

LIFE info

creative recycling

are you
sun safe?

the emotional diet

television
advertising –
what is it really
trying to sell?



'Procrastination is the bad habit of putting off until the day after tomorrow what should have been done the day before yesterday.' Napoleon Hill

Until yesterday I hadn't paid a proper visit to a dentist in around fifteen years. I did visit a local chap down the road from my house in Hertfordshire back when I lived there, in order to get some custom-made bleaching trays and tooth bleach to brighten my tea-and-coffee soaked smile – but that was about six years ago and I'm still not convinced he was a *real* dentist. Peering into my mouth, he expressed shock and delight at the wire brace I'd worn glued to the inside of my bottom row of teeth since I was a teenager. 'It's like magic!' he enthused. Or something to that effect. But that's not the reason I question his authenticity. 'You have nice teeth,' he said. 'Your teeth look *great*.' Now anyone with the kind of extensive dental experience I have knows that no dentist ever tells you your teeth are 'great'. The man was obviously a charlatan.

When I was six, the dental and orthodontic communities came together and decided my 'arch' was too small for the number of permanent teeth I would have as an adult, which, in case you're wondering, is supposed to be thirty-two. Over the next nine years, I had sixteen teeth pulled – four of them permanent, the others were milk teeth removed to make 'space'. I had a palate expander to widen the roof of my mouth. I had metal braces affixed with ever-tightening rubber bands to pull my fangs into proper position. All I remember of this period of my life was trips to the dentist and the orthodontist, of my chin constantly feeling numb and enlarged, the smell of antiseptic, the open sores the braces rubbed into the inside of my lips every time new wires were strung. When I was seven, I had acid accidentally dripped on my face by an under-experienced dental worker who didn't even realise what she'd done. 'Did that product you used have acid in it?' my mother asked. 'No,' the woman answered cautiously. 'Then why does my daughter have a hole in her face?' Mum asked. The last dentist appointment I remember in the USA was when I was in my very early twenties and Dr Sweeney threatened to remove my wisdom teeth. 'Make an appointment,' he said. I never did. At first, it was simply never a convenient time to have my teeth pulled. I was at university. I had exams or papers to write. I had social commitments. I was going to Europe. Then I stayed in Europe, hiding out, you might suspect, from Dr Sweeney and his rusty tongs. Free at last from the tyranny of the dental police and their insatiable appetite for sadism and snide remarks, I thought I was finally safe.

Maybe it's the fact of being physically present in the US and the dental guilt that comes along with that, but for the past year, I've been thinking that I should really, *really* go to the dentist. I have lost many a night's sleep worrying about cavities and periodontal disease. But of course, the longer I *didn't* visit the dentist, the harder it became to go. 'They'll probably have to pull all my teeth out and give me dentures,' I thought wildly in the wee hours.

I finally worked up the courage and went. I have to tell you: today, I am feeling superhuman and smug. I still have no cavities – never have. My gums are fine. My dentist gave me a 'gold star'. It was figurative rather than literally stuck proudly to my jacket for all to see, but still, it's safe to say I'm rather chuffed with myself right now and this is not a sentiment I often feel. Of course I've learned a valuable lesson which I first shared with two classrooms of university students and which I'm now sharing with you: putting things off is silly and gives you a life completely devoid of peace of mind. Stop procrastinating. If not today, definitely tomorrow.

My students rolled their eyes, as they do in reaction to most of my advice. But I keep dishing it out anyway . . . and here's one last bit: enjoy your summer and make the most of it. Be happy. Floss daily. ☺

Becky

04 LIFE snippets

Just a few bits and bobs about this and that . . .

06 Religion or entertainment?

The seventies musical *Godspell* is certainly a hoot – but does it have anything serious or meaningful to say?

11 How to get through your to-do list

Struggling to get it all done? Here are a few tips for managing your to-do list and keeping yourself on task.

12 Truth – with a capital 'T'

Cliff was just a young man with a passionate dream to become a novelist – until an encounter with a pizza, among other things, changed the course of his life forever.

16 Hiking Helvellyn

One of the best ways to feel great is to get out and see some of the natural beauty this country has to offer. Helvellyn is a fun, challenging day hike that offers stunning views and variety.

18 Creative recycling

Anyone can fill a green bin. Sue Greenleaf offers some amazingly creative ideas for making the most of your old 'rubbish'.

24 With God on our side

Discover Gary Baugh's collection of war memorabilia and soldiers' Bibles – a poignant glimpse into history that gives us all a better understanding of the past.

28 People skills

As immersed as we are in our own lives and problems, it's easy for us to forget those around us. Noticing other people can make a tremendous difference.

36 Loving to be loved

Karen thought her husband would love the book of poetry she tucked into his bag – but to her surprise, she found he much preferred having his back scratched! We all have different ways we want to be loved. What's yours?

40 Waiting

Just as Viktor in the film *The Terminal* waits, so must we all. How can we make the most of this spare time?

42 Every sip brings you closer

Scott Moncrieff takes an amusing look at television advertising – in particular several adverts aired during the US Super Bowl.

50 Are you sun safe?

Make sure you know how to protect your skin against cancer. Andrew Cate offers tips as well as a quiz to help you discover your risk level.

56 The emotional diet

What does food mean to you? How can you break your emotional addictions?

58 Recipe

Goat's cheese and red onion salad.

62 Jigsaw sudoku

Even more painful than the regular kind!

contents



Dean Murray

THE X-BOW ROADSTER

You could be forgiven for thinking that Easyjet are now making cars, but this in fact the amazing X-BOW roadster.

And while it has the looks of a one-off Batmobile beach buggy, this nippy little car should cost you only £27,000 (US\$55,000) when it hits the showrooms.

It is the first car designed by Austrian



© Rex Features

motorcycle company KTM and is set to be a massive hit when it begins production in early 2008.

Developed in partnership with Audi, the X-BOW is only 700kg thanks to its carbon fibre monocoque shell.

And its lightweight construction means it can accelerate from 0-62mph in just 3.9 seconds.

The basic version's 162 kW (220 hp) Audi TFSI engine gives the car performance values that out-pace those of super-sports cars with more than twice the power.

Engineers have also stripped out anything they have deemed unnecessary in favour of extra speed – namely all 'comfort features' such as a roof, doors or windscreen.

The firm were so surprised by the positive response to the two-seater they have had to ramp up their production schedule from an original pilot series of 100 units to 1,000 vehicles.

They are also tinkering with the mean machine to make it street legal for the UK and other countries in the EU.

Expect Batman to put his name on the waiting list.

Exercise tip

Use music to motivate

Researchers have discovered that both men and women are able to exercise longer to exhaustion while listening to music. On average, women pedalled 25% longer and men 30% longer on a stationary bike before feeling exhausted. This is one easy way to prolong an exercise session.



© www.istockphoto.com/Lisa Gagne

© www.istockphoto.com/Simon Mitchell

If you happen to travel down to Cornwall this summer, consider paying a visit to The Minack Theatre, located near Porthcurno – just four miles from Land's End. An open-air theatre, Minack is built above a gully with a granite outcrop jutting into the sea, providing a gorgeous backdrop for the action on stage. If you're there between June and September, see one of the summer productions. Otherwise, the theatre remains open to day visitors for the remainder of the year. www.minack.com



© www.istockphoto.com/Michael Brake

DID YOU KNOW?
A group of jellyfish is called a 'smack'.

Victor Garber stars as Jesus in the legendary 1973 movie version of *Godspell*.

John Surridge

RELIGION OR ENTERTAINMENT?

A 40-something father takes his 14-year-old daughter to see the 70s musical *Godspell* at Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff.



GODSPELL SURRIDGE

We thought we were safe, sitting back on row G in the mid stalls. We were wrong. A single spotlight picked out John the Baptist, complete with bucket and sponge, and he was standing in the aisle right next to us! The audience hushed into a suitably reverent silence and the actor's solo voice rang out, clear and strong: 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord'. A few seconds later the atmosphere changed completely. Shrieks erupted from the audience as spongfuls of water from the bucket were flung over them, 'baptising' anyone who got in the way! This show was *not* going to be a reverent portrayal of the life of Christ.

Of course, it never was. First performed in 1971, *Godspell*, a musical version of Matthew's gospel by Stephen Schwartz and John-Michael Tebelak, was controversial right from the start. Seeing a college kid, dressed as a clown, wearing a Superman t-shirt and pretending to be Jesus, was just too much for mainstream Christians and they avoided it in their droves.

Can it be right to tell a serious story – to my mind the most serious and most important story ever told – in the style of a pantomime?

Back then I loved it. I had the soundtrack on an LP and learned to play as many of the songs as I could on my first guitar. I also tried to look the part, at least with the long hair and flares, if not the clown outfit. For a 14-year-old church-going kid in the seventies *Godspell* had just the right balance of religion and rock. *Godspell* was cool.

Fast forward to a cold and wet winter's night in 2008. I'm now taking my 14-year-old daughter to see the same show. I'm excited because it's a trip down memory lane for me

but I'm also a bit concerned. Will the show have any relevance at all for Anna or will it simply confirm her suspicions that her dad is an incorrigible old hippy?

I needn't have worried. The version we saw, produced by Paddy Wilson and directed by Paul Kerryson, was fully updated to suit a contemporary audience. Nine young actors, recognisable from their various TV and popular stage roles, gave the performance of their lives. In the grand setting of the 1,900-seater Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff – a venue more used to opera and ballet than the high energy *Godspell* – it perhaps felt a little out of place. Those who turned up in dinner jackets looked uncomfortable, and I soon wished I'd left my tie at home, but for all that it was an excellent night out.

My old LP only contained the songs from the show. I had forgotten just how much dialogue there was. In fact *Godspell* is more of a pantomime than a musical and as such it worked well. Bawdy humour, Elvis and Tommy Cooper impressions, jokes about Cardiff and allusions to current politics, all combined to create a party atmosphere with the audience fully engaged.

Fairly early on in the show, one of the female singers struck up a conversation with a man on the front row who happened to stand out because of his striped shirt. The unfortunate 'Andrew' (as we later discovered his name to be) became a focal point for the cast and the butt of numerous jokes. Fortunately he seemed to take it in good spirit. In the second half, Tiffany Graves, provocatively clad and looking a bit like Liza Minelli from *Cabaret*, came into the audience and actually sat on the knee of a rather nonplussed middle-aged gentleman to sing the raunchy number, 'Turn Back O Man'.

During the interval Christopher Bartlett, a 19-year-old actor from Barry (just down the road from Cardiff), entertained his home



The author outside the Wales Millennium Centre, nervously awaiting the show . . .

© Anna Surridge

crowd by running through the audience, stealing and redistributing ice creams and sweets at random. It was all good stuff – there was no danger of Anna feeling bored or left out. It was, as she put it, 'totally awesome'.

There were times, however, that I squirmed in my seat. Can it be right to tell a serious story – to my mind the most serious and most important story ever told – in the style of a pantomime? Yes, people are much less prudish these days than they were in the 70s, and it's no longer unusual to see dramatic portrayals of the life of Jesus, but isn't turning it into a comedy going a bit too far? On the other hand, as a Christian minister I have a vested interest in reaching new audiences with the gospel story. If this does the job, who am I to argue?

Also it has to be said that Jesus used humour in his ministry. Surely there must have been a belly laugh or two when he told

the story of the man who tried to remove a speck of dust from his friend's eye while he had a great big plank in his own! And the story of the rich man and Lazarus who, after death, go to hell and heaven respectively, and then strike up an amusing dialogue.

Godspell is full of Jesus' parables, which were all told to make a specific point. If the point is made effectively, does it matter if humour, or music, or any other medium, has been used in the process? If we are entertained at the same time as being educated, why should we complain?

And *Godspell* does educate. Woven in with the choreography, musical lyrics and the planned or improvised jokes, are words nearly two thousand years old. It's not all funny either. In the second half there is a significant mood switch. Throughout the show there's applause when the set pieces are completed – but this doesn't happen



GODSPELL SURRIDGE

when it comes to the scene portraying the Last Supper. There's just silence.

There are a lot of funny ideas about religion these days. For some people the word conjures up images of fanatics who are prepared to blow themselves up for their beliefs. For others it's just a joke – the buck-toothed, lisping vicar without a contemporary thought or relevant word in his head. 'Religion' as a word has been hijacked by the secular world to mean anything that people are passionate

about. (A couple of months ago Anna went to the Clothes Show at Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre where the slogan was, 'Fashion Is The New Religion'!)

