

Matt's Home News

News To Help You Save Time And Money

October 2015

The Lesson Of The Brick And The Boy

A successful young executive was traveling down a neighborhood street, feeling on top of the world, and going a bit too fast in his new Jaguar. He was watching for kids darting out from between parked cars and slowed a little when he thought he saw something ahead.

Suddenly, a brick smashed into the Jag's side door. He slammed on the brakes and backed to the spot where the brick had been thrown.

The angry driver then jumped out of the car, grabbed the kid standing there and shouted, "What was that all about? Why did you do it?" he cried, shaking the boy.

The young boy was apologetic. "Please, mister...please! I'm sorry, but I didn't know what else to do," he pleaded. "I threw the brick because no one else would stop!" With tears dripping down his face, the boy pointed behind the parked car. "It's my brother," he said. "He fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up. Would you please help me lift him back up? He's too heavy for me."



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- The Lesson Of The Brick And The Boy
- Anniversary of the Microwave Oven
- October Quiz Question
- Would You Know?
- Encourage Nutrition With Positive Talk
- Creativity "Hacks"
- No Bones About It
- Income Preordained By Birth Order?
- How To Improve Older Brain Function
- Now, That's A Positive Attitude!
- 4 Easy Pumpkin Recipes (Beyond Pie)

The man saw the other boy, and moved beyond words, he hurriedly lifted him back into the wheelchair, then took out a handkerchief and dabbed at the boy's scrapes. A quick look told him everything was going to be okay. "Thank you," the grateful child told the man.

Too shaken for words, the man simply watched the boy push the wheelchair down the sidewalk toward their home.

It was a slow walk back to his Jaguar. The damage was quite noticeable, but he never bothered to repair the dent. He kept it there to remind him not to go through life so self-absorbed that someone has to throw a brick at him to get his attention.

~Matt Haviland

Anniversary of the Microwave Oven

70 years ago this October, Raytheon engineer and inventor, Percy Spencer, stood in front of a magnetron—a radar component—and noticed a chocolate bar start to melt in his pocket. Curious about the magnetron's potential, Spencer obtained a bag of popcorn kernels and watched them pop next to the magnetron. The microwave oven was born! The company Spencer was working for, Raytheon, then filed a patent on October 8, 1945, calling the new product, Radarange.



Their very first microwave oven was 6 feet tall, weighed 750 pounds, and cost around \$5,000. It wasn't until 1967 that a popular countertop model costing

\$495 hit the market. Approximately 70 million microwave ovens are estimated to exist today.

October Quiz Question

Q: *A small lily pad sits in the middle of a 60-meter round pond. The lily pad doubles in size every day. In 48 days it has covered the pond entirely. On what day will it have covered half the pond?*

September Question

Q: *Which North African seaport's name is Spanish for white house?*

A: Casablanca

"I'm so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers." ~ Lucy Maud Montgomery, Anne of Green Gables

Would You Know?

How much do you know about current events? The Pew Research Center's News IQ survey examined the knowledge of more than 3,000 people in an interactive quiz that asked them to identify a series of photographs, charts, and maps. Here's how the participants measured up when asked to do the following:

- Identify a photo of Martin Luther King Jr.: **91 %**
- Identify the country led by Kim Jong-il from a photo (North Korea): **82 %**
- Identify the location of Guantanamo on a map (Cuba): **78 %**
- Identify Malala from a photo (2014 Nobel Prize winner): **93 %**
- Identify Pope Francis's home country on a map (Argentina): **52 %**



You can take the quiz at: <http://www.pewresearch.org/quiz/the-news-iq-quiz/>

Encourage Nutrition With Positive Talk

Most parents want to encourage their children to have better eating habits. A study from Cornell University, reported on the CBS News website offers some useful advice: Focus on the good, not the bad.

Instead of emphasizing how bad cookies and soda are, emphasize the benefits of vegetables and milk and other healthy foods. You might put a note in your child's lunchbox saying, "This apple will give you lots of energy today." Or point out at dinner how milk will help him or her grow up to be strong.

The Cornell study showed that children respond more strongly to positive messages about food than negative warnings, so choose your words with care.



