Fentiman

SILVER VINE PRESS

Fentiman's heart-warming memoir portrays how a Japanese cat taught her about an old culture and new beginnings. Struggling to fit in, she unexpectedly receives a job offer she can't refuse as well as a homeless kitten. The silver tabby grounds her in Japan, which in turn helps open her heart and mind to reconnect with her estranged family and experience the unexpected, like the naked men's festival, forest bathing, the temples of Takayama and Cat Island.

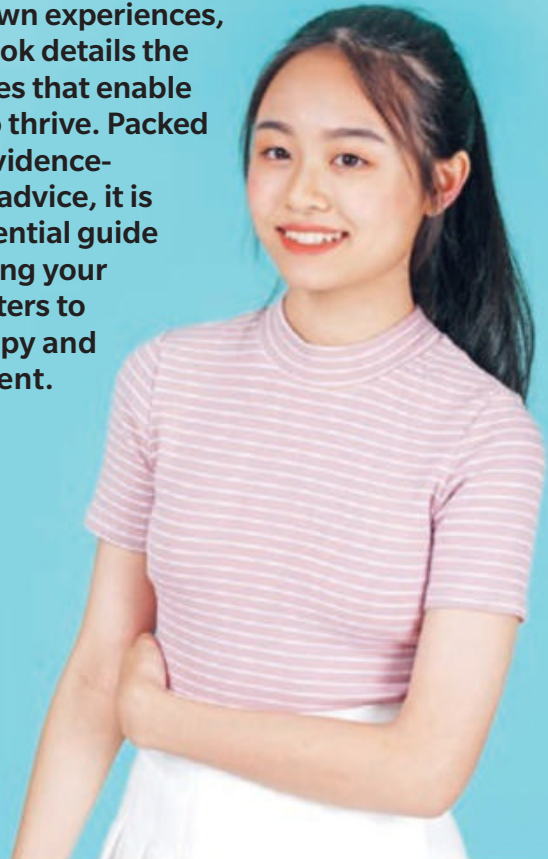
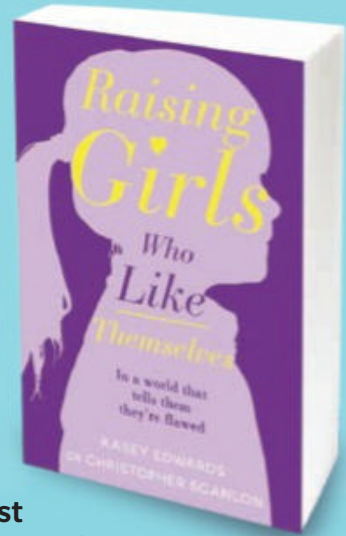


Raising Girls Who Like Themselves

Kasey Edwards & Dr Christopher Scanlon

PENGUIN
RANDOMHOUSE

According to the authors, when you raise a girl who likes herself, she will strive for excellence, nurture her physical and mental health, insist on healthy relationships, and be joyful and secure – everything you want for your daughter. Based on a decade of research and their own experiences, this book details the qualities that enable girls to thrive. Packed with evidence-based advice, it is an essential guide to raising your daughters to be happy and confident.





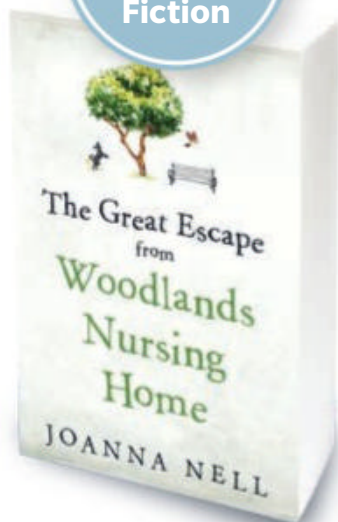
Fiction

The Last Convict

Anthony Hill

PENGUIN

Meticulously researched over 16 years, award-winning author and historian Anthony Hill has recreated the life of Samuel Speed, the last convict to be transported to Australia and survive. A few months before his death in 1938, Speed shared his story with a journalist, which formed the foundations of *The Last Convict*. Homeless and starving, Speed burns a stack of barley in order to be locked up for the night and given food and shelter, but finds himself sentenced to seven years in the colonies.