If religion in general, or Christianity in particular, is going to be reclaimed and restored to its rightful position at the heart of society, it will have to be understood by and be relevant to today's masses. *Godspell* is a brave attempt to do just this.

Good luck to it. ☺

Anna's perspective

When Dad said to me, 'Do you want to see a musical called *Godspell*?', I didn't hesitate in saying yes. Why would I have? I love musicals! But then I realised that I had just agreed to go to see something I had no idea about – maybe it would have been better to find out about it before I had said yes.

So, what did I do? I typed 'Godspell' into Google and clicked on good old Wikipedia. The more I read about it, the more I thought I should have said no. It sounded like a cheap rip-off of *Jesus Christ Superstar* and as soon as I saw the date, 1970, I feared the worst. I had visions of people with oversized afros dancing around in gigantic flares. What had I let myself into?

As we approached the Wales Millennium Centre, I have to admit I was really quite apprehensive. We sat down in our seats about twenty minutes early and I read my book to pass the time and to take my mind off wondering what it was going to be like. Gradually, the theatre filled up until it was heaving.

The lights dimmed and the show began. I was shocked. It was fantastic! The music was unbelievable, the songs were catchy and the dances were mesmerising. It took me about three minutes to really start enjoying myself. I had a bit of a fright when one of the cast walked down the aisle next to me, with a bucket of water and a sponge. I sat there, eyeing up the wet sponge, cowering in my seat and hoping that I wouldn't be one of the 'lucky' ones to get 'baptised'. Thankfully I wasn't, so I could truly enjoy the squeals of shock from



© John Surridge

the members of the audience who had just been soaked.

The play itself didn't have a storyline as such. It was more one parable after another, squashed into a side-splittingly funny musical/panto. It was unlike anything I had ever seen before and I absolutely loved it.

The second half began rather casually. The lights didn't dim until halfway through the first song which was unusual, but good, as it made us in the audience feel included.

The message of the whole musical came together in the last scene, where Jesus was crucified. You could almost hear people's minds ticking, thinking through what the play was actually about. That's how it ended. It didn't show the resurrection, but perhaps that was deliberate. Maybe it was done that way to get people to want to know more. Some people might go home and pick up a Bible, wanting to know what happened next. It's possible.

I think this musical is a really good way to portray snippets of the Bible. It was enjoyable, and although there was a lot of humour involved, it did have a serious note too. I would definitely recommend it to anyone, not just Christians. Even if you're not looking at it from a religious point of view, it's utterly fantastic and well worth going to see. ☺

Sheila O'Connor

HOW TO GET THROUGH YOUR TO-DO LIST

Finding there are not enough hours in the day to get through everything you'd like to? Feel as if you are taking two steps forward and one step backwards? If you're having trouble getting things done, it may be because there's way too much on your list of things to do and you're getting overwhelmed. Here are seven easy ways to ensure you get things done and feel a sense of accomplishment each day.

Use lists. They're a necessity. You have a million things to do, right? Why clutter your brain with all those tasks? Instead, get them down on paper. You'll free up your mind for more important things.

Know the difference between a master list and a to-do list. A master list and a to-do list are two different animals. A master list includes everything you have to get done. It is simply a running list of tasks that don't necessarily have to be done in any particular order. It is basically a place holder so that you don't forget about things that need to get done. A to-do list is a short list of tasks that you need to do *today*.

Prioritise the items on your master list. Every time you add an item to your master list, code it A, B or C.

- A This is vital to the achievement of my goals and I must do it immediately.
- B This is important to the achievement of my goals and I must do it soon.
- C This is not very important to the achievement of my goals, but would be nice to do if I have the time.

Obviously, things like buying groceries, picking up items from the dry cleaners and doing that report for your boss and so on are usually indirectly supportive of your major goals. You have to eat, you have to wear clothes and you have to take home a wage packet.

Make sure your to-do list is not overwhelming.

Each day, transfer some of the items on your master list to your to-do list. Be sure the majority of tasks on your to-do list are A priorities. B priorities come next. Then, feel free to add one or two C priorities if you'd like. Cross anything you transfer to your to-do list off your master list.

I recommend no more than ten items on your to-do list each day. And if you can't seem to get ten items done, then I suggest cutting the number of items down to whatever you can manage. It's perfectly fine if your to-do list only consists of three or four items at a time.

Know the difference between a task and a project.

Don't add items that consist of multiple steps as one single entry. For instance, if one of the items on your to-do list is 'Plan birthday party', that is a project, not a task. A *task* consists of one step, while a *project* consists of multiple steps. Your to-do list should consist of tasks, not projects.

Be sure to break your projects down into tasks before you put them on your lists. For instance, five tasks within the project of 'Plan birthday party' might be:

- make list of people to invite
- select invitations
- post invitations
- plan party menu
- book entertainer

Don't add anything until everything is crossed off.

While you can add to your master list any time you like, the golden rule is that you cannot add anything to your to-do list until everything on that list is crossed off.

If you can't get to every item on your to-do list today, continue with those items tomorrow. Once everything is crossed off, feel free to add your next set of tasks to your to-do list. Think half-full, rather than half-empty. It is more optimistic and fulfilling to think of a glass as half-full, instead of half-empty. The same is true when it comes to your to-do list.

If you finish five out of ten tasks, don't feel bad. Instead, celebrate the fact that you accomplished five tasks, and that you're halfway there to completing the remainder of your list. You can do it! ☺

Clifford Goldstein

TRUTH – WITH A CAPITAL ‘T’

Cliff wanted nothing more than to be a fiction writer. At the age of twenty-three, his entire life revolved around the novel he was determined to finish. Find out what happened to make him burn his beloved manuscript. →



TRUTH GOLDSTEIN

One of the most fascinating stories of antiquity dealt with a Jew named Saul (we're never told his last name) from the ancient city of Tarsus, located in modern day Turkey. The setting is the first half of the first century AD. A fervent and devout Jew, a Pharisee (one of the priestly class), Saul was a relentless persecutor of Jews who were following the recently crucified Jesus of Nazareth. They claimed that not only was Jesus the long-awaited Messiah, but that he had risen from the dead. Convinced that they were a heretical sect, apostates from the true faith, Saul went on a *jihad* to imprison, or even kill, as many as he could.

Then, one day, something unusual happens. Here it is, in Saul's own words: 'Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them. On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads." Then I asked, "Who are you, Lord?" "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," the Lord replied. "Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'" (Acts 26:11-18, *The New International Version*.)

Soon after that experience, Saul of Tarsus became the apostle Paul and the world was never the same again.

Jump ahead in time almost two thousand years, and cross the Atlantic Ocean to the university town of Gainesville, Florida, where another Jew – this one secular – enters into his room. He's a writer, twenty-three years old, and has been working on a novel for two and half years, a project that has consumed him. He is determined to be a fiction writer – or nothing. Nothing in fact matters to him other than being a fiction writer, and being a fiction writer means nothing less than completing the

The pizza existed. There had to be an explanation for it, and that explanation – whatever it might be – was the truth about the pizza.

novel that has dominated his life for the past few years.

He enters the room, sits down at his manual typewriter (the year is 1979) and puts his fingers on the keys. At that moment, the same Jesus who appeared to Saul of Tarsus nineteen centuries earlier, appears to Clifford of Miami Beach, and says to him, *Cliff, you have been playing with me long enough. If you want me tonight, burn your novel. Burn the novel!* It is all Cliff has in the world. Nothing else matters to him. He could cut off his right arm easier than burn the novel.

'Please, Lord,' he argues, 'let me finish it, and then I will give my life to you.' The response is the same: *If you want me tonight, burn the novel.*

Cliff pleads, 'Please, I will write it all to your glory.' The Lord responds, *If you want me tonight, burn the novel.*



© Getty Images/Photodisc

Cliff tries one more time. 'Please, let me put it away, and we can talk about it later.' Jesus says, *Burn the novel.*

Tears streaming down his face, Cliff jumps up and leaves the room, not wanting to burn the novel. Not *able* to, in fact.

What happened to Clifford Goldstein, me, that night in Gainesville didn't happen in a vacuum. As with everything, it came with a background, a context, though in this case a context that, at least from a surface perspective, didn't appear a likely precursor to the event itself.

As I said, I was a secular Jew who grew up on Miami Beach, a graduate of Miami Beach Senior High School (class of '73), the child of non-practising Jews who rarely if ever spoke about God, and when they did it was generally about his non-existence or about what a *schlemiel** he would be if he did exist because of the Holocaust. For myself, I always wondered if there were a God, and used to think that if there were, how incredibly consequential that would be for my life even if I wasn't sure how or why.

I was, though, totally postmodern, even if I didn't know exactly what that meant at the time. I just believed, fervently, that no truth

existed, that the only absolute truth was that there was no absolute truth. You could have *your* truth, and that was yours; I could have *my* truth, and that was mine. (Never mind that because these truths logically contradicted each other, if your truth were correct then mine couldn't be, or vice versa: as a teenager, I hadn't worked through these things that far yet.)

My radical relativism received a fatal blow, however, one evening in a pizza parlour in Gainesville, Florida, where I was at university. I was eating a pizza, drinking a beer, when a thought suddenly hit me: truth, absolute *truth* had to exist. I mean, here was this pizza sitting in front of me on the table. There could have been a thousand different people with a thousand different theories on how the pizza got there: everything from the theory that the Babylonian god Marduk created it out of air, to the belief that aliens from Pluto dropped it from a space ship, to the idea that it had evolved from ammonia and amino acids. It didn't matter if they all were wrong; it didn't even matter if no one ever knew how the pizza got there. All I knew was that the pizza existed, and somewhere out there (even if I or no one ever knew or ever could know from where) there had to be an explanation for it,

Continued on page 17

* A Yiddish word that refers to a habitual blunderer or a fool.

Helvellyn

Hiking

*As I climbed the dark slopes of mighty Helvellyn
The torrents were roaring, the eagles were yelling . . .*
– Sir Walter Scott

If you're going fell walking this summer – and you should – Helvellyn makes a very satisfying climb. The third highest peak in England (950 metres), Helvellyn is located in the Lake District and features the famous 'striding edge' – the traditional scrambling route to the summit (pictured above).

Camping is allowed by Red Tarn; alternatively stay in Windermere or another nearby town.

Helvellyn is a relatively strenuous climb and is not recommended for small children.

Stay safe whenever fell walking by observing the following:

- Obtain a reliable local weather forecast before you set off and plan a suitable route based on the weather.
- Take waterproofs, spare warm clothing, hat and gloves, food and drink, a map, a compass and a survival bag.
- Learn basic mountain skills, particularly navigation.
- If weather conditions turn bad, turn back.

www.english-lakes.com

© www.istockphoto.com/Kevin Eaves

and that explanation – whatever it might be – was the *truth* about the pizza.

At that moment, I stepped back and looked around. I even pinched my cheek. Something was here. There was a reality, a world, a universe, just as there was a pizza. And then it hit me that, just as there had to be an explanation for the pizza, whatever it was, there had to be an explanation for the world, the universe, for *me* – and that explanation, whatever it was, whether I could ever know it or not, that was the truth about the universe, about existence. In that sense, then, that explanation would be the Truth. Truth with a capital 'T'.

I walked out of that pizza parlour, twenty-one years old, my head spinning, my whole view of reality having radically shifted. And I remember, too, a burning inside me as I was overwhelmed with this desire to know what this Truth was. And I remember thinking: If it were possible to know this Truth (because even though it had to exist it didn't mean I could know it), if it were possible, I wanted to know it – no matter where it led me, what it cost me, what I had to suffer. If I could know it, I wanted to – regardless of the cost.

All of which led to me to that room in Gainesville about three years later. . . .

Having finished university, I returned to Miami Beach for a while and then went to Europe and Israel, bumming around while the whole time writing my novel. Nothing mattered other than writing the book. It was my life. It was then that I had some incredible experiences, things for which the only rational and logical explanation would be the existence of God. For instance at one point, I said, 'God, if you are there, then you have to reveal yourself to me.' Not long after that I met a guy named Clifford Goldstein. He came from Miami Beach. He was a writer. He lived in the same kibbutz where I had lived in Israel months earlier. He was in the same

room I had lived in when I was there. Slept in the same bed, too. Had on the bookshelf over the same bed some of the same books that I had had when I was there, only they were his books, not mine. Finally, when I was on the kibbutz I had a blonde Danish girlfriend named Tine. Clifford Goldstein from Miami Beach, the writer, had a blonde Danish girlfriend named Tine!

