

LIFE.info

Vol. 3, Issue No. 4

live forever

■ be
your own
financial
manager

■
facing change

■
coping with
stress

■
10 years' time

also: puzzles • poetry • trivia • feedback • fun

LIFE.info magazine

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I nearly threw it out of the bedroom window, piece by piece!

I'm almost certain that, according to the diagram, the bolt marked 'k' accompanied by the washer 'j' should insert through side rail 'b' and end panel 'e', which can then be tightened up with nut 'm'. But could I get it to work? NO!

Lydia and I have recently moved house, and as part of the process we decided to treat ourselves to a new bed. Our old bed was eight years of age, and the mattress, which was pretty cheap, came to the end of its useful life about five years ago. It's been like sleeping on a bag of vegetables ever since.

So, ten weeks after we stumped up our cash in the furniture shop our bed arrived, from Malaysia, in bits with a single page of instructions which looked like a photocopy of a photocopy of a photocopy of a fax of a photocopy of a

I managed to track down bolt 'k', washer 'j' and even nut 'm', but unfortunately the holes in side rail 'b' and end panel 'e' would not line up, no matter how much I jiggled and wiggled – not me personally, the bed parts! I pulled and pushed and even got to the point of kicking it.

In the end I had to use an electric planer – a tool I *now* own after an emergency trip to the DIY shop – to trim off the ends of side rail 'b' so that the holes lined up.

Three hours later – sweating like a pig – I finished what I had originally anticipated to be a 45-minute job. What a palaver! What a lot of extra hassle! If only the manufacturer had got it right in the first place, I wouldn't have had to spend the afternoon muttering under my breath, I wouldn't have needed to shell out twenty quid on a power tool, and Lydia wouldn't have needed to avoid me all afternoon.

It all worked out OK in the end, and the bed is very comfortable. But once I got over my initial chuntering, I wondered if I hadn't expected too much of flat-pack furniture. Should I just stop being surprised when it doesn't fit properly and start to factor-in extra time to finish the job?

Expectation versus realisation. It's a tricky subject we have to cross paths with in lots of different situations. Sheila has more on the subject on page 7.

Hope you find something in the mag that interests you.



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Lee



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Magazine Aims:

To provide relevant material to help you with day-to-day living. To encourage you to stop and think

Contents

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>05 LIFE snippets
Trivia and stories about the world we live in and the people we share it with.</p> <p>07 Great Expectations
Are you constantly disappointed with life? Time to look at your expectations.</p> <p>11 No need to be scared
The work of <i>Changing Faces</i>.</p> <p>14 It's personal
Do you stop and stare when you see something out of the ordinary? What if that something happens to be <i>someone</i>?</p> <p>18 Ten years' time
Where you gonna be and how you gonna get there? What? You mean you don't have any plans?</p> <p>20 Coping with stress
It's good for all of us in small doses but too much of it is definitely a bad thing.</p> <p>25 Ain't misbehaving
Discipline, it's part of loving parenting.</p> <p>28 By chance or by prayer?
Coincidence? You do the maths.</p> <p>30 Live forever
<i>Fame!</i> Ouch! my muscles are aching just at the thought of it, but my brain is aching even more trying to remember their names</p> <p>38 This church
Poignant poetry by Ruth Bath.</p> | <p>39 Five lessons
Sage advice in a modern context.</p> <p>42 SIN – naughty but <i>not</i> very nice
More than sneaking cream cakes from the fridge and little discrepancies at work, SIN is serious stuff – and it hurts!</p> <p>46 Warning signs
Can you smell something fishy?</p> <p>49 A little necessary chaos
. . . in the garden, anyway.</p> <p>50 Why we're fat
You've heard it all before but were you paying attention?</p> <p>55 Be your own financial manager
Is your wallet more out of shape than your stomach? Here's how to sort it.</p> <p>60 Mr Wonderful
What every woman wants and what every man thinks he is. Hmm.</p> |
|--|---|



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big kids

still children at 30

Two surveys in Britain and America have concluded that today's children are more likely to reach 'proper' adulthood some time in their 30s rather than at 18. That's if you count passing into adulthood by the three milestones of completing education, leaving home, and becoming financially independent.

The surveys found that only 46% of men had passed this stage by the age of 30 today, compared with 65% in 1960. And only 25% of women aged 25 could be classed as adults using such criteria today, compared with 70% in 1960.