The Great Escape from Woodlands Nursing Home

Joanna Nell

HACHETTE

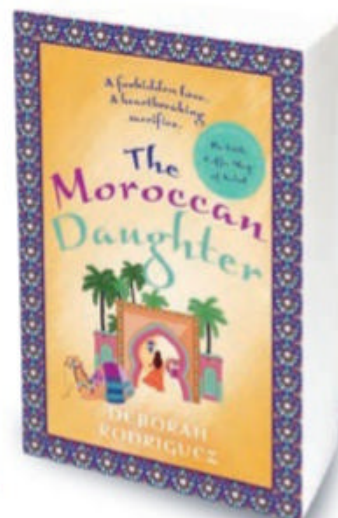
Best-selling author Joanne Nell is also a general practitioner with a passion for women's health and elderly care. So, it's not surprising that her character-driven novels centre around these subjects. Creating young-at-heart characters, Nell's third novel is set in a nursing home where newly arrived 'inmates' Hattie and Walter plan to return home ASAP. A charming yet poignant tale that shows it's never too late to laugh and form new friendships.

The Moroccan Daughter

Deborah Rodriguez

PENGUIN

You may know hairdresser turned author Deborah Rodriguez from her previous novels, such as *The Little Coffee Shop of Kabul*. In her latest novel, Rodriguez regales us with a modern-day story of forbidden love set in North Africa. When Amina goes back home to Morocco to attend her sister's wedding, she realises it is time to confront her father with her secret, her American husband. But behind the ancient walls, she is caught in a web of lies and clandestine deals.





Podcasts

**Short & Curly**

Aimed at primary school children and their parents, this fun-filled ethics podcast discusses hard-to-answer questions such as: Is it fair to punish the whole class? Is it ever OK to fight back against a bully? From banning lollies to colonising other planets, this podcast helps kids find their way around tricky topics.

**My Parachute Won't Open!**

Skydiving has associated risks, such as one in 1000 parachute openings not going to plan. When Timothy Verissimo looked up, he expected to see a comforting canopy above him. Instead the New Zealand high school student saw a mass of twisted cords. His story will send chills down your spine.

**The Apology Line**

If you could call a phone number and say you're sorry anonymously ... what would you apologise for? For 15 years, thousands of callers flooded the line, confessing to everything from shoplifting to infidelity, drug dealing to murder. Then the man at the other end of the line decided to stop listening passively.

**LibriVox**

This month we highlight the most prominent site for free audio book downloads, <http://www.librivox.org>, which provides open access to over 15,000 books. The texts are all in the public domain and include classics such as *Treasure Island* and *Frankenstein*.

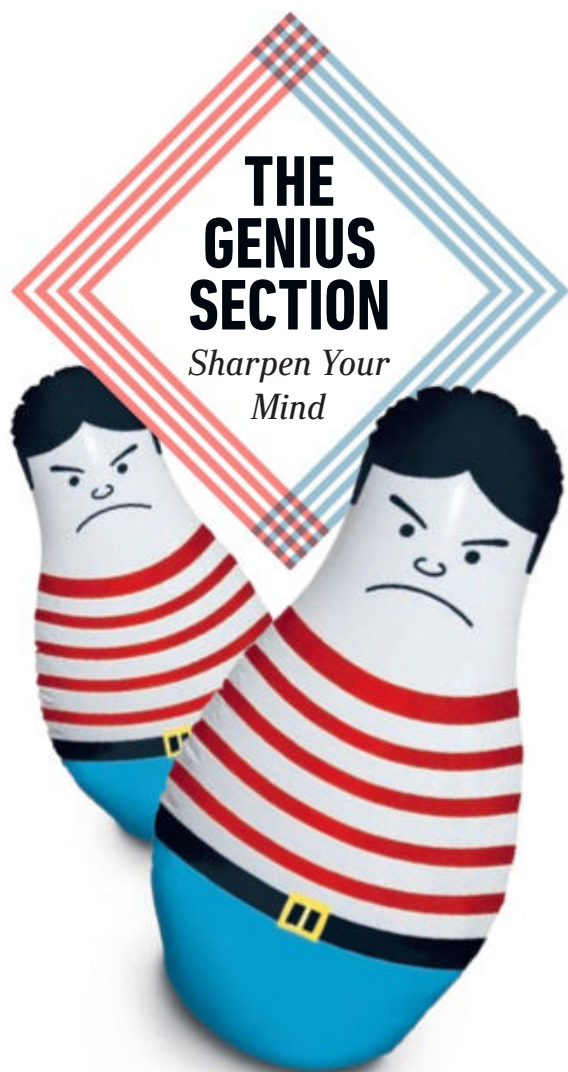


Audio Book

HOW TO GET PODCASTS To listen on the web: In a search engine, look up 'The Apology Line', for example, and click on the play button. **To download:** Download an app such as Podcatchers or iTunes on your device and simply search by title.

