

Matt's Home News

News To Help You Save Time And Money

February 2017

Count Your Blessings

A wise wizard saw a horse crying in a field. The horse was fine and had good qualities, but it told the wizard, "I wish I could be more beautiful."

The wizard said, "Well, this is your lucky day. I can make you more beautiful. Tell me in what you want to change."

The horse said, "It seems to me that I am not well proportioned. My neck is too short. If you can make my neck a little longer, my upper body will be more beautiful. And if you can make my legs longer and thinner, then I will look more beautiful in my lower body. And if you could give me more stamina, I will be fine."

The wise wizard said, "I understand!" Then he turned the horse into a camel.

But the horse cried, "I wanted to be more beautiful. Why did you make me an ugly camel?"

The wizard said, "But this is what you asked for."

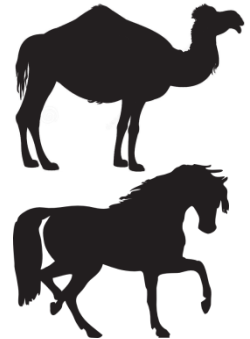
The horse cried, "No, I don't want to be a camel. People will laugh at me and they won't know what to do with me. I want to be a horse again."

"Why do you want to be a horse again?"

The horse described the things he loved about being a horse, and the wonderful things he could do as a horse. So the wizard said, "That sounds like a very fine creature. Would you like to become that creature?"

"Yes," said the camel. And so the wizard turned him back into a horse and the horse was happy.

~ Matt Haviland



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February Quiz Question

Q: *What is Prince Harry's real first name?*

January Question

Q: *Who invented the lightning rod for conducting electricity around a building and safely into the ground?*

A: *Benjamin Franklin.*

Are You Insane? Here's How To Fix That

It's been said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over, and expecting different results. If you look at that statement in reverse, it can be a useful life tool.

For instance, you might keep getting the same unwanted results over and over again, even though you try different things. Perhaps you keep getting passed over for promotion. Or your boss keeps having a "talk with you." You keep having the same arguments with your spouse. Or your business keeps struggling.

If you keep getting the same unwanted results – it may be a sign that you're doing the same old things, but dressing them up differently so that you *think* you're changing.

Want to really change? Try this:

First, admit there's an ongoing problem.

Second, create two mental pictures...one of the results you keep getting, and one of the results you want. Put those pictures at opposite ends of an imaginary line, the **old on your left** and the **new on your right**.

Third, mentally enlarge the picture on the right and reduce the picture on the left.

And **fourth**, take steps to actualize the picture on the right.

Continuously ask if the things you are doing will put you closer to the new picture or move you back to the old.

Try A Spending Fast

Some major financial professionals were recently asked for their best tips on living within a budget.

One suggestion that sounds particularly intriguing is declaring a moratorium on spending. Commit to spending absolutely no money for one day a month. Try stretching it to two or three days if possible.

You'll find out how much money you spend without thinking about it, and you'll break yourself of the habit of reaching for your wallet on impulse. You may also find that you can do without a lot of things you thought you needed.

Kick-Start Your Brain In The Morning

We've all heard that eating a good breakfast is important in the morning. Here are a few other aspects of a morning routine that can enhance your day, too:



- **Have a happy thought.** When you first wake up, even before you get up, think a happy thought. Think about what you're grateful for, or what you're looking forward to about the day. Ignore

creeping doubts for now.

- **Take deep breaths.** The oxygen will fire up your neurons and enhance your mood. Stretching, yoga, or brief exercise can help you breathe deep. Relax your muscles as you breathe. You can do this all through your morning routine, even as you enjoy a cup of coffee or tea.
- **Plan the day.** Take five or ten minutes to sort through all your appointments and to-do's for the day. Get it out of the mind and onto something you can see. The less clutter in your brain, the more focused you can be.
- **Picture the outcome.** Before you get to work, imagine a positive day, meeting, or project. Actions tend to follow intentions.

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Now That's A Tough CEO

A corporation brought in a tough new CEO to shake things up. Touring the facilities on his first day, the new CEO spotted a young man leaning against a wall while other employees were working hard around him.

He marched up to the man. "You! How much do you make in a week?"

Confused and alarmed, the young man stammered, "About \$300."

"Here." The new CEO pulled out his wallet and thrust \$300 in cash at the man. "Go home, and don't come back."

"Yes, sir." The man took the money and immediately ran away.

Proud of his tough image, the CEO turned to a nearby group of employees who had stopped to watch. "What was his job, anyway?" he asked.

They eyed each other nervously. Finally one said, "He's the pizza delivery guy from down the street."

Add-On Front Patios

Front porches and back patios have joined forces. The result is the emergence of the "front yard patio."

A front yard patio is inviting, which might herald a reversal of a 70 year trend towards hiding out in our houses and entertaining only in our backyards. This condition was a direct result of the age of the automobile, when garages gradually crept to the front of the house at the expense of our porches.

For those of us with garage-dominated or porch-less facades, the front yard patio is a welcome feature—a decorative, as well as functional entertaining space that says, "Hello."

Front patios can look like almost anything, and be constructed of any material that can be made weed-free and level, including brick, stone, gravel, or wood. They can be attached to the home, wrapped around the front door, or set off on their own. And they can be enhanced by such things as:

- A fire pit or heat lamps.
- A small side fountain.
- Low shrubs or low walls.
- Tea lights or lanterns.