A study in 1957 regarded those who remained unmarried and childless at 30 as being 'selfish, peculiar or morally flawed'. The new studies suggest that today such behaviour is the norm.

Dr Elisa Ferri, who led the British study for the Economic and Social Research Council, said she found that one in six 30-year-olds are still living with their parents. As recently as the late 1980s only half that proportion still lived at home.



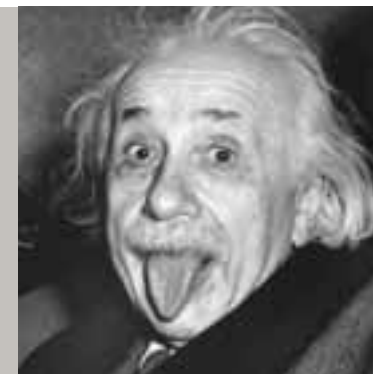
source: www.ananova.com

tongue in cheek?

A German court has ruled that Germans are allowed to stick their tongues out in their passport photos. The ruling comes after 30-year-old Alexander Mechthold appealed against his local passport office's decision to reject a passport photo showing him sticking his tongue out.

'It's a tribute to my hero, Albert Einstein,' Mechthold explained, alluding to a famous photograph showing Einstein in a similarly irreverent pose.

The official in Arnsberg refused to accept the picture for Mechthold's new passport, telling him it was illegal. But Mechthold took the case to court. It found that there was no rule in Germany that stated that passport photos couldn't show people with their tongues sticking out.



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Mechthold was told he could use the photo – and was issued a new passport.

He did, however, have to sign a statement revoking his right of recourse should he ever encounter problems with border patrol officers because of the photo.

Bond-style gadgets for OAPs

source: www.ananova.com

A team of Austrian and British scientists has developed a futuristic James Bond-like rescue system for senior citizens.

The small device, titled Supporting Independently Living Citizens (SILC), is packed with sensors and monitoring devices and is worn like a watch on the wearer's wrist.

It automatically calls for help when the person is in trouble, eliminating the need for the wearer to press a button.

Sponsored by the EU, the team of Austrian and British researchers, which also co-operated with Italian and Spanish colleagues, has taken three years to lay the groundwork for the high-tech portable alarm system.

The scientists questioned 70 potential users and 36 care workers, as well as experts from emergency service centres all over Europe, asking them where they saw room for improvement in emergency rescue scenarios.

In alarm systems used up to now, the person in trouble has



REX Features/News Photo Service

always had to push a button in order for the device to contact an emergency centre.

But studies show that the elderly are often reluctant to cause unnecessary alarm, and generally wait too long before calling for help. When their condition drastically worsens, they are unable to press the button themselves.

The SILC watch, however, uses a system of sensors to tell whether its wearer is in the throes of a life-threatening situation.

Monitoring pulse, temperature and the level of humidity on the skin, the sensors keep track of whether these values are within normal parameters.

Motion sensors in the watch can also detect if the person has suffered a fall. In order to avoid sounding a false alarm, the system uses a sophisticated 3D algorithm to recognise the typical pattern of a fall.

source: www.ananova.com

Edible clingfilm

Scientists in the US have developed a clingfilm that can be eaten.

Experts at Oregon State University have come up with a wrapping that not only keeps food fresh but can also be safely eaten.

The film, which contains natural preservatives, can be fortified with vitamins and minerals, says the Daily Telegraph. Used in liquid form, it can also be sprayed on fresh foods such as fruit to keep them fresher.

Dr Yanyun Zhao, a food technologist at the university who helped develop the film, said: 'You can use it as a film to wrap foods or you can use it as a spray or dip to coat foods.'

Dr Zhao and his colleague Dr Mark Daeschel, a microbiologist, invented the wrap after experimenting with chitosan, an ingredient in crab and shrimp shells, and lysozyme, a protein from egg whites.

Great expectations

by Sheila O'Connor

'I was all set for a blind date,' says Margaret, aged 33. 'My colleague at the office had said so many good things about Steve, I couldn't wait to meet him. He sounded keen to meet me, too, and had planned our whole day out. A trip to the zoo in the morning, lunch in a small café nearby, bowling in the afternoon and dinner in the evening. Trouble was, I realised he wasn't my type within an hour of meeting him. But I couldn't cancel the rest of the day when he'd gone to so much trouble. By the time I got home at night I was so exhausted I went straight to bed, vowing I'd never go on another blind date again. What a real let down! And I had thought this was going to be the beginning of something really wonderful.'