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THE GENIUS SECTION

*Sharpen Your
Mind*

The Art of the **'GOOD'** **MELTDOWN**

*Not all emotional eruptions
are bad. Here's how to lose
it the right way*

BY *Elizabeth Bernstein*

FROM **THE WALL STREET JOURNAL**

Preston Woodruff held it together for months during the pandemic – working in his garden and workshop, sharing meals with his daughter, and walking in the forest behind his home. Then a sneeze sent him over the edge.

Woodruff was sleeping soundly when he woke to an uncomfortable feeling in his nose. He reached for the box of tissues on his nightstand. He tried and tried to dig one out. The entirewad remained tightly wound.

So Woodruff grabbed the box, crushed it in his hands, and flung it at the far wall of his bedroom. Alone in the dark, he slammed his head back on the pillow and swore.

“I momentarily lost it,” says Woodruff, a retired philosophy professor.

Welcome to the meltdown. Have you had one lately?

It's what happens after you've held it together through a pandemic and a quarantine, working from home and homeschooling – on top of the dishes and the laundry and your regular familial responsibilities. Then, when something seemingly small happens, suddenly you're alone in your car screaming or sobbing to your dog about, well, everything.

People lost control of their emotions before this past year, of course. But we've been doing it a whole lot more because of our sustained levels of stress, anger and fear. It's no wonder our fuses have been short.

Think you've never had a meltdown? Think again. Although we typically expect meltdowns to look like the adult version of a toddler's tantrum – wailing, whining, whimpering – psychologists say they can manifest in different ways: crying, rage, silence or an emotional shutdown. “Often, people don't identify with the word meltdown because of the stigma of having a mental health crisis,” says Amanda Luterman, a psychotherapist. “They will just say they are having a really horrible day.”

What most meltdowns have in common is a loss of emotional control – often manifested physically – and a sense of helplessness. They occur when we no longer have the emotional resources to deal with our stress. And they're typically triggered by something small and unanticipated – a stubbed toe, a spill on our shirt, or (for me recently) a broken backspace key on the laptop.

Yet meltdowns have an upside. They allow us to release tension, and once we do that, we can think more clearly because we're no longer spending all our energy trying to hold it together. “A meltdown is the body's natural mechanism to let go, to cleanse itself of painful emotions,” says psychologist Tal Ben-Shahar. “It lets us reset.”

Not all meltdowns are created equal. Bad ones happen often and

can hurt people around us or leave us feeling worse. Good ones are rare, ideally take place when we're alone, and leave us feeling better than we did before.

To have a productive meltdown, experts say we should accept that it's happening (or about to). We need to identify what will make us feel better – and explain this to others. We should be careful to manage the negative effects and explore the meaning afterwards.

Woodruff, of the tissue tantrum, has minor meltdowns several times a week these days and makes a point of taking his

frustration out on inanimate objects – throwing a piece of wood across his workshop or slamming silverware into the dishwasher. But Woodruff makes sure to keep his outbursts brief. “It's wasted energy and wasted time to focus too long on the hostility of the moment,” he says. “I let it out, and then I have an immediate feeling of relief.”

Mike Veny was walking to his vehicle one afternoon when he received an e-mail from a colleague stating that some information he needed for a project wasn't available. He began stomping down the street, ranting about a growing list of complaints: a colleague who annoyed him, the state of the country, whether people

THEY CAN MANIFEST IN CRYING, RAGE, SILENCE OR AN EMOTIONAL SHUTDOWN

READER'S DIGEST

were looking at him funny, how his dad hadn't called him all week.

"It spiralled faster and faster until things felt 10,000 times worse than they really were," says Veny, who owns a company that provides mental-wellness and diversity training for corporations.

Luckily, Veny has a plan for dealing with meltdowns. He sat in his vehicle for 20 minutes and thought about the answers to three questions: "What do I feel?" (Anger, but also sadness at losing work and fear of whether he would get the coronavirus by going to the gym.) "Where do I feel it?" (In his

chest and stomach.) "What do I need now?" (Time to feel his emotions rather than suppress them.)