That, and many other things, opened me to the possible existence of God – nothing more, nothing until that night when, as with Saul of Tarsus, Jesus came to me in that room. The novel was my god – it was all that mattered to me, and if I wanted the real God, if I wanted the Truth, it had to go because he, Jesus, was the *only* God and I could have no other gods before him.

With that ultimatum before me, I ran out of that room and wandered through the streets of Gainesville, the same streets I had walked through after the incident in the pizza parlour, where I said I wanted truth, no matter the cost. Now I faced the cost. It seemed too much.

And yet, before the night was through – knowing almost nothing about Jesus, nothing about the Christian faith (having always been hostile to it, in fact) – I went back to my room and burned the novel. And that night, just as it happened to Saul of Tarsus, I became a born again believer in Jesus. And, as with Saul, my life changed through an experience, a trans-rational experience that gave me a whole new understanding of human origins, lives and destiny. Afterwards, there has been time for study, for logic, for reason, but just as with Saul too, it wasn't study logic and reason that opened me to Jesus. He got me at first with my heart and, once he had my heart, the mind and all the rest followed.

And they have been for more than twenty-nine years since. ☺



Sue Greenleaf

creative recycling

RECYCLING GREENLEAF

Over the past few years, since recycling has become a standard way of life, I must have sent tonnes of old magazines, junk mail and drafted, scribbled-on versions of countless articles to find a better future as pages in national papers, recycled stationery, or (and most likely) toilet paper. Then there are all those plastic bottles which someone has managed to transform into warm, fleecy fabric, shopping bags that have been melted into picnic tables and thousands of old glass jars and bottles that are crushed to become new jars and bottles. There's a momentary feel-good factor when we add something to our recycling bin and ponder our drop-in-the-ocean contribution to lower the earth's temperature. But that doesn't feel quite as good as finding a creative way to recycle something we would have thrown away into something that is fun, beautiful, or both.

Here are some creative ways you could breathe new life into the collection of unwanted things lying in the dark corners of your home or stuffed at the back of your wardrobe.

Jars

Instead of throwing your old jars into a recycling bin, keep any with interesting shapes and use them as storage jars. They look much more attractive than tatty packets or opaque plastic boxes. Use them in the bathroom, bedroom and office, to store all kinds of bits and pieces. Everyone can see exactly what's inside, and anything looks prettier in a glass jar, even rubber bands.

Twist wire firmly around the screw part of the jar, and then take a length of wire over the top of the jar to make a hanging loop. Add a tea-light and hang the jar in a safe place outside, to make a lantern. Stick a piece of patterned tissue paper, thin fabric or lace on the outside of the jar using slightly diluted PVA glue. Spread the glue all over the jar,

stick on the paper or fabric and leave to dry. Another coat of thinned glue will add extra protection and it will dry clear like a varnish.

Fill a small jar with dried lavender and tie a circular scrap of pretty fabric over the top of the jar. This can add fragrance to your wardrobes and it will also help to keep moths away from your clothes.

Fill jars with ingredients to make a special recipe. Print out a label for the jar using your computer and tie a card with the recipe onto the neck of the jar. Go to www.allfreecrafts.com for some ideas, or search the internet for 'gift in a jar'. Try filling a jar with recycled buttons, lace and ribbons for a 'crafty' friend, crayons and collage items for a child, seeds and plant labels for a gardener, or home-made sweets as a thank-you present.

There's a momentary feel-good factor when we add something to our recycling bin and ponder our drop-in-the-ocean contribution.

Bottles

Keep interesting bottles and make a collection of different shapes and sizes. Use them as vases and put each flower stem in a different bottle for an eye-catching display. Olive oil often comes in simple, square bottles in different sizes. Group nine of the same size together, in three rows of three, or mix and match a variety of similar bottles. Tie a bright ribbon, or bunch of garden raffia, in a generous bow around all the bottles. Add water and even the simplest flowers will look special.

Group an interesting collection of bottles



A denim 'quilt' made from old pairs of jeans.

© www.iStockphoto.com/JamesMcConaha

and jars on an old mirror and add tea-lights or a string of clear fairy lights, to make an interesting feature.

Keep small glass essence bottles and use them as place settings. Use a computer to print out the names of your guests in an attractive font, cut them apart and place one name inside each bottle. Lay the bottles on the plates with the names showing. Tie raffia or ribbon around the neck of the bottles and use extra lengths to wrap around the napkins or glasses. Or use these tiny bottles as flower vases and place one by each guest's glass, or down the centre of the table.

Clothes

Make your children's favourite old t-shirts into cushions by turning them inside out and stitching across the bottom hem. Square off the neck and sleeve areas, and sew cut edges together. Leave a small space so that you can insert some stuffing, turn right side

out, fill, and then sew the gap shut. Stitch on co-ordinating beads, buttons and fabric patches to add extra dimension to the design.

Recycle jeans by cutting the legs apart without the top-stitching and pressing the fabric flat. Stitch several legs together to form a larger piece of fabric, and then turn this into an apron that would be perfect for barbecues. Use another apron to help you get the right shape and add straps and ties made of cotton webbing, or recycled check shirts.

Make a denim 'quilt' by cutting equal sized squares from jeans and other denim clothes. Include pockets and embroidered sections to add interest. Sew them together to make a large square or rectangle and back it with a piece of fleece fabric. Bind the edges with a wide strip of contrasting fabric, or just place the fleece wrong side up on the top of the finished patchwork and stitch them both together around the edges, leaving a gap so





© www.iStockphoto.com/Anna Khomula

that you can turn the quilt the right side out again. Slip stitch the gap closed. Sew recycled or spare buttons firmly through the denim and fleece using strong thread. Do this on the corner of every fabric square, except on the edges of the quilt. This can make a fun picnic blanket or a rug for a teenager's bedroom.

Cut around the patch pockets of jeans to create a small pocket that can be stuck on the front of a notebook, or add magnets to the back of the pocket and 'stick' the magnet onto the fridge to collect bits and pieces and keep them safe.

Cover an outdated and unco-ordinated vase or plant pot with a piece of recycled fabric. Just pull the material up around the vase or pot and tie a ribbon around the neck of the vase to hold the fabric in place. The edges of the fabric need to come up above the rim of the vase or pot. Stiffen the fabric with spray starch or fabric stiffener if it needs extra support.

Be creative – sheets and curtains can

become tablecloths or laundry bags. Old duvet covers can be used as sleeping bag liners. Shirts and blouses can be turned into drawstring shoe bags. You can find simple patterns and instructions for making these on the internet at www.simplesewingprojects.com.

Make everlasting gift bags by sewing fabric into simple rectangular bags. No crumpled paper or rippled sticky tape!

Make everlasting gift bags by sewing fabric into simple rectangular bags. Stitch a co-ordinating ribbon into one of the side seams so that you can just pop in a gift and tie up the bag! No crumpled and torn paper or rippled sticky tape! I made a whole stack of these bags by collecting lots of worn out cotton clothes and machine dyeing them navy blue. Then I cut out the sections that

were big enough to make gift bags and machine stitched thirty different sizes in an afternoon. I added silver and white organza ribbons and we used them for family birthdays and Christmases for ten years! It was also easy for the children to choose a bag and wrap presents by themselves. Now I have made a new set all in red and white fabrics with red ribbons. I've also made a set of red felt, heart-shaped tags and used white squeeze fabric paint to write several name labels for each person, so we can just tie the labels to the bags.

Buttons

Save any buttons you have and collect them in one of your recycled jars. Make decorations for gifts or Christmas trees by threading the buttons onto gold-coloured wire. 'Sew' the buttons onto the wire, taking the wire up through one of the holes and down through another and then up and down through the central holes in the next button. Shape the button wire into a heart, circle or star and leave a loop of wire for hanging. Choose one colour, or mix them up for a different look.

Stick a collection of different buttons in a similar colour onto a flat wooden picture

frame. Space them out evenly or cluster them, even sticking some on top of each other. Arrange the buttons and then stick them down with strong glue suitable for plastics and wood. Or decorate a box, flower pot or greetings card with colourful buttons.

Odds and ends

Use ribbon and lace pieces to decorate lampshades, or to hang at varying lengths from an old lampshade ring to make an unusual shade.

Old linen and lace mats can be stitched onto a plain duvet cover to make an interesting quilt cover, hung at windows as café-curtains, used to line baskets, or be folded and stitched to make 'envelope' style cushion covers, lingerie bags and lavender sachets.

Oddments of trimmings can be stuck around small gifts instead of parcel ribbon. Motifs from fabric, or even patterned paper napkins, can be cut out and stuck onto hard surfaces to decorate furniture, pots and even walls.

Make unusual tea-lights by collecting some large open shells on the beach, or ask for some from your local fishmonger. Slip a tea-light with its wick out of its metal cup, and place the waxy tea-light in the shell. Support the shells with crumpled foil so that they stay level, and place them on a baking tray. Put into a warm oven for a while, watching carefully, until the tea-light has melted into the shell. Check that the wicks are central and upright. Turn off the heat and leave the shells to cool in the oven. These make amazing candles for the garden, a lovely display on a heat-proof surface, or unusual presents or hostess gifts.

Have fun, and don't throw anything away until you have explored its possibilities! There is creative beauty in the most unusual places when you look for it. ♡



© www.iStockphoto.com/Chen Chun Wu

WITH GOD ON OUR SIDE



Kim Kimber

For centuries, Christians have been moved to pursue paths they might not otherwise have chosen were it not for their strong convictions, and Gary Baugh is no exception. The 47-year-old father, who has four school-age children living at home, gave up a steady job in social care to spend his time bringing history alive to people of all ages by way of his collection of war memorabilia and soldiers' Bibles.

Gary says: 'What started out as a hobby, took on a life of its own with a definite purpose – a way of bridging the generation gap between those who are learning history in school and those who actually made it.'

It all came about quite unexpectedly, beginning with just one man and his Bible. While working in a nursing home fifteen years ago, Gary met the man who was to change the course of his life.

He explains: 'There were twelve residents in the nursing home on that day but only one of them, an elderly gentleman by the name of Timothy, was awake. We fell into conversation and as

I have always had a keen interest in history, I was fascinated to discover that he had been a volunteer soldier in World War I with the King's Royal Rifle Corps.

'Before I left, the old soldier said that he had something to show me; a souvenir from

his war days. I imagined a bayonet or some other instrument of death smuggled into the nursing home but, to my surprise, he handed me a small, brown book – his soldier's Bible. This had a huge impact on me as, of all the things Timothy could have chosen to hold on to over the years, he had regarded his Bible as being the most important.'

Curiosity took hold of Gary and he scoured book shops, boot sales and second-hand shops in search of other soldiers' Bibles. To his surprise, he unearthed several more. The first book he bought cost a mere fifty pence.

'The Bibles were either hidden away on a lower shelf or at the bottom of a box among the discarded items but I was aware that

'Before I left, the old soldier said that he had something to show me; a souvenir from his war days.'

each of these little books represented an individual life,' Gary says.

It was not long before Gary had accumulated a sizeable number of Bibles and, encouraged by friends, took them along to the pensioners' group at his local church. He received such an animated response that he came up with the idea of turning his collection into a kind of 'living history'.

Gary's collection grew rapidly to include 451 soldiers' Bibles, prayer books and New Testaments, together with other war memorabilia that he has turned into a 'travelling exhibition of military and religious history' which he takes into schools, church groups and other associations, connecting old and young.

He says: 'I believe that history can break down barriers, and this is particularly





A few of the items in Gary Baugh's war memorabilia collection.

important now at a time when there is such a huge gap between the generations. Hidden away in care homes across the country are the forgotten people who have lived a lifetime of challenges and now face perhaps the greatest battle of all – old age! These people who have lived through history have amazing stories that deserve to be told.

'Like the elderly lady who met Hitler at the 1936 Berlin Olympics during a school exchange trip or the one who danced with Glenn Miller. Then there was someone who was at the Yalta Conference with Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt.'

Gary is a powerful orator and has the ability to reach out to audiences of all ages and, in particular, the generation of junior and senior school children who are currently learning the story of 'one man and his Bible'.