Front patios are more than simple functional changes in our space and lifestyle. They're also a smart move for home sellers as they gain traction with buyers who see them as inviting and desirable features that add value to the house.

Why Honey Doesn't Spoil

Honey is unique among organic compounds in that it constitutes a "perfect storm" of attributes against spoilage:

Most of the honey is a supersaturated solution of sugar. Sugar is hygroscopic, which means it attracts water. Bacteria and other microorganisms that come in contact with this solution are desiccated (water is drawn from them into the solution). The same happens to yeast and other fungal spores, leaving almost no organisms in the honey that can spoil it. This supersaturation of sugar also inhibits the growth of yeast and other fungal spores.

Furthermore, bees process honey by means of an enzyme called glucose oxidase. You might know glucose oxidase from something else...it used to be called "Penicillin A," which destroys bacteria.

Never leave a jar of honey standing open. The supersaturated sugar solution will absorb moisture from the air and gradually become weaker, losing its anti-bacterial properties.

Are You Being *Green* or *Greenwashed*?

Confused by green marketing and labels? You're not alone. What, exactly, does green mean?

Green in general refers to the adoption of environmental management practices and products intended to minimize the damaging impact on the environment from resource depletion and pollution.

Green does not refer to healthy living, like doing yoga. Green refers to how you get to the yoga studio (ie. in your gas guzzler or your electric car... assuming your electric car was manufactured and delivered using green methods).

Many products call themselves green based on nuance, while others go all-out to green-up. In fact, there is no oversight of what green means, and no standard by which a consumer can judge if a product is truly green.



"Greenwashing" refers to excessive claims about the process or product beyond authentic environmental benefits. Greenwashing is rampant these days, and it's up to the consumer to decide if it's important enough to them to evaluate the manufacturing chain to determine if the product is truly green.

Kitchen cleansers are a good example. Many cleansers are labelled green, because the chemicals applied to your counters are "natural" (lemon juice). But the product might well have been manufactured, bottled in plastic, and delivered through the same high-polluting process that has been used for decades.

Should we stop caring about green? Not at all. The "green movement" serves us, if for no other reason than to help each of us think green, and adjust our own practices and expectations to be better conservators of our environment.

Eventually green standards will be developed, giving consumers a measure by which to judge products that call themselves green.

"We've all heard that a million monkeys banging on a million typewriters will eventually reproduce the entire works of Shakespeare. Now, thanks to the Internet, we know this is not true." ~Robert Wilensky

How Plants Know When To Bloom

Scientists have known since the 1930s that plants sense the length of the days and use that information to decide when to flower. It was only in 2005 that studies revealed a gene called FT which is active in the leaf and whose activity is regulated by day length.



FT produces a messenger molecule that is transported to the shoot tip where it activates a “gene program” that leads to the formation of buds. The program causes proteins to form that then talk to other proteins that exist at the future locations of buds.

Why does all this matter to scientists? Daffodils bloom in spring as the days get longer. Roses wait until summer. Rice flowers in the fall as the days shorten. Consider the benefits of early flowering rice. In parts of the world, this could allow production of more than one harvest per year, further reducing world hunger.

*“What is the use of a house if you don't have a decent planet to put it on?”
~Henry David Thoreau*

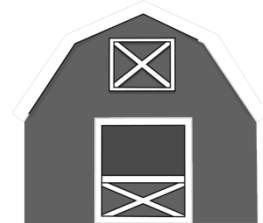
What Red Barns And Dying Stars Have In Common

The color red is one of the easiest and cheapest colors for mankind to create using artificial means (as opposed to crushing berries). The reason for this is because of something that happens when a star dies.

As a star shrinks, pressure and temperature rise, creating a long series of reactions that produce heavier and heavier elements. At some point, the star becomes too heavy and falls apart.

One of the elements that causes this rampage of self-destruction is iron, which then spreads throughout space, eventually ending up on planets like Earth. Red paint is made from a compound of iron and oxygen called Fe_2O_3 .

So the next time you see a humble red barn, think of the cosmos that went into its iconic color.



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Dear Friend,

What Would You Do Over?

Have you ever heard of a “do-over”? One definition is “the chance to do something again from the beginning, and do it better this time.” I came across these “do-over” thoughts from writer/humorist Erma Bombeck and they really got me thinking. She wrote,

If I had my life to do over, I would...

- Spend more time listening – and less talking.
- Spend more time on loved ones – and less on work.
- Spend more time living in my living space – and less cleaning it.
- Spend more time learning from the older people in my life – and less trying to convince them I already know it all.
- Spend more time with the windows rolled down – and less worrying about mussing my hair.
- Spend more time using the stuff I have – and less time collecting more.
- Spend more time playing – and less planning.
- Spend more time sharing the burdens of those I love – and less trying to get them to share mine.
- Spend more time participating in life – and less watching television.
- Spend more time taking care of myself when I’m ill – and less trying to convince myself that the world can’t get along without me for even a day.
- Spend more time having fun – and less being practical.
- Spend more time finding joy in each moment – and less wishing time would pass quickly.
- Spend more time on love and forgiveness – and less on anger and insults.

Erma Bombeck also said, “Given another shot at life, I would seize every minute...look at it and really see it...live it...and never give it back.”

Warm regards,



Matt Haviland
Your Real Estate Consultant For Life

P.S. If you had the chance for a “do-over” what would it be? I’d love to know, so email me at Matt@SJHouses.com or 609-338-3773

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