Next, he went to the gym and worked out. When he got home, he did yoga, which he says helps him let go of his emotions.

In bed that night, Veny realised he had a smile on his face. "I felt free of whatever it was that had been cooking up inside me," he says. "I felt like I was in control again, like I had taken my power back." **R**

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TIPS ON HOW TO HAVE AN EFFECTIVE MELTDOWN

ACCEPT IT Don't judge yourself. A meltdown lets you release tension and frees up energy that was spent suppressing emotions.

KNOW WHAT YOU NEED Some people prefer to be left alone. Others want a hug or a pep talk. Be clear with your loved ones about your needs.

MODEL A GOOD MELTDOWN No kicking the dog, punching the wall, or full-blown meltdowns in front of children – it can frighten them. But showing

others, especially kids, that you can express painful emotions in a way that doesn't negatively affect others can be an important lesson.

"Having an occasional meltdown and recovering from it helps people see that we can be OK through these expressions," says Carrie Krawiec, a marriage and family therapist.

TRY AN 'ALTERNATE REBELLION' When we lose control, we often want to rebel: quit our job or tell off our father-

in-law. Instead, plan a healthy rebellion that satisfies the need to assert control in your life, says psychologist Jenny Taitz. For example, turn off your phone, then go do something you enjoy yourself, explore the meaning of your meltdown, and move on. Get some exercise or try steady breathing. Reflect on what happened. Apologise if you've upset others – and forgive yourself. Having a meltdown makes you human.

FAMILY FUN

Spot the Difference

There are ten differences. Can you find them?



Tap Maze

Which tap carries which colour of paint?



Check your answers for Family Fun on page 128.

PUZZLES

Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles and mind stretchers, then check your answers on page 111

			3	2			2	3	2		
		4	6	3	2	10	10	2	3	2	0
		2									
		6									
		8									
3	2	2									
	2	2									
	2	2									
3	2	2									
		8									
		6									
		2									

Pic-a-Pix: Penny Moderately Difficult

Reveal a hidden picture by shading in groups of horizontally or vertically adjacent cells. The numbers represent how many cells are in each of the corresponding row or column's groups. (For example, a '3' next to a row represents three horizontally adjacent shaded cells in that row.) There must be at least one empty cell between each group. The numbers read in the same horizontal or vertical order as the groups they represent. There's only one possible picture; can you shade it in?

(PIC-A-PIX: PENNY) DIANE BAHER. MORE DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS AVAILABLE AT LEARNPICAPIX.COM; (NO MORE SCISSORS) DARREN RIGBY

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

Sudoku 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 of the outlined 3 x 3 boxes has all nine numbers, none repeated.



No More Scissors Moderately Difficult

Simone decides to create a variant of the game rock, paper, scissors. It will feature five elements. So far, she has decided that:

- Water puts out fire
- Fire melts metal
- Water rusts metal
- Air blows away earth

Simone will ensure that the new game is balanced, meaning that each element wins against as many other elements as it loses to. Under this system, between earth and fire, who wins?

BRAIN POWER
brought to you by



"Write, Erase, Rewrite"



Breakfast Plates **Difficult**

A cafe offers three options for breakfast:

- **bacon and eggs**
- **pancakes**
- **sausage and hash browns**

If four students come in, the waiter could get any of 81 different orders, since each person could ask for any one of the three things, and $3^4 = 81$.

Unlike the waiter, the cook doesn't need to know which customer gets what: he only needs to know how many of each breakfast plate to make (for example, three plates of bacon and eggs and one plate of pancakes). Considering this, and assuming that each student asks for only one breakfast plate, how many different possible orders are there that the cook could receive?

Treasures **Easy**

Can you locate 12 hidden treasures in the empty cells of this grid? The numbers outside indicate how many treasures are in each row or column. Each arrow points directly towards 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.