He has come across some quite challenging pupils in the schools he visits but has moved the toughest of children to tears, and often it is the children from the more difficult schools who respond the best. One

tough little kid described the Bibles as 'wicked' and another twelve-year old boy at a Kent school, having heard Gary relate the tale of a British soldier killed at Monte Cassino, stated: 'I will remember.'

Of all the items in Gary's collection, it is the Heart (or bullet) Shield Bible that often has an impact on school children. The bullet shield was a small metal-plated Bible, strong enough to deflect a bullet, designed to fit inside a soldier's breast pocket to protect his heart. The Bible in Gary's collection belonged to an American GI in World War II and was a present from his mother. It is engraved with the words: 'May this keep you safe from harm'.

The schools Gary has visited have all reported a renewed interest in the history of World Wars I and II after his talk, largely helped by his 'hands-on' approach to history. Gary believes that his exhibits should be picked up and examined rather than locked away in a showcase. He says: 'They will fall to bits one day but people love the texture and feel of things, and this connects them to

the past far more than viewing the items through glass in a museum.'

Gary does not shy away from the harsh realities of war and shows youngsters the Bibles that have belonged to soldiers who never came home. One belonging to a sergeant with the 13th Royal Scots Regiment, for example, bears a handwritten note to say that the soldier was 'killed in action May 11 1926 on a Flanders Battlefield'. He also shows them the funeral bill received by the parents of an eighteen-year old boy who died in World War I.

The oldest book that Gary owns is a Jewish prayer book, dating back to 1795. He says: 'The book has been handed down through the generations and inside the front cover someone has pasted a prayer, written in Hebrew and dated Holland, 1939, "for our brothers in the east who are suffering at this time", unaware that the German army was about to advance further into Europe and into Holland itself.'

Gary always points out that, in matters of faith, nationality and rank were irrelevant. 'It didn't matter which army you were fighting for,' he explains, 'God was on the side of everyone who believed in him. A general's Bible was just as important to its owner as a private's was to him; faith is all encompassing and has nothing to do with rank or regiment.'

To illustrate this point Gary shows his audiences a World War II German soldier's Bible, containing a number of prayer cards slotted inside and also his death card which reads 'killed in action on the Russian front'. His collection also includes a German prayer book given to German prisoners of war in England during World War II.

Gary has Bibles from the Crimean War (1854-1856), one of which belonged to Colonel Mayow, who was a serving officer during the Charge of the Light Brigade, and a number of New Testaments that were sent to

patients in hospitals in the Crimea during the time of Florence Nightingale. His collection also covers the Boer War, The American Civil War, Korea, Vietnam and the Gulf War.

The tradition of handing out Bibles to British soldiers dates back to The Naval and Military Bible Society in 1780 and, during times of war, Bibles were often handed out to troops with food parcels by women's groups and church leaders. Gary has over 400 letters written by servicemen and women to Reverend Charles Taylor in World War II, thanking him for the Bible he sent to them.

Many soldiers spent a great deal of time in camp between battles and the Bibles would give them something to read as well as providing comfort and inspiration in times of fear and despair. Other soldiers kept their Bibles as keepsakes from loved ones, and many carried inscriptions from those left behind who had to deal with the reality that their men may be injured or lose their lives.

In fact, items found inside the books can be as interesting and informative as the Bible itself; pressed flowers, photographs, poems and messages of love and hope. One of Gary's Bibles revealed a message on a ripped piece of paper to his family back home, stating that the World War I soldier, stationed in France, was safe and hiding in the woods.

To date, nearly 20,000 people of all ages have joined Gary on his mission to bring history to the people. Gary says, 'It all began with one man, Timothy, who was living out his final days alone in a nursing home but now thousands of people have heard about him and know his story.' Gary could perhaps best be described as a kind of modern-day missionary bringing the lessons of the past to the children of the future. ☺

For further information about his talks on war memorabilia Gary Baugh can be contacted on one of the following numbers: 07999 836233, 01702 420723, 01277 824380 or by email: gary@historic-al.co.uk.



PEOPLE SKILLS

Márianna Csóti

**Probably the world's
most underused
resource**

Many people talk about international understanding, yet how can we achieve understanding on an international level when we are not prepared to understand our neighbours, colleagues, friends and family? It is all very well spouting opinions about what other people should do when we at home are not prepared to pay regard to those closest to us in both the physical and emotional sense.

We are busy people, caught up in the problems of our own lives. What does it matter if we offend the person next door, our children, our friends, our partners or the people we work with? They understand no harm was intended and they know we like and love them really. Or do they? And what about the people we barge past in a hurry to catch our usual train or bus in the mornings or after work? Or the people we see performing mundane jobs on our behalf or the people serving us?

How many of us truly take note of those we pass in the street or the person in front of

We are busy people, caught up in the problems of our own lives. What does it matter if we offend the person next door?

us in the queue or the person reaching for the same bunch of bananas in the supermarket? How many of us walk around in our own protective bubble, determined not to connect in any sense with those about us?

Why can't we create a small community in the area around us? Why do we see other people as potential enemies rather than potential friends? Why do we concentrate on differences rather than similarities? And when there are differences, why don't we celebrate them (assuming they are not of the antisocial kind)?

Continued on page 35



A woman with dark hair and bangs is standing on a set of wide, stone steps outdoors. She is wearing a bright yellow, off-the-shoulder, long-sleeved gown with a very full, ruffled skirt and matching long gloves. She is looking back over her shoulder towards the camera. The background shows green foliage and a stone wall.

WHAT'S
YOUR
STORY?

Maybe it's a Cinderella story.
But probably not . . .

Regardless, we'd like to hear from you.
We're particularly interested in personal
stories of people living positive lives and
making a difference to their communities.

Contact the editor at lifeinfomag@mac.com

feedback

Vol. 7, Issue No.3

Please let us know what you think. Your suggestions are a crucial part of enabling us to provide a magazine that is relevant, interesting and useful.

Your overall opinion: (Please tick as appropriate)

Loved it liked it disliked it hated it

Best bit: _____ Worst bit: _____

Comments/suggestions/article ideas: _____

Do you belong to any type of faith group/church? Yes No

LIFE.info needs more writers

LIFE.info is sponsored by a Christian organisation but you don't have to be a Christian to contribute. If you've enjoyed the content of *LIFE.info* and would like to write something for the magazine, we want to hear from you. For more information about writing for *LIFE.info*, tick the box below and don't forget to give us your contact details.

Yes, I am interested in writing for *LIFE.info*. Please send me more details.

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email _____ Telephone _____

Occupation _____ Age _____

How did you get hold of your copy of *LIFE.info* magazine? (Please tick as appropriate)

Came through letterbox given by a friend found it other*

*If other, please elaborate: _____

To send us your feedback and/or subscription form, simply pull this middle section out of the magazine, fold it and stick down the three open sides, then pop it in the post. **Postage is FREE.**

LIFE.info Subscription form

Yes I would like to subscribe to *LIFE.info* magazine

For me For a friend

If the subscription is for yourself, just fill in your contact details below. If you are subscribing on behalf of someone else, please fill in your contact details as well as their address details. Thank you.

My contact details:

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

My friend's name and address:

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

For office use only

Vol. 7, Issue No. 3

Annual UK subscription still only £5 including p+p
European subscribers pay €10

All cheques should be made payable to: LIFE.info.

LIFE.info is published five times a year (on a ten-week cycle).

For all enquiries contact Gloria on: 01476 591700 Email: lifeinfomag@mac.com

2

BUSINESS REPLY SERVICE
Licence No. GM26

LIFE.info Magazine

Alma Park
Grantham
Lincolnshire
NG31 9SL

To return the feedback form and/or the subscription form, simply pull out this middle section of the magazine, fold it in half and stick down the three open sides. Then pop it in the post. Postage is FREE.

PEOPLE CSÓTI (continued from page 29)

My dream is to have a united community, no matter what sex, faith, culture, ability or age we are: a community that looks out for its members, is drawn together in everyday life, not in response to a local tragedy or major crisis. A community where each of its members feels he belongs; a community we call home.

When I was nineteen, I was in hospital for a minor operation and was the youngest on the women's ward. Opposite me lay an old woman. I couldn't see her at all clearly because I didn't have my glasses; I couldn't get out of bed as I was recovering from a general anaesthetic. I wanted to show that I was friendly and so waved at her. I wasn't sure if she was looking my way so I did this twice more but saw no answering wave. I felt embarrassed. Perhaps she hadn't seen me, or perhaps she didn't want to know. I wished I hadn't bothered – it was unpleasant to have a gesture of friendship rejected. But that evening her daughter visited her and after they'd been talking for a while, her daughter came over to my bed and asked if I'd waved at her mother. Being only nineteen and still in childhood mode I wondered if I'd done something wrong, so prepared myself to be told off for pestering an old woman. But no. The daughter was *thanking* me for having waved. Her mother had poor sight and wasn't sure if she'd seen what she thought she'd seen – and hadn't risked a wave back.

A couple of decades later, I came out of a local gym to sit on an armchair while I waited for my husband. An old man was seated in the same area and I went to sit by him. I said hello and we started to chat. He said he couldn't hear very well so I moved to sit on the other side of him. He said he was deaf in both ears. I laughed and said, 'Oh dear,' and he laughed with me. I leaned closer and spoke more loudly so that he could hear me. He told me about his life and his trips to Norway. When my husband joined us, I

introduced him and the three of us chatted for a couple of minutes before we left. As we were leaving, the man said, to my astonishment, 'Thank you for talking to me.' As though I'd done him a favour without finding the conversation enjoyable myself.

I make it a point to smile when I pass an elderly person in the street or a shop, should they look up. Most don't. They don't expect anyone to take any notice of them. Is this what I have to look forward to in my old age? I can give a smile without slowing my pace, so the effort required in being friendly only involves the energy to move a few facial muscles. So why don't we *all* do it? I admit I don't do it every single time I am out; sometimes my own cares overtake me. But generally, I do.

During a period when I was in a wheelchair, pushed by my husband, I found that no one's gaze met mine. Comparing this to when I wasn't in a wheelchair, I recognised a difference. I find it is also hard to meet someone's gaze when I am walking and they are in a wheelchair. They do not expect to be acknowledged. Many of us go about our lives without connecting at all with the people around us. Many of us will probably miss a friendly smile just because we are not alert enough to notice – or we may regard friendly overtures with suspicion.

Some people shun others because of some physical difference from them and would not want to be seen with them, perhaps fearing it lowers their social status. Why do we have a hierarchy of people with whom we are happy to be seen and others who embarrass us? I try to remember to think: That person could be me.

What do you think? ☺

Márianna Csóti has written many books on social skills. Her latest is *How to be a People Person* by Elliot Right Way Books. Her website is www.mariannacsoti.co.uk


 Karen Holford

LOVING TO BE LOVED

I wrapped the tiny book of contemporary love poetry in white tissue paper, tied it with a blue ribbon and placed the package in my husband's backpack. All day I imagined him finding the present, excitedly tearing off the tissue and being touched by my kindness and thoughtfulness.

When Bernie came home that evening he didn't mention the book. All through supper he talked about his day and I talked about mine. We were both students at a University in the Midwest of America, thousands of miles away from home. Bernie had a permit to work on the campus and I wasn't allowed to work at all, even though I was studying too. We'd only been married a few months and I wanted to keep our romance alive, somehow. We had very little money and some days we only had food to eat because of a charitable food run, where we could go and get a free bag full of supermarket throwaways: bananas with bruises, unsold perishables and past-their-best potatoes. But the book was in the 50% off basket, and I thought Bernie would be as delighted as I'd have been if he'd done the same for me.

Never in a thousand years would I love having my back scratched. I'd much rather be given a book of poetry.

But he wasn't. He didn't really understand why I needed to give him the book. Finally, after a long silence, as he tried to find the right words, Bernie suggested that I didn't need to buy him gifts. We were poor and we needed the money for other things. I was slightly stunned. In my family we often bought each other little gifts. It was what you did. It was one of the ways we showed love and care for each other, as well as by being

with each other, and helping each other. It was my turn to be quiet: to think things through. If Bernie didn't want me to give him gifts, how was I going to show that I loved him in a way that would mean something to him?

Bernie spent the evening studying and writing an essay at the kitchen table. Just before bedtime he stretched his bent arms out to either side and wriggled his back around to loosen the knotted muscles in his shoulders. 'Karen, you couldn't scratch my back for me, could you?'

'OK, where does it itch?'

'Oh, nowhere in particular. I just like having my back scratched.'