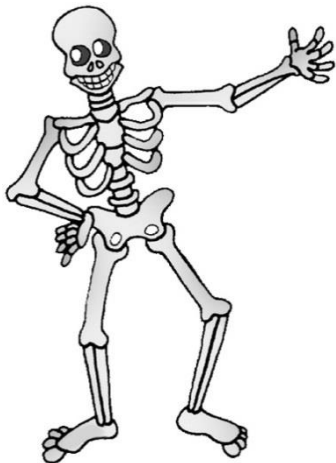
Creativity “Hacks”

Some people may be naturally creative, but many of us need a spark to get our imaginations flowing. If you feel stuck in a rut and can't generate any interesting ideas, try some of these tactics from the *Fast Company* website:

- **Think in metaphors.** When you describe a problem, don't use literal terms. Express it differently. For instance, trying to come up with a name for a new athletic shoe? Don't focus on "shoe." Instead, use word association: Toe, run, mile, or stride. Then try combinations—"Milestrider," for example.
- **Try visuals.** Draw a picture of your problem and your proposed solution. Putting it in visual form may help you see problems and opportunities that language alone won't bring out.
- **Borrow ideas.** Cast a wide net for ideas related to the one you're working on. Combine your ideas with others that have succeeded. Branch out. For instance, you may be designing a conference brochure, but can look beyond other brochures for ideas—look at art magazines, music videos, and other media, as well.
- **Reverse things.** Imagine a problem's difficulties are actually advantages. Customers can't get through to you? That means fewer interruptions during the day. Maybe the solution is to find a way for customers to order products or fix problems on their own instead of asking for your help with every concern.

No Bones About It

A doctor wanted to instruct his new intern in skeletal anatomy. The intern was sent to collect a new skeleton from the central storehouse. When he returned to the



doctor's office, there was a long queue of patients waiting. As the intern wrestled the skeleton through the office door, he became aware of people staring at him.

He gave them a smile and said, "I am just bringing him to the doctor."

An old lady said impishly, "My dear! Isn't he a bit late for the doctor?"

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A career path is rarely a path at all. A more interesting life is usually a more crooked, winding path of missteps, luck and vigorous work. It is almost always a clumsy balance between the things you try to make happen and the things that happen to you. ~Tom Freston

Income Preordained By Birth Order?

You may place no importance on your birth order or the alignment of the stars and planets, but a CareerBuilder.com survey of more than 8,700 workers may change your mind. The survey, conducted several years ago by Harris Interactive, found that first-born children are more likely than their siblings to earn \$100,000 or more per year. Last-born children are least likely to earn six figures. Other statistical tidbits regarding birth order:

- First-born children are more likely to be drawn to the professions of government, engineering, pharmacy, and science, and more likely to hold senior management positions or be vice presidents.
- Middle children are more likely to work in nursing, law enforcement, firefighting, and machine operation, and generally more likely to identify with professional/technical staff level positions.
- Last-born children are more likely to become artists/designers, salespeople, and information technologists; also more likely to hold administrative or clerical positions.

And whether you believe in astrology or not, the study found that the astrological signs of Scorpio, Leo, Taurus, and Cancer were more likely to be paid \$100,000 or more annually; Aquarius and Capricorn signs were among those most likely to earn \$35,000 or less.

How To Improve Brain Function

A study by UCLA researchers found that people can improve their brain function after just 14 days of following some simple, healthy lifestyle strategies. Incorporating healthy food, physical activity, stress reduction, and memory exercises seem to improve cognitive function.

In the study, participants were divided into two groups—a control group that did not change behaviors and one that incorporated modifications to improve health and mental function. After only 14 days of following the regimen, participants' brain metabolism slowed down in the working memory regions, which means the brain was not working as hard to accomplish its tasks.

Here are some of the health strategies participants worked into their daily routines:

- Memory exercises, such as crossword puzzles and brain teasers were worked on throughout the day.
- Daily walks.
- Five small meals a day in order to prevent drops in blood glucose levels, because glucose is the main source of energy for the brain. Participants also ate diets rich in omega-3 fats, anti-oxidants and low glycemic carbohydrates like whole grains.
- Daily relaxation exercises to prevent the release of cortisol, a hormone that can impair memory and damage memory cells.

You cannot swim for new horizons until you have courage to lose sight of the shore. ~William Faulkner

Now, That's A Positive Attitude!