Do you feel disappointed when things don't turn out as you'd expected? Do you then spend your energy focusing on what 'should have been', without enjoying what actually happened?

Psychologist Francis Winterbourne says, 'Disappointment is the discrepancy between our expectations and reality, and it's usually a sign that we need to change our expectations, not necessarily lower them, and be more open about what happens to us.' Winterbourne says that if you are disappointed you know you had expectations. Yet this disappointment is entirely self-created, and in most cases nothing bad actually happens.

'Just because something turned out another way, it doesn't mean that way was "wrong". On the contrary, the unexpected way could easily have been right,' she advises.

To some extent, having expectations means we lose out twice. Firstly, because we're concentrating on what we're not getting, and secondly, because we're not appreciating what we *did* get. This is especially true if what we get results from how we did or didn't behave.



Janet says of a recent performance review with her boss. 'I felt good about it going in. I thought I'd done a great job all year and was all set for asking for a promotion. Then my boss told me that one supervisor had said I was a bit slow and needed to improve. I was so shocked and angry I never asked for my promotion, and was more annoyed with myself afterwards for not being able to answer the criticism.'

It's important, in a situation like this, to let go of any expectations that things could have been better, as Janet clearly believes. How do you know things could have been better? For Janet the only thing she could have been sure of is that they would have been *different*.

Winterbourne says, 'Wouldn't it be a better idea to ask yourself, "Can I shift gears and appreciate what is there and what I can get from this situation?"' In Janet's case she then knew that there was something preventing her from getting a promotion and that if she worked on it the promotion would be hers next time around.

And while women are often guilty of having high expectations and concentrating on how things 'should be', to some extent the



society in which we live encourages us to have these expectations. How many women, for instance, are continually disappointed on Valentine's Day? And it's not just those who never receive Valentine's cards. In some cases, women who do receive tokens of affection from their partners (whether it's a card or a Happy Valentine's Day kiss) often feel cheated that they didn't get something better.

Winterbourne says, 'Realise that if you think another thought, you could enjoy the experience more. Don't spend time focusing on the wrong thing.'

And when it comes to focusing on the wrong thing, we often do this with other people and end up frustrated by our expectations of them. Do you have a difficult work colleague or boss who makes your life miserable, for instance? Do you constantly wish they'd change – and then get annoyed when they keep acting the same way? In this situation, realising that this is how that person acts, and understanding that you shouldn't take it personally, can make all the difference.

If, however, you keep coming up against people like this in your life, Winterbourne says, 'Ask yourself why you're attracting these people. Although their behaviour says more about them than it does about you, ask yourself why you're even staying in a negative situation. What is the pay-off you get? Is it more frightening to look for something else than to stay where you are?'

When we decide to stay where we are, it's usually because it's easier or already known to us and doesn't require us to take any action. But sometimes it's a good idea to make a decision and just see what happens without having a preconceived idea of how things 'should' turn out. Even if you decide your choice was 'wrong', it's not irreversible and you can always make another one.

To illustrate this, look back over your life and assess the decisions and choices you've made. Even when you thought you had made a 'bad' decision, the chances are it turned out all right in the end. In fact, with age we often look back and see where bad things led to good things.

And while we have expectations of outcomes and other people, our greatest expectations (and often our most frustrating ones) are usually of ourselves.

'I was mad for hours when I left my house keys at the office and didn't discover the fact until I got home,' says Pauline. 'It meant another hour's bus trip to go and pick them up and then another hour back home again. I couldn't believe I'd been so stupid. I usually check they're in my bag but for some reason I didn't do it that day. It put me in such a bad mood that I couldn't enjoy the rest of the evening when I finally got home.'

If this sounds familiar, you're not the only one who mentally beats yourself up when you do something silly, but it's important to keep things in perspective. After all, how many times have you congratulated yourself for having your keys in your bag when you got home. Probably never. The point is, we never give ourselves credit for the things we do right, but we treat ourselves harshly whenever we do the least thing wrong (and probably to a greater degree than we'd ever do with someone else who did something wrong). Keep in mind that it's not a bad thing to be nice to yourself.

Winterbourne says, 'Life is a mixture of good and bad. View the negative things as part of life's experience and look on them as leading to something good or even enriching you in some way. Be realistic and understand that some bad experiences will happen but that you'll get through them and be stronger for them.'

When your expectations are not met, it's up to you not to continue feeling bad about them. Instead, you can and should imagine that good things will come into the empty space left behind by those unfulfilled expectations. It's then up to you to enjoy any new experiences for what they're worth. And that's something we can all expect to be interesting!