Scratch his back? Whoever wanted their back scratched? Especially if there wasn't an itch! But I scratched his back anyway. He wanted me to scratch all over his upper back, with my fingernails, and especially around his shoulder blades. Weird. But he seemed to like it.

'Mmmm, that's better. Thanks. I just love having my back scratched.'

He loved having his back scratched! I was stunned! Never in a thousand years would I love having my back scratched. I'd much rather be given a book of poetry. I thought about our strange differences as I tried to fall asleep. I woke for a few moments, several hours later when the night was darkest and deeply silent, and a candle of light flickered through my thoughts. I was trying to love Bernie the way I liked to be loved, with tiny treats and surprises, when what he really wanted was a good old back scratch!

Years later we read Gary Chapman's bestselling book, *The Five Love Languages*, and we understood more about our differences. We each wrote a list of twenty times when we felt especially loved by the other person, and then we went over the list

LOVED HOLFORD

This is how God showed his love for us: God sent his only Son into the world so we might live through him. This is the kind of love we are talking about – not that we once upon a time loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to clear away our sins and the damage they've done to our relationship with God . . . If God loved us like this, we certainly ought to love each other. No one has seen God, ever. But if we love one another, God dwells deeply within us, and his love becomes complete in us – perfect love! . . . God is love. When we take up permanent residence in a life of love, we live in God and God lives in us. 1 John 4:9-12 & 17, *The Message*.

again, deciding which of Chapman's five love languages was being expressed. Had we been loving each other with little gifts and surprises (my top favourite), spending quality time together, helping each other, saying loving words, or being physically affectionate? Evidently scratching Bernie's back came into the 'being physically affectionate' category, which ended up, not surprisingly, being Bernie's favourite way for me to express my love to him. So I have learned to scratch his back, and to spend time helping him, and he has learned to buy me flowers and/or chocolate every now and then, and last Christmas he even bought me a book of love poetry. But learning how to love each other in the way we each like to be loved has sometimes been as challenging as learning Mandarin Chinese, because we just haven't been wired to experience love in the same way. I have to remind myself that Bernie likes his back to be scratched, even twenty-four years later. So it's just as well I haven't needed to speak Chinese, or I'd still be on the first page in the book.

How do you like to be loved? Do you like it when a friend gives you a thoughtful present for no reason at all? Or do you prefer someone to tell you how special you are to

them? Maybe you really like to be hugged, or to have a head massage? Perhaps your favourite thing is when people you love spend time with you, or would you rather they cooked dinner once in a while? Most of us have one or two favourite ways we like to be loved. Our three children have completely different love preferences, too. One of our children seems to have inherited the 'love by back-scratching' gene. He used to ask for his back to be scratched whenever we were sitting down together in a public place and I'm sure people wondered if he had fleas! Our daughter likes little gifts, like me, but her taste is getting increasingly more expensive with age. . . . And our other son prefers us to spend time with him, and to help him when he gets stuck with something.

Have you ever had a time when someone showed you love in an amazing and unexpected way? It feels so good when someone takes the time and effort to love you perfectly. Bernie was out of town when I had a special birthday. He arranged for one of my best friends to kidnap me (in a nice way), and take me to a wonderful day spa in Covent Garden. It was bliss! That's an idea I wouldn't mind him having again!

Did you know that you have a friend who loves you so much that he has already done the most amazing things anyone could ever do for you? However you prefer to be loved, he has already loved you. He has loved you ever since he's ever known about you, even though you might never have known about him. And he will go on loving you because nothing you could ever do would stop him loving you.

Knowing that we all like to be loved in different ways, Jesus was born on this Earth to spend time with us. He walked around on this Earth doing very ordinary things as well as very extraordinary things, just so he could be with us. And because he wants to be with us, he is building a special place in heaven where we can choose to go and live with him forever. He knows that some of us like to hear loving words, so he has given us the Bible as his love letter to us. He likes to help us, and whenever we ask him to, he can inspire us to make wise choices, or solve a difficult problem we're facing.

When Jesus was on Earth he touched lots of people. He held children in his arms and told them stories, and he even hugged lepers and the people no one else would want to touch. Although he can't be with us physically now, he comes in our thoughts to comfort us when we're sad and alone. When I'm having a rough day, I imagine myself being held by Jesus, and I feel soothed again. Some of us like little gifts (and big ones!) and every time something wonderful happens in our lives, or we see something beautiful, it is a gift from him. He also gave up his life and died for us, as the ultimate gift, to show us the depth of his love, so that we could experience total forgiveness for everything we've ever done that hurt ourselves or others. Through his death he gives us forgiveness, so that we can let go of our mistakes and start the story of our life over again, on a fresh sheet of paper.

Jesus wants to love you in the best way possible, so that you can experience what it's like to be loved perfectly: the way you like to be loved. And, whenever you love someone else the way they like to be loved best, they're experiencing your love, along with his.

Mmm. I wonder who needs some extra love today? ☺

How does God love you? How do you like to be loved?

With words

If you like to hear or read loving words, visit www.fathersloveletter.com and read a love letter from God to you.

With gifts

If you like to be given presents, then make a list of ten good things that you have in your life (people you love, things you are good at, your home, food, health and so on.) and imagine that they are all presents from God. If you were to write a thank you card to God for these things, what would you write?

By being helped

If you like people to do kind and thoughtful things for you, think of ten things you have done that were successful or went well. It can be anything from having a jam-free journey to work, having a cake you made turn out perfectly, having a child sleep through the night when you were tired, or having the confidence to do a presentation that you were anxious about. Imagine that God was on your team, helping you to do your best, and that he was ironing out some of the challenges before you even realised they were there! Thank God for the things that went well.

By being touched

Sit in your favourite comfortable chair at home, wrap yourself in a cosy quilt, throw a blanket and imagine that God is giving you a great big hug.

By having someone spend time with you

Imagine that God, who loves you more than you can ever understand, is right there in the room with you. Whatever you are feeling and thinking, talk to him and have a conversation with him in your mind. What do you think he would say or do if he were right there with you? Remember that he is right there, even if you can't see him, and he knows every detail of your life, and will never stop loving you.



waiting

Ed Dickerson

Erin lies, unmoving, like someone being assimilated by the Borg, with tubes running from her body, the only sounds the whirring and clicking of machines, and the distant murmur of voices. Men and women in crisp surgical uniforms move in silence around her, monitoring the machines, checking her responses.

On that Monday morning, she had started out for school as usual. But on a curve she encountered a small patch of ice, which sent her small car spinning into the path of an oncoming lorry. Alert witnesses notified emergency personnel immediately, probably saving her life. Even so, paramedics had all they could do to keep her alive until she reached the hospital. After three hours of surgery, doctors had removed her spleen, packed her bruised liver, and put her dislocated hip back in its socket.

Now, on a ventilator to ease her breathing, and sedated to reduce the chance of her brain swelling, the doctors finally had time to address the worried parents. 'We've done all we can,' the medics said. 'Now we'll just have to wait.' Wait to see if her battered body would begin to heal itself; wait and watch, hoping the pressure inside her skull would not rise too high; wait and discover how she reacted to medication and sedation. Just wait.

In the 2004 movie, *The Terminal*, Tom Hanks plays Viktor Navorsky, a man

marooned in the international terminal at the JFK airport. A revolt in his home country of Krakhozia left him without a valid passport to enter the United States, and no country to return to. As long as he stays in the international terminal, he remains free. If he attempts to leave, he will be arrested and jailed. So he waits; waits for resolution of his legal status; waits for the revolution in his home country to conclude; waits to accomplish the purpose which brought him to New York in the first place.

At one point Viktor says, 'Everyone waits,' and as we watch him, we realise the truth of his statement. All of the major characters in the film wait for something. Viktor meets an air hostess who waits for the man she's having an affair with to divorce his wife and marry her. He encounters the acting head of the airport, who has waited many years for the opportunity to be in charge. A young airport worker who waits to propose to another worker he loves. And so it goes.

The movie helps us realise that we all wait. Perhaps we wait to finish school, or to find the right person to marry. Upon becoming engaged, we must wait for the wedding day. Couples must wait during pregnancy. Perhaps, like the airport administrator at the beginning of *The Terminal*, we wait for retirement. I have known of elderly people waiting to die. Viktor was right. We all wait.

At one point Viktor says, 'Everyone waits.'

Sometimes we don't realise it, but on other occasions, such as in the case of Erin's parents and friends, we become all too aware of it. Everyone waits, yet we seldom get used to it. But whether we like or not, we have no choice. Our world abounds in processes and projects that take time, that cannot be hurried. And since we must wait, it helps if we learn to wait in ways which enhance our lives, or at least which don't increase our misery.

Erin wasn't the only patient in the Intensive Care Unit, or ICU. As I sat time and again in the unit's aptly named 'waiting room', a veritable parade of concerned families and friends of the other patients passed through. Most were subdued; a few wept openly. Some sat, dreading the moment doctors would emerge and ask them to go to the conference room next to the chapel – the room where families got the bad news. From my experience, I formulated a few rules.

1. Don't dwell on all the possibilities.

Waiting can seem like torture because we occupy ourselves with the worst outcomes. Shakespeare said, 'Cowards die a thousand deaths,' and that happens, at least partially, because they fill their imaginations with all the deadly things that might happen. Yes, the worst outcome should be addressed, enough for you to be prepared, then such thoughts should be laid aside. If it comes to pass, there will be time enough for sorrow. No need to add to it by grieving ahead of time. But if the worst does not happen, you will have suffered needlessly.

At the same time, you should not spend much time on the positive outcomes, either. Once again, enough for you to be prepared, but no more.

2. Find something useful to do. In *The Terminal*, Viktor Navorsky first must find a

way simply to survive, having no money for food, and no place to sleep. But as he solves these problems, he looks for opportunities to help others, and to do useful work. An old proverb advises that a watched pot never boils. Of course, a watched pot does eventually boil, but watching it makes it seem longer. In the same way, when you must wait, don't expend all your energies attending to what you're waiting on. The time will pass, and if you spend it usefully, you will be better for it, no matter what the outcome. And it will make the time pass more quickly.

3. Don't wish your life away. Similar to number two, but different. Wishing doesn't make things come true – good or bad. And while you're wishing that the waiting would pass, time passes. If you do not fill it with purposeful activity, you will lose it forever.

4. Seek spiritual solace. There's a reason hospitals have chapels. People need comfort that goes beyond their everyday experience, because not everyone who enters intensive care recovers, and some who recover will be maimed or disabled the rest of their lives. If the here and now is all you have, it will be difficult not to become bitter. And bitterness poisons the spirit, and extinguishes whatever joy remains.

Like many others, I find such comfort in the Bible. There are many comforting passages for times of uncertainty. For me, the poetry of the ancient Psalms soothes my troubled spirit. When it comes to waiting, one passage in particular comes to mind: 'Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.' (Isaiah 40:31, *New International Version*.)

Viktor Navorsky was right: Everyone waits. But *how* we wait can either spread joy or misery. ☺

Scott Moncrieff

EVERY SIP BRINGS YOU CLOSER

Superstar pop singer **Justin Timberlake** starred in the Pepsi Max advert – aired during the Super Bowl – which promises ‘every sip brings you closer’.



While viewers are generally sceptical about TV adverts, myself included, these adverts do provide an interesting window into things that matter. →

EVERY SIP MONCRIEFF

Not the washing powders, appliances, cars, and credit cards that are being hawked, of course, but the fantastical associations the advertisers try to conjure between their pedestrian goods and the viewer. What better place to analyse this phenomenon than with the Super Bowl adverts – all available for viewing on *youtube.com*?

In America, there is a longstanding tradition of considering the Super Bowl adverts as the test of cutting edge television advertising. The 2008 Super Bowl set the record for the second most US viewers ever for a televised event (97.5 million) – after the 1983 finale of M*A*S*H (106 million) (*AP news story, 2/4/08*). I like to analyse adverts, partly because – in the case of the Super Bowl adverts – they are entertaining; partly because they are short; and partly because of the interesting dance they perform between advertiser and viewer.

The 'I can fly' claim is perhaps unintentionally ironic in that alcohol consumption has a tendency to make drinkers think they can fly, or do other things that, when sober, they would not try.