	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	1
2								
3								
2					↓	↖		
2	↘							
0	↗				↙			
2	↗							
0								
1			↗		↗			

(BREAKFAST PLATES) DARREN RIGBY; (TREASURES) FRASER SIMPSON

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TRIVIA

Test Your General Knowledge

1. Which common cloud type most resembles a fluffy white cotton ball? **1 point**

2. In what year was the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) established? a) 1948. b) 1967. c) 1977? **1 point**

3. The leopard seal is an apex predator on which continent? **1 point**

4. What was the first human-made object to orbit the Earth? **2 points**

5. Singapore is one of only three surviving independent city-states in the world. Name one of the other two. **1 point**

6. Compared to other seasons, heart attacks are more common during spring. True or false? **1 point**

7. In Western art, what is a *memento mori*? **2 points**

8. In which country were robotic wolves with flashing red eyes

and bared teeth recently deployed to scare off bears? **1 point**

9. What Spanish building did Frank Gehry design using software first made for the aerospace industry? **3 points**

10. There is growing evidence from geologists that New Zealand is part of a 93% entirely submerged mass of continental crust known as what? **1 point**

11. Which form of arthritis most commonly affects the large joint of the big toe? **1 point**

12. Which one of these technologies is the newest: the compass, irrigation or gunpowder? **1 point**

13. What beloved children's book characters were created by Finland's Tove Jansson? **2 points**

14. Which girl group had worldwide hits with 'Boombayah' and 'Playing With Fire'? **1 point**



15. Rhubarb's stems are delicious and nutritious, but which part of this plant is toxic for humans? **1 point**

16-20 Gold medal **11-15** Silver medal **6-10** Bronze medal **0-5** Wooden spoon

ANSWERS: 1. Cumulus. 2. 1967. 3. Antarctica. 4. The Soviet satellite Sputnik 1. 5. Monaco and the Vatican City. 6. False: they're more common during winter and summer. 7. A symbol or artwork intended to remind the viewer of their mortality. 8. Japan. 9. The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. 10. Zealandia also known as Te Riu-a-Māui or Tasmantia. 11. Gout. 12. The compass, which dates back to the 11th century. 13. The Moomins, a family of round, white trolls. 14. Blackpink. 15. The leaves.



WORD POWER

Order in the Court!

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

BY Sarah Chassé

- 1. acquit** – A: appear in court twice.
B: declared not guilty of a crime.
C: pay a fine.
- 2. defendant** – A: person who does without a lawyer. B: person who is held in contempt. C: a person who is charged with a criminal offence.
- 3. exculpate** – A: banish from a country. B: settle quickly.
C: clear of blame.
- 4. affidavit** – A: written declaration.
B: first offence. C: star witness.
- 5. perjury** – A: failing to appear.
B: lying under oath.
C: skipping jury duty.
- 6. sequester** – A: cross-examine.
B: approach the bench. C: isolate.
- 7. remand** – A: return to custody.
B: pay a small fine.
C: overrule an objection.
- 8. docket** – A: witness stand.
B: list of court cases.
C: ceremonial gavel.
- 9. appeal** – A: higher court's review.
B: plea deal. C: damages awarded.
- 10. deposition** – A: parole hearing.
B: testimony. C: lawyer's brief.
- 11. negligent** – A: careless.
B: honorable. C: jailed.
- 12. transcript** – A: stenographer.
B: a typed copy of what is said in court. C: judge's collar.
- 13. punitive** – A: involving money.
B: related to corruption.
C: related to punishment.
- 14. lenient** – A: merciful.
B: biased. C: bankrupt.
- 15. presume** – A: return from a recess. B: believe without proof.
C: give evidence.

Answers

- 1. acquit** (b) declared not guilty of a crime. The judge directed the jury to acquit Smith of the murder.
- 2. defendant** (c) a person who is charged with a criminal offence. Another word for 'an accused' is 'defendant'.
- 3. exculpate** (c) clear of blame. I'm not trying to exculpate myself – I admit that I stole a cookie!
- 4. affidavit** (a) written declaration. Anthony submitted a sworn affidavit that he was out of town.
- 5. perjury** (b) lying under oath. "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 criminal 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, John claimed that Sam committed the murder.
- 11. negligent** (a) careless. The negligent driver caused a three-car pile-up on the freeway.
- 12. transcript** (b) a typed copy of what is said in court. The judge's sentencing remarks were recorded in the transcript.
- 13. punitive** (c) related to punishment. The teachers used positive

reinforcement instead of punitive measures.

14. lenient (a) merciful. Colleen hoped the judge would be lenient about her many parking tickets.

15. presume (b) believe without proof. In most legal systems, people are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

VOCABULARY RATINGS

5-8: Fair 9-12: Good 13-15: Word Power Wizard

FAMILY FUN ANSWERS *See Page 121*

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



TAP MAZE



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“““
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NON-CORROSIVE



NON-TOXIC



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REMOVE ODOUR



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