Great Truths About Life that little children have learned

- Q Never ask your 3-year-old brother to hold a tomato.
- Q You can't trust dogs to watch your food.
- Q Don't sneeze when someone is cutting your hair.
- Q Puppies still have bad breath even after eating a tic tac.
- Q Reading what people write on desks can teach you a lot.
- Q School lunches stick to the wall.
- Q When your Mum is mad at your Dad, don't let her brush your hair.
- Q If your sister hits you, don't hit her back. They always catch the second person.
- Q Never hold a dustbuster and a cat at the same time.
- Q You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.



No need to be scared

– the work of Changing Faces

History

Changing Faces was founded as a charity in 1992 by James Partridge who was severely burned in a car fire when he was 18. Every day since the accident James has had to deal with people's reactions to the way he looked – something he had previously taken for granted. People stared at him or were embarrassed in his presence. He has been ridiculed in the street and even turned away from restaurants.

Gradually, by trial and error, he discovered ways of managing people's reactions. He realised that it was possible to lead a very fulfilling life, unusual looks and all, and he became determined to find ways to help others face these challenges with confidence and skill. This has become the work of Changing Faces which has developed a very practical range of life skills programmes to help many of the 400,000 children and adults in the UK deal with the emotional and social effects of disfigurements.

I spoke to Suzanne Millstone, head of client services for Changing Faces. She told me more about the work of the charity.

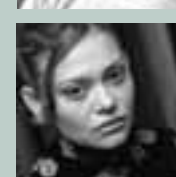
As Head of Client Services, Suzanne oversees a team of psychologists and counsellors who work directly with children, young people, families and adults who have a disfigurement from any cause.

Counselling, either over the phone or face-to-face, is a key part of our work. This emotional and psychological support is backed up with a range of workshops where people can learn communications skills and positive strategies to enable them to deal with difficult social situations and hostile public reactions to the way that they look.

Family and friends

We work with families because it's important to acknowledge the impact that a positive network of support can have on a person who

by Lee Gallaher



has a disfigurement. For parents whose child is born with a disfigurement or if a family member acquires a disfigurement, there can often follow a process of bereavement as the parents come to terms with the way that person looks. One client remembered her grief for the perfect baby she did not have and the confused reactions of those around her who didn't know whether to celebrate the baby's birth or console her. This Mum also had a fierce love for her daughter and understood the vital role she could play as a mother in helping her daughter to live successfully with a disfigurement.

It's a real balancing act for parents learning to manage the blatant public reactions that their child with a disfigurement can encounter while perhaps bringing up other children who have 'a normal' appearance. It's important to show total acceptance of their child as part of the family while making people aware of the potentially damaging effects of their reactions, at the same time as modelling positive ways for all their children to respond to future negative comments.

Language and popular culture

I talked with Suzanne about the effects language can have. She explained: There can be ways in which people reinforce positive or negative attitudes by the language they use. For example, saying that someone has suffered disfigurement is very negative. We prefer to say that someone has experienced disfigurement. Also, because people are often scared of the unknown, popular culture often uses disfigurement as a device to portray evil in horror films, comic strips and fairy tales. This means that people feel free to resort to calling people who have disfigurements names like Cyclops, Scarface or Freddie Kreuger.

Transition

Change is never easy; it's something we all struggle with. Often, because of the perceptions of others, this is even more so for those with disfigurements – which is why another aspect of the work of Changing Faces is to provide support and practical skills to help their clients deal with all transitional areas of life from moving school, through job interviews, to relationship building and dating.

It's personal

Suzanne also emphasised that disfigurement is personal and there are no general rules to apply when helping someone who is dealing with it. Neither is their ability to cope based on the severity of disfigurement. The emphasis ultimately has to centre on how the individual perceives their disfigurement. Suzanne explained that this perception is often based on what a person has thought about facial difference in the past. For example, if someone who acquires a disfigurement has, in the past, considered anyone facing the same thing as tragic, they are more likely to regard their own experience as a tragedy.

Scared

One of the most important things to realise is that in any encounter involving someone who has a disfigurement, both parties can feel anxious about how to behave, scared of saying the wrong thing or looking in the wrong direction. This is not always the case because many people with disfigurements have developed the effective communication skills that enable them to engage with the other person within a few seconds of meeting them. But in many instances, the double 'scaredness' can make the interaction awkward.