What I mean is this: some material goods meet our basic needs for food, functional clothing, and shelter. However, adverts aren't focused on necessities, but on discretionary spending. We don't need – really *need* – any of the products featured. So the adverts try to create other 'reasons' for us to spend. They try to create a little magic dust aura around the product that makes it seem necessary, beyond anything it can actually provide or perform, in order to get us to take action that

really doesn't make sense. Let's look at some examples.

One Bud Light (lager) advert begins with a lofty voiceover narration and corresponding symphonic theme while a chilled Budweiser bottle – how do they get all those droplets to form so perfectly? – is caressed by the camera from several angles. The speaker says 'Bud Light is brewed to give you



everything you want in a beer, never-ending refreshment, superior drinkability, and now . . . the ability to fly.' As the latter words are being spoken, a business traveller in suit and flapping tie rockets out of a cloud carrying a bottle of Bud Light, shouting ecstatically, 'Look at me, I'm flying, I can't believe this! Man, this is awesome, look at the clouds!' At this point our poor traveller is overtaken by a passenger jet and sucked into its engine. There is a quick voiceover in which Bud revokes its 'ability to fly' clause from advertising (presumably to avoid lawsuits), and a final shot of the former flier in his tattered suit – Bud Light still in hand – sitting in a terminal, while another traveller asks: 'Rough flight?'

The 'I can fly' claim is perhaps unintentionally ironic in that alcohol consumption has a tendency to make

drinkers think they can fly, or do other things that, when sober, they would not try. And, like the protagonist of the ad, they sometimes end up burned and tattered from their inebriated excesses. In a clever twist, however, even while Bud Light reneges on its promise of flight, it repeats that endless refreshment remains, and 'superior drinkability', whatever that means.

When I was a child, the Bud Light slogan used to be a contest between 'Tastes Great!' and 'Less Filling!' Characters presented as moronic opposites would get into arguments where one would shout 'Tastes Great' while the other would shout 'Less Filling'. Maybe the company finally caught on that even though some drinkers shout moronic things at each other when under the influence, they would rather see themselves portrayed with a bit more culture. Maybe that's the explanation for upward-aspiring phrases like 'superior drinkability', as if Bud Light were some kind of fine wine.

A second advert features a remix of the Rocky story. In the opening shot, a Clydesdale (the breed of horse featured in Bud ads) with the pedestrian name of Hank loses out to 'Thunder' as the last horse chosen for the high honour of pulling the Bud Light beer wagon. In a montage of training images, a Dalmatian on the 'farm' coaches Hank in all the strength and agility abilities he will need to be selected for next year, and, at the advert's end, the wagonmaster says, 'Welcome to the team, Hank.'

I respect the cleverness, humour, and artistic qualities of this advert. If you're going to spend millions on writing and filming an advert, and another two or three million for the rights to broadcast it, this is the way to go. The images and the little story line will stick in viewers' minds for quite some time. If I were a beer-drinking guy, I might go out and get a cold one to celebrate the genius of

this little story. I'm not, however, so let me do some more analysis of the subtext.

The horse stands in for me, the viewer: I'm perceived to be a loser by those in authority, but I've got potential if only I had the right sort of coaching. The Dalmatian (perfect dog to attract a multicultural audience) plays the coach, out there to encourage, design a training regimen, kick me into touch if I'm lazy, and lead me to peak performance. I work hard for a season and make tremendous improvement; suddenly I'm recognised for my achievement, awarded, celebrated. These underdog stories, when well done, almost always send a shiver up our spines.

A third advert touts the power of Diet Pepsi Max in homage to the film *A Night at the Roxbury*. A montage showcases a number of people nodding off on the job, at home, at play. Enter the beverage. After a couple of swigs (and a voiceover shouting 'Wake up people!') these zombies are suddenly supercharged with life and begin head bobbing and gyrating to the soundtrack.

There's an interesting paradox here, as there is in almost every advert. What people really need to wake up is a good night's sleep, good diet, exercise – a healthy lifestyle. All the caffeine in the world can't make up for going to bed at 2am and trying to get to work at 8am. The product is itself part of the problem it is proclaiming to cure.

There's another message of interest, however, that operates on a slightly different level. This is the idea that there is a fundamental musical background to life on this planet (represented by the 'What is Love?' soundtrack) and some people are with it (those who drink Diet Pepsi Max) and some aren't. Those who are 'with it' enjoy an emotional bond, grooving, bobbing their heads with the 'natural' rhythm, while those



EVERY SIP MONCRIEFF

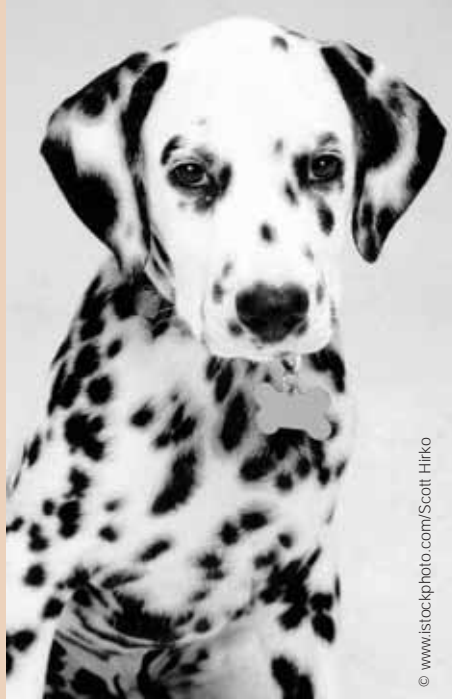
who aren't inhabit a dry, uncomprehending space, like the man who calls, 'Stop it!' to two head bobbars at the end of the advert.

In the last advert, pop star Justin Timberlake is inexplicably jerked out of a restaurant, across a crowded street, up a building, into a river, and eventually to a poolside where, we find out, a girl in a bikini sipping Pepsi is 'bringing Justin Timberlake MP3s closer to her with each sip,' because the MP3s are one of several prizes she can win in a Pepsi sweepstake.

When one actually drinks a Pepsi, overpriced ounces of brown liquid go down the esophagus to the stomach. There might be a pleasing carbonation sparkle in the mouth, possibly an inadvertent belch. That's the realistic description of drinking a Pepsi. Of course that wouldn't sell many bottles. Thus, the fantastic hyperbole of power attributed to Pepsi in this commercial.

Usually we think of pop stars as having all the power, with their awesome record sales and movie appearances, their glamorous cars, designer clothes, and beautiful partners. Here, however, the lowly citizen (you and me), merely by sipping on a Pepsi, can jerk the celebrity around like a puppet on a string. It doesn't matter that no viewer believes this: all we have to do is be willing to imagine it, and it's true enough for advertising purposes. After all, advertising is about living in a fantasy world, a world that can only exist in the imagination, a world where products really do make our dreams come true.

Let's get back to reality. From a Christian perspective, there's a different way of interpreting each of the adverts. The 'I Can Fly' ad? Well, yes, flying has a natural appeal to us flightless beings, and Christians generally believe that solo, non-mechanically aided flight will be one of the facts of existence in paradise. What would you rather have? An imaginary flight under the influence of a few Budweisers, or the ability really to fly



– down the road a few years, of course.

The 'Rocky' ad? In the postlude moment, 'Hank' lifts his hoof to touch the dog's paw, in a scene modelled after God bringing Adam to life, as depicted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo. Suddenly we realise the Dalmatian is a stand-in for God. But only in a world where the highest honour is pulling a Budweiser wagon. Who wants to settle for that when we can qualify – by placing ourselves under God's training – for heaven?

Pepsi Max? As Christians, we believe there is a fundamental 'music' of the universe, of which God is the composer, and that we can only be happy when we are in tune with it and 'dancing' to its rhythm. Fortunately, God's tune is not the obnoxious little ditty of this ad, but something that can be enjoyed for eternity. Once again, there's a kernel of truth below the head-bobbing surface.

And finally, 'every sip brings you closer'? It's interesting that all the ads under discussion feature beverages, products that start outside your body but go inside and actually have an effect on your body chemistry. In this sense,

the drink is somewhat like the Bible's description of the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Godhead, whom Jesus recommended to his disciples – see John 14:26, for example. (And note that alcoholic beverages are sometimes called 'spirits.')

In the ad, sipping Pepsi has the power to levitate Justin Timberlake and bring him to your side. Jesus' disciples, taking in the Holy Spirit – or to put it more accurately, submitting themselves to the direction of the Holy Spirit – had the power to change the world.

As the Pepsi Max ad says, it's time to wake up – just not to Pepsi Max. Commercials take us away to a fantasy world. Christianity – the ultimate realism – can prepare us to live better in this world, and in the world to come. ☺



What's your favourite television advert – past or present?

For me, one of the most striking differences about being in the US – rather than Britain – is the prevalence of pharmaceutical advertising on television. My favourite television advert – the one that makes me shriek every time I see it – is the one in which an attractive young man turns to face the camera and says, without missing a beat, 'I have herpes!'

'What did he just say?' I shout to anyone within hearing. When they wearily repeat the sentence, I say, without fail, 'That's a bit *frank*.'

My husband's favourite adverts ever are the series by Castlemaine 4X – 'Probably the best lager in the world'.

We'd like to hear about your favourite adverts – and better yet, we'd love a short analysis of them, similar to what Scott has done in his article. **Write an intelligent, thought-provoking piece about your favourite television advert and email it to the editor at lifeinfomag@mac.com**

Look forward to hearing from you!
– Editor

Merlin Evans FAST FOOD

OK, I know it's not the done thing, what with Jamie Oliver and those government health warnings, but sometimes, yes, sometimes a quick hamburger and fries is the best thing on God's Earth. It feels really risky, in these politically censorious days, admitting that I enjoy the occasional visit to a fast-food outlet. But there, I've said it.

Confession, they say, is good for the soul, so here's another sin I commit. I have been known to buy the odd ready meal. There, I've said it. Well, what is a tin of baked beans but the ultimate quick fix for a busy parent?

But I am fudging the issue. If I am owning

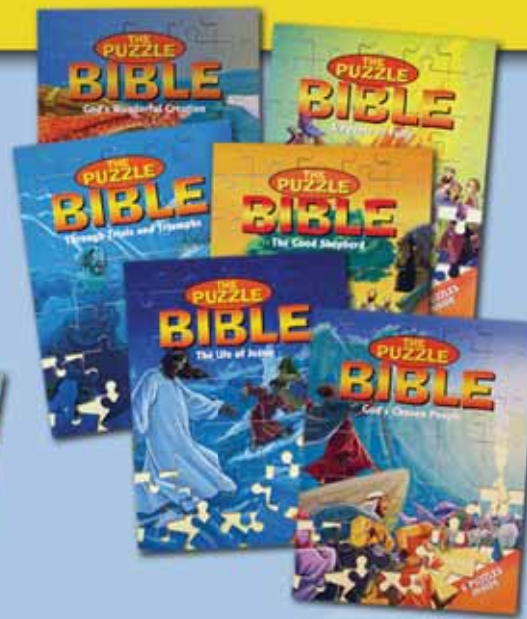
Wasn't it Shirley Conran who said, 'Life's too short to stuff a mushroom'?

up I must come clean and also admit to having packets of cod in sauce and tikka marsala in my freezer for those days when it really is just too much to start plucking a chicken.

Wasn't it Shirley Conran who said, 'Life's too short to stuff a mushroom'? This saying has kept me sane when trying to juggle my roles as wife, mother and part-time worker. It's impossible to be Mr or Mrs Perfect all the time and that's when the benefits of the quick fix in the form of fast food come into play.

There are times, too, when life is just too busy to attend fully to our spiritual well-being. With the best intentions often we haven't got enough time to attend a church service or spend time in proper prayer. I like to think of those days as being fast-food days. A short prayer between collecting the dry cleaning as I drive to fetch my husband from the station will have to do. I don't think it hurts once in a while to take the easy route.