An old woman woke up one morning to find she had only three strands of her once long and luxurious hair left on her head. Instead of getting depressed, she looked in the mirror and said to herself, "I'll braid these for the day."

The next morning she saw that one hair had fallen out, leaving her with only two. "OK," she said, "I'll part my hair down the middle today."

A few days later she woke up to discover that her last hairs had fallen out. With a smile, she said, "Wonderful! I don't have to do anything with my hair today!"

4 Easy Pumpkin Recipes (Beyond Pie)

October is the season for pumpkin, a squash that's loaded with vitamin A and fiber. Here are four super-easy recipes you can make from scratch. Each begins with making a



pumpkin puree from the hard pumpkin flesh. The only caveat is that you can't use your kid's carving pumpkin. You'll want to buy fresh sugar (or pie) pumpkins, which are small and usually purchased in a specialty store. And, if you're not inclined to roast your own pumpkins or can't find any sugar pumpkins, you can also use store-bought pumpkin in a can.

Homemade Pumpkin Puree: Choose a small (8 to 12 inches diameter) pumpkin. Cut off the top, halve, scoop out seeds, cut into quarters, and roast at 350 degrees for 75 to 90 minutes. Cool, peel and then puree the flesh in a food processor or blender. An 8-inch diameter pumpkin equals 2 cups of puree.

1. **Pumpkin Pie Smoothie:** In a blender, combine 1/2 cup ice, 1/2 cup vanilla nonfat yogurt, 1 teaspoon honey, 1/4 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice and 1/4 cup pumpkin puree. Blend until icy and smooth. Tastes like pie.
2. **Pumpkin Oatmeal:** After cooking your oatmeal, fold in 2 tablespoons of warmed pumpkin puree, mixed with 1 teaspoon of maple syrup and 1/2 teaspoon of pumpkin pie spice. Easy breezy.
3. **Pumpkin Soup:** In a small saucepan, sauté 2 tablespoons of minced yellow onion and 1 teaspoon of minced garlic in 2 tablespoons of vegetable or chicken broth until the onions are translucent. Remove from heat. In a blender combine 1/2 cup of pumpkin puree with the onion mixture, along with 1/2 cup of unsweetened coconut milk, 1/4 cup of vegetable broth, and 1/2 teaspoon of curry seasoning (optional). Whip until smooth, transfer to saucepan, bring to a quick boil, reduce to a simmer for 5-6 minutes, and serve. A healthy way to warm up on a chilly day.
4. **Pumpkin Cookie Sandwiches:** Use pre-made or store-bought oatmeal cookies. Make tasty treat sandwiches by spreading the following frosting between two of the cookies: Blend 4 oz of cream cheese and 2 tablespoons of butter. Add 1/4 cup pumpkin puree, 1 teaspoon of cinnamon, 3/4 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice, and a pinch of salt. Stir in about 2 cups of powdered sugar. Use a little flour to thicken if needed.

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The Power of Positive Parables

Dear Friend,

Parables are stories that illustrate a moral or lesson. From the Greek *parabolē*, meaning "comparison, illustration, analogy," parable was the name given by Greek rhetoricians to an illustration in the form of a brief fictional narrative.

Self-help books, the bible, and zen texts are all filled with parables, and just reading one every now and then can do wonders for a person's powers of positive thinking. Here's one I came across that has stuck with me for a while, reminding me that simply deciding something one way or another in advance has enormous power over the outcome.

The 92-year-old, petite lady was poised and proud. Fully dressed each morning by eight o'clock, with her hair fashionably coifed and makeup perfectly applied even though she was nearly blind, was moving to a nursing home today. Her husband of 70 years recently passed away, making the move necessary.

After waiting patiently in the lobby of the nursing home, she smiled sweetly when told her room was ready. The nurse walking with her provided a visual description of her tiny room, including the eyelet sheets that had been hung on her window.

"I love it," stated the lady with the enthusiasm of an eight-year-old having just been presented with a new puppy.

"Mrs. Jones, you haven't even seen the room yet," the nurse said.

"That doesn't have anything to do with it," the lady replied. "Whether I like my room or not doesn't depend on how the furniture is arranged ... it's how I arrange my mind. I already decided to love it."

Sincerely,



Matt Haviland
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