So long as it doesn't become a habit. ☺



Children's Books

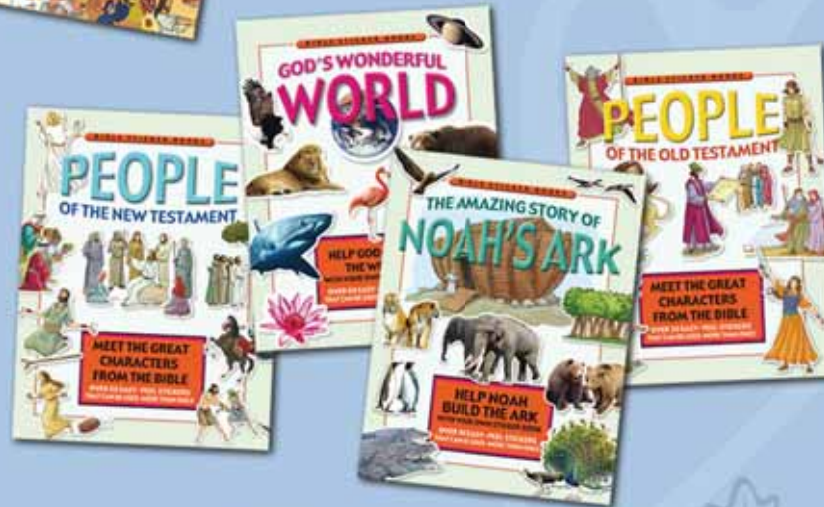
only available from Autumn House

to order, contact us at:

Autumn House Publications


Alma Park, Grantham, Lincs., NG31 9SL

Tel: 01476 539900



Autumn
House




 Andrew Cate

ARE YOU SUN SAFE?

You may know about the importance of skin protection, but are you doing enough to prevent cancer and premature ageing of the skin? Health and fitness consultant Andrew Cate looks at how to protect your skin this summer.

Why is the summer sun dangerous for your skin?

The warmer weather in summer brings people outside for activities such as beach-going, picnics, barbecues and gardening. This increases your exposure to sunlight, which contains large amounts of ultraviolet (UV) radiation. The radiation consists of UV-A, UV-B and UV-C, according to its wavelength. Ultraviolet rays penetrate the skin and stimulate the cells to release melanin which darkens the skin and gives you a tan. The UV-A and UV-B rays are recognised as being mostly responsible for sunburn, premature ageing, loss of elasticity and skin tone, leathery, mottled skin and more serious conditions such as skin cancer.

Are you at risk?

Everyone is at risk of permanent skin damage and skin cancer from the sun's UV rays, but some are at a higher risk than others. Extra care should be taken by people who fit into any of the following groups:

- People who spend their leisure time outdoors.
- Those with fair skin, blonde or red hair, blue eyes and a tendency to burn rather than tan.
- People who work outdoors, or who live in the tropics.
- People who have a family history of skin cancer.
- People with lots of moles and freckles.
- People who were sunburnt numerous times as children.

SUN SAFE CATE

- Babies (who should not be exposed to direct sunlight at all until they are twelve months of age).

The top ten summer safety steps

The good news is that it's easy to reduce your risk and enjoy your favourite outdoor activities safely. The following tips offer a good guide on how to take extra care in the sun, and prevent skin cancer and premature ageing of the skin.

1. *Know if you are at risk* – Some people are at a higher risk of permanent skin damage and skin cancer than others. Take extra care if you are at extra risk.
2. *Choose the right time* – Avoid exposure to the sun when UV rays are at their most damaging – between 10am and 3pm. If you must be outside during these hours, pay extra attention to other protective measures.
3. *Seek out, or supply shade* – If you're outside, find some shade under a tree or structure, especially in the middle of the day. Take a beach umbrella or pop-up sun shelter with you. It is also important to seek shade and protect your skin on hazy or cloudy days. The UV rays will still penetrate haze and clouds.
4. *Wear a broad-brimmed hat* – Broad-brimmed hats made of close-knit fibres offer the best protection for your face, head, neck and ears. Caps fail to protect your ears, shoulders and the back of your neck, so apply sunscreen if you must wear one.
5. *Wear protective clothing* – Clothing provides an excellent barrier between your skin and the sun. Choose long-sleeved shirts made of tightly woven fabric to maximise sun protection. When held up to the light, the less you can see through a material, the better your protection. Collared shirts also provide protection to your neck.
6. *Use 30+ sunscreen* – Apply a SPF (Sun Protection Factor) 30+ sunscreen when

outdoors for more than ten minutes. Look for sunscreens labelled 'broad spectrum', which protect against both types of radiation (UVA and UVB). If you are sweating or swimming, re-apply at least every two hours. Use around a teaspoon for each arm, leg, chest and back, plus a half a teaspoon on the face, neck and ears.

7. *Don't rely on cream alone* – Used alone, sunscreen is not enough to protect you from the sun. No sunscreen provides 100% protection against the sun, as small amounts of UV radiation will always get through. Avoid using sunscreen as the only line of defence, but as a complement to other sun protection measures.

8. *Take eye care* – UV radiation can cause irritation and irreversible eye damage, resulting in cataracts or cancer on the eye's surface. Choose close-fitting sunglasses that offer UV protection. Some glasses also have an EPF (Eye Protection Factor), with ten being the highest.

9. *Think ahead* – Have extra hats, sunglasses and sunscreen in your car or bag so they are always close at hand. Apply sunscreen approximately 15-20 minutes before going outside, preferably underneath your swimwear, and take an umbrella or sunshade with you. Be well prepared on holidays, as a sudden exposure of sun to large areas of unprotected skin can significantly increase your chances of developing melanoma.

10. *Don't get sunburnt, especially if you are young* – All types of sunburn, whether serious or mild, can cause permanent and irreversible skin damage. The more sun you get, the higher your risk of skin cancer. However, your exposure to sun before the age of twenty is the most important factor in developing skin cancer.

When to get a skin check

If detected early, skin cancer has a 99% cure rate, so examine any moles, spots and blemishes regularly. Try to schedule an annual visit to your doctor to look you over, especially with areas that you can't see yourself, such as your back. There are a few warning signs that suggest it is time to seek a more urgent professional diagnosis on your skin, especially if you notice any of the following:

- any sore, ulcer or red, scaly patch on the skin, or white patch on the lips that doesn't heal within four weeks.

- any unusual freckle or mole that seems to grow quickly.
- any unusual freckle or mole that changes shape or colour.
- any unusual freckle or mole that bleeds or repeatedly itches.
- any unusual freckle or mole that is new.

Normally, your doctor can inspect any unusual looking spots or blemishes, although you may be referred to a dermatologist or surgeon for a second opinion. Skin cancer is diagnosed by physical examination and biopsy, where the spot is removed under local anaesthetic, and sent to a laboratory for tests.

Vitamin D

Approximately 90% of our vitamin D intake occurs when the skin is exposed to sunlight. Vitamin D has an important role in the prevention of bone disease, fractures, diabetes and some cancers. People who are housebound, who live in institutions, or who wear traditional or religious clothing that covers most of their body are at a higher risk of vitamin D deficiency. A few minutes of exposure to sunlight during summer outside peak UV times in the middle of the day is beneficial for your health, especially if you are in a high risk group. Just don't use it as an excuse to fry yourself.



Take a quiz to discover how high your risk of skin cancer really is.





Quiz

What is your risk of skin cancer?

Skin cancer can take twenty years or more to develop, so it's important to be aware of skin protection in all seasons and situations. Take this quiz to check your level of risk of skin cancer.

Do you usually wear a wide-brimmed hat when you go outside to protect your ears, forehead, upper cheeks and the back of your neck?

- a. Yes
 b. No

Do you often wear long-sleeved shirts made of tightly-woven fabrics when you are outside?

- a. Yes
 b. No

Do you use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 plus?

- a. Yes
 b. No

When you apply sunscreen, do you give maximum attention to the parts of your body that are at the greatest risk, such as the hands, forearms, face, ears and back of the neck?

- a. Yes
 b. No

Do you apply sunscreen 15-30 minutes before going outside, allowing the cream to penetrate your skin?

- a. Yes
 b. No

Do you try to avoid sun exposure between 10am and 3pm?

- a. Yes
 b. No

Do you re-apply sunscreen frequently if you are swimming or sweating?

- a. Yes
 b. No

Do you perform a self-examination of your skin every six months, checking for changes in the size, colour or shape of your freckles, moles or blemishes?

- a. Yes
 b. No

Do you visit a doctor or dermatologist every year to have your skin examined?

- a. Yes
 b. No

Did you have severe, repeated sunburns when you were young?

- a. No
 b. Yes

Have you had any type of cancer in the past?

- a. No
 b. Yes

Have your brother, sister or parents ever had skin cancer?

- a. No
 b. Yes

(Score 1 point for every 'a' answer and 0 points for every 'b' answer).

Score 0-4: You are at a high level of risk of developing skin cancer.

Score 5-8: You are at a moderate level of risk of developing skin cancer.

Score 9-12: You are at a low level of risk of developing skin cancer.



LIFE.info
magazine

Vol. 7, Issue No. 3

Editor

B. A. De Oliveira

Design

little bear creative

LIFE.info magazine

Alma Park
Grantham
Lincolnshire
NG31 9SL

Telephone:
01476 591 700

Email:
lifeinfomag@mac.com

Published by
The Stanborough Press Ltd,
Alma Park, Grantham,
Lincolnshire, NG31 9SL.

Printed in Thailand.

LIFEResources

● **Religion or entertainment? (p. 6)**
Godspell. If you can't find it playing at a local theatre, check it out on DVD.

● **To-do list (p. 11)**
To-Do List: From Buying Milk to Finding a Soul Mate, What Our Lists Reveal About Us, by Sasha Cagen.

God's To-do List: 103 Ways to Be an Angel and Do God's Work on Earth, by Ron Wolfson.

● **Truth (p. 12)**
The Clifford Goldstein Story, by Clifford Goldstein.

● **Creative recycling (p. 18)**
Re-Creative: 50 Projects for Turning Found Items Into Contemporary Design, by Steve Dodds.

● **Waiting (p. 40)**
Waiting, by Ha Jin.

● **Every sip (p. 42)**
Screen Deep, by Scott Moncrieff.
No Logo, by Naomi Klein.



Magazine Aims: To provide relevant material to help you with day-to-day living. To encourage you to stop and think about a few things that perhaps you haven't given much thought to before. To make you smile.



Sponsored by:

SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

If you would like to find out more about the Seventh-day Adventist Church, see www.adventist.org.uk

Cat Thompson

THE EMOTIONAL DIET

Food. It can bring us such intense pleasure, or, if we are at war with our cravings, such intense pain. How does food get to be so important in our lives, and what can we do to achieve a life where our relationship with it leaves us content and peaceful?

Food is Life

Eating is a basic survival mechanism. It is the thing we build our lives on. Without food, we will die. So, you might say it is the foundation of our lives. That being said, at some point breaking our day into eating three meals was an important way to sustain our lifestyles. When we physically worked long, hard hours to survive and spent tremendous energy each day, it was important to begin the day with lots of fuel, break in the middle of the day to rest and rejuvenate with food, and then end the day with fuel to sustain our bodies through the evening. For many of us, it wasn't that long ago (relatively speaking) that our families were serfs turning over the majority of our food to landlords. Hunger was the norm, and food represented wealth and abundance.

These days we are still eating as though we are labourers in the field, yet most of us are not able to handle the continuous amounts of food we put into our bodies. Our systems become overloaded, overworked, and eventually break down. Because we sit still most of the day, eating as often as we do and as much as we do creates a surplus that our bodies struggle to assimilate. In addition, much of the processed food we are eating has very little nutritional value. This causes us to crave more food as our bodies try to take in adequate nutrients. And that can lead to some nasty feelings of self-hatred as we watch our bodies bloat, age and rebel.

The structure of nourishment

Structure is an important part of our existence. We are most comfortable when we have consistent structures that we can depend on. Eating is a structure. We can build our lives around three meals a day. As children, mealtimes were an important part of our family structure. Meals generally happened at the same time each day, involved our families, and provided us with feelings of belonging to a tribe. As we get older and our physical and emotional needs change, we may find ourselves reverting back to this three-meal structure even if we live alone, or aren't hungry. That may be because it is the ritual of eating we are craving – the rich experience of sharing ourselves with others at mealtimes. If we do not understand that craving and create new food structures, we may find ourselves dissatisfied with every eating experience, yet never feel full enough to stop.

So, in order to understand better the subconscious factors that may be motivating our eating habits, we may need to remember how we spent our formative years with food, and what the relationship between food and family was.

The feelings of food

Many of us are drawn to food for the specific

emotional memories it carries. If, for example, our families used certain types of food to reward us or to celebrate something special, eating that particular food may bring a sense of peace or connection that we are missing. If we were given sweets to compensate for our parents' busy schedules, we may associate sweet food with love and caring. If eating a large meal with meat, vegetables and dessert was how we shared time with our families each day, we may find ourselves going out to dinner at the all-you-can-eat buffet as a way of re-evoking the feeling of being connected to our tribal community. Food generally plays an important role in how we define ourselves in the context of our family life. If we grew up in a house where the family did not eat meals together, and our food choices consisted of what was in the fridge at that moment, we may find eating with others uncomfortable and distressing, thereby triggering us to find ways to eat our meals alone. If food was scarce, and we were often hungry, eating may represent abundance to us, and we may be driven to continuous eating so as to avoid any memories of emptiness. Food can evoke tremendous feelings in our subconscious that can overtake any conscious structure we might try to install as adults.

Is it time for my treat?

As we look for the patterns that may be affecting our food choices, paying attention to the time of day we are drawn to binge or make unhealthy food choices is important.

For example, let's say that you crave sweets an hour or two before bedtime. And not just crave them – you're downright obsessed with having something sweet in the evening. Looking at your childhood patterns may show that early evening was the time of day when you got your parents' undivided attention and affection. Getting ready for bed, reading a bedtime story, saying prayers with



© Food Features

GOAT'S CHEESE AND RED ONION SALAD

Goat's cheese is delicious briefly grilled until just softening and its slightly sour tang is nicely balanced by this red onion sauce.

Serves: 4
Prep. time: 25 mins

Ingredients:

250g green beans
4tbsp walnut oil
1tbsp mustard seeds
Salt and black pepper
2 large red onions
25g butter
25g caster sugar
1tbsp red wine vinegar
1 pkt rocket
1tbsp cider or white wine vinegar
4 long slices of French bread,
brushed with olive oil
2 logs goat's cheese
Salt and black pepper

Method:

1. Boil or steam the beans until just tender. Drain and toss in one tablespoon walnut oil with mustard seed and seasoning. Chill.
2. Finely shred the red onions and place in a pan with the butter, sugar and vinegar. Simmer, stirring occasionally until well softened, adding a little water if it begins to brown.
3. Whisk the remaining oil and vinegar and season well. Toss the rocket with a little dressing.
4. Toast the bread and then place on four warmed plates. Cut the cheeses into four sections each. Place on foil on the grill rack and grill until golden and softening.
5. Meanwhile top the bread with the rocket, then the beans and then two slices of melted cheese. Finally top with a spoonful or two of the onion sauce and serve immediately.

- Onions are believed to have originated in Asia.
- As one of the only foods that do not spoil during winter, they were an attractive food to ancient people.
- The Egyptians worshipped the onion, believing that its shape and rings symbolised eternity.
- It was originally used for medicinal purposes.
- Sulphuric compounds in onions make our eyes water when we cut them.
- The largest onion on record weighed over ten pounds.
- Onions contain an antioxidant that is associated with beneficial effects on human diseases such as cancer.
- A slice of onion on the gauze-padded part of a plaster left overnight will draw out a sliver from the skin.



Remember to collect and save recipes! When you're finished with this magazine, tear out these pages and store them in a special folder. Alternatively, if you have the time, copy the recipe onto a card and keep it in your file.

you – these may have been ways your parents were connecting intimately with you – and for some, it may have been the only intimate connection you had with your parents. If today you do not have a supportive bedtime structure that provides that same quality of intimacy, you may find yourself turning to ice cream or chocolate instead.

Did your family all help prepare meals together? If so, food in the context of personal relationships may have a much higher emotional charge for you than it does for your partner or your children. You may feel hurt or angry that your family shows no interest in helping prepare meals. Often, as adults we remember certain parts of food preparation with fondness, and carry a desire to recreate that experience with our own families. If they have little or no desire to participate with us, we may find ourselves jumping between what we long to create and the reality of what we are experiencing in the moment. This can create drama in our meal structures, and if drama is the thing we are missing in our lives, food dramas may well become a substitute.

Did your parents reward you for a job well done by a trip to the sweet shop? If so, you may have set in motion a structure of sweets for work. If you're working at a job that is stressful and challenging, you might find yourself repeatedly going out in your lunch hour or break to treat yourself to a little sugar high. While it may give you a short burst of satisfaction and pleasure, chances are the crash you experience an hour later is adding to your stress rather than relieving it.

And what about mornings? Do you crave sweets first thing, before you even get to work? If so, chances are your body is begging for balance. Often when we are in a structure that is out of balance – our physical body is not getting enough activity, our emotional lives are barren, or our social lives non-existent – we crave sugar in the morning

as a way to start our day with the sweetness of life. Yet those morning sweets can send us on a downward spiral that culminates with exhaustion and/or depression by the day's end. The short-term sweet fix cannot feed our need for richness in our lives.

Food as protection

There is another, more subtle component to overeating. When our lives are rich with meaningful relationships, when we feel valued and believe we are contributing to making the world a better place, we feel full. This fullness is felt in our centre, where our stomach is. When we are not full of the satisfaction that comes from meaningful existence, we may carry a sense of emptiness in our centre. And then we are drawn to fill that space, often at any cost. For some, it is through drugs or certain addictive behaviours. For others, it is through food. This pattern often shows up at family gatherings. Have you ever been to a social event with your family and felt ravenous? This is often due to the fact that relationships with our families may be unsatisfying. If we long to have more meaningful and authentic relationships, and don't know how to achieve that, our feelings of dissatisfaction may intensify, causing unease in our centre and demanding instant attention. If we are not conscious of what this feeling indicates, we may interpret it as a signal for food, and overeat even when we are not hungry. Food can distract us, fill us up and change our feelings.

In a related pattern, we often begin relationships around food. 'Everyone has to eat,' a friend of mine said to me, 'so let's meet up and go for something to eat.' This sounds like an efficient plan at first glance. What often happens next (particularly in new relationships) is the feelings of being infatuated or excited are now tied into the act of eating together. And, as the relationship progresses, there is always a place we get to

where we are uncomfortable with each other. I remember many times being out to dinner, observing couples who didn't speak to or look at each other throughout their entire meals. I would shudder and think, 'I hope I never get to that place.' Each time I *did* get to that place, I realised that the *process* of eating had taken the place of the authentic dialogue we began with. I have since changed my relationships – I generally only eat with someone whom I have not seen for a long time, thereby assuring that we will actually have things to talk about during our meal. With my closer friends, I prefer playing to eating.

Breaking the chains of compulsion

So how do we break eating patterns that are unhealthy? Many of us have been in that place of trying to control our eating patterns; imposing rigid disciplines around what we can and can't eat, building structures to make sure we aren't tempted by the foods we crave, avoiding social situations where we might fall off the wagon – and, frankly, battling our desires like that takes an enormous amount of energy and often leaves life dreary and hard. Let's look at some other ways we might change our patterns.

1. *If you crave a specific food, and you are in a constant battle with that craving, you might ask yourself: 'What other desires might I have had that I did not fulfil, and moved that desire to chocolate, chips, bread, and so on?'* In other words, if your body has been having a strong desire for physical exercise, and you have not honoured that (due to time constraints in your work, no gym close by, and so on), then it is highly possible that your desire to exercise will look for something else to fill that need. Chocolate, in particular, imparts many of the same feelings to the body that physical exertion does. The satisfaction, however, does not last nearly as long! So, ask yourself if that particular food craving might not be a second choice addiction. See if you can find the first

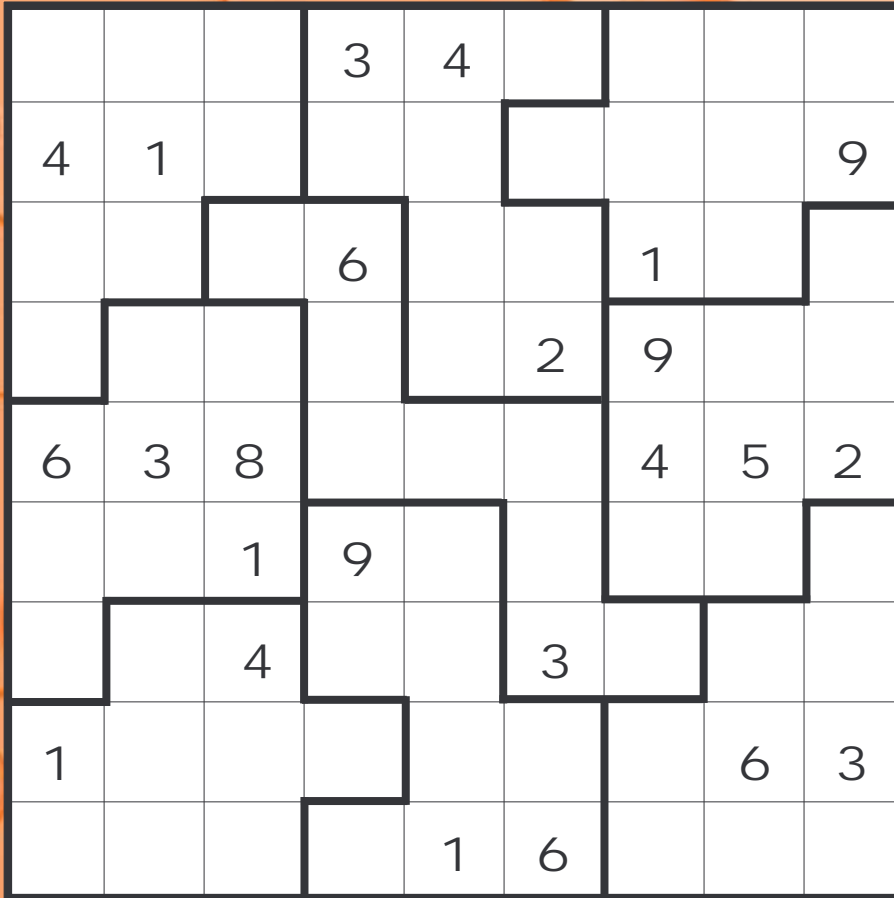
choice addiction (exercise, touch, intimacy, and so on).

2. *Notice what your food cravings are for, and what times of the day you are craving them.* Can you trace any of those patterns back to your childhood? How was food used in your family? Were you hungry a lot? Full a lot? Feeling unsafe as a child and food helped you feel grounded? Almost all of our addictive patterns with food can be traced back to specific feelings from our youth.

3. *Get a 'food friend'.* Make a deal that you will call each other when your food craving hits and talk about what's going on with you right then and there that might be making you crave your food of choice. You may see a pattern unfolding – like each time you have a certain experience that creates a certain feeling, you crave a certain food. Once you find the root cause of a pattern, it often will change on its own, and will lose some of its power just by being revealed.

4. *Observe your eating patterns when you are with groups, and whether those patterns are different in various group settings.* If being with your family makes you overeat, it might be interesting to see if changing the dynamic you have with them will change your food cravings. Start by meeting with one family member and initiate some authentic conversation, perhaps around what kind of relationship you truly desire with that person, and how you would be willing to create that. Then see if the family gatherings take on a richer and juicier flavour without food!

When you are able to see the ways your feelings connect with your food choices, you are well on the way to creating a life that feeds and sustains you with joy and ease. ☺



© www.istockphoto.com/Andrew Johnson



Jigsaw Sudoku

This is sudoku with a slight twist. In addition to solving the puzzle horizontally and vertically – making sure all the digits from 1-9 appear no more than once – you must also have all nine digits appear once in each of the asymmetrical 'jigsaw' boxes.

Good luck! 🍀

I'd like to get connected to God through regular prayer and Bible study. Please send the first lesson of my FREE correspondence course.

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode: _____

Post this coupon to:

Correspondence Courses, Discover Bible School,
Stanborough Park, Walford, WD25 9JU.



Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), the Irish writer, was perhaps best known for his biting wit. Here are just a few of his quips.

- A cynic is a man who knows the price of everything but the value of nothing.
- A man who does not think for himself does not think at all.
- A true friend stabs you in the front.
- Always forgive your enemies – nothing annoys them so much.
- Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future.
- Everybody who is incapable of learning has taken to teaching.
- I am not young enough to know everything.
- I am so clever that sometimes I don't understand a single word of what I am saying.
- I can resist everything except temptation.
- No man is rich enough to buy back his past.
- Pessimist: One who, when he has the choice of two evils, chooses both.
- Some cause happiness wherever they go; others whenever they go.
- The old believe everything, the middle-aged suspect everything, the young know everything.
- There are only two tragedies in life: one is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it.
- There is only one thing in life worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.
- We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.



Make the most
of every day

www.bibleschools.com



Local distributor details