REACH OUT is an acronym used at Changing Faces to help everyone communicate effectively whether they have a disfigurement or not. It starts the communication ball rolling, helping the other person to feel more confident and relaxed and helping the user to relax and remove that communication barrier.

Here's how to reach out to someone new:

When you meet someone who has a disfigurement

Respect – the other person's point of view. Actively listen and don't patronise or ask personal questions you wouldn't ask anyone else.

Eye contact – Let the other person know you are concentrating on them.

Approachable – use open and welcoming body language – shake hands for a start. Let the other person know you are pleased to meet them.

Calm – it helps you both to create a safe feeling so that you can both start to communicate.

Honesty – if you don't understand someone, say so. Some facial disfigurements make speech difficult, but don't confuse that with a lack of intellect.

Open questions – These allow the other person to talk as much or as little about themselves. Be open about yourself in return.

Unbiased – Don't judge the person on their appearance. Make the effort to get to know them and find out what he or she is really like as a person.

Try again – don't be put off if you don't get an immediate response to your efforts. Remember – you have to fall off a bike a few times before you find your balance.

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For the person who has a disfigurement

Reassurance – Break the tension by smiling, nodding or making a neutral remark.

Energy and effort – to use effective body language and speech to get on the same wavelength as others.

Assertiveness – decide what is required, and whether it is reasonable, then ask for it directly and politely.

Courage – to tackle difficult situations and to talk to oneself in a positive way.

Humour – one of the best icebreakers in social interaction.

Over there – Learn how to change the subject of a conversation so that you don't have to discuss your disfiguring condition all the time.

Understanding – other people are nervous too.

Try again – when an encounter goes wrong it can be hard to summon the courage to have another go. Work out another way for next time.

Working together

I asked Suzanne what it would take to make life better for people with disfigurements in the UK. She told me it's about partnership – people with and without disfigurements working together, consciously making the decision to change their own personal attitudes and learning the skills required so that everyone can face disfigurement with confidence.

Disfigurement is not something to be

feared, reviled or whispered about behind closed doors. For some people it is part of their life – and that's the key – recognising that a physical difference is only part, not the whole, of the picture.



For more information about disfigurement you can visit the Changing Faces website: www.changingfaces.co.uk or email: info@changingfaces.co.uk Alternatively you can call them on: 0845 4500 275.

It's personal

by Lee Gallaher

Standing on the platform of Baker Street tube station, I'm trying not to let one of my dad's favourite tunes by Jerry Rafferty drown out all other thought. Amid the repetition of the only few bars I know of the song, one thought that pops into my head is that London is a great place to people-watch.

In the eight minutes that I was waiting for my westbound train to arrive, I saw an incredible array of human variety go past. Which led me to my next thought: first impressions. . . . I love people-watching – wondering where people are travelling to or from; are they regular commuters or casual visitors or tourists? Is their journey business or pleasure?

I became aware that in silently observing the general throng of fellow travellers I was randomly picking out individuals and making judgements. I was making tentative mental notes about people I had never met, based on their appearance. Do you ever do that? If you do, are you generous with your thoughts, or do you sometimes, like me, find yourself criticising and being negative? 'She's fat.' 'He's skinny.' 'They're an odd couple.' What if you see someone who looks a little different? Do you do a 'double-take'? Do you stare? Can you help yourself? Well, now, it's time you and I stopped to think about it.

Alison Rich has a facial disfigurement. It was noticeable to me when she entered the room, smiled warmly and extended her right hand to greet me. Alison Rich, when I met her, was also wearing great shoes (I have a thing about shoes) had very nice hair and a good tan – the lucky thing had just been on holiday. I'll be honest, I've only met Alison once and spoken to her on the phone a couple of times, but already I like her a lot; she's good fun, very interesting to talk to, and outgoing. What

more could you want to know about a person? Oh, well, you might want to talk about her face. OK, let's.

Alison was born with Golden Hars Syndrome, a condition which affects the bone structure, muscles and nerves of the face. Nobody knows exactly why it occurs. There are varying degrees of severity. For example, some children are born without an ear or they don't have an eye. It can also affect the spine – as is the case for Alison – and the heart

Alison was born to very outgoing, supportive parents. They decided that they would not hide their daughter away, but would introduce her to the world so that the world could be introduced to her. This decision was not without difficulties for Alison's mum and dad. At times, Alison's father admitted that the constant staring just got too much, and her parents used to position her in the pram so that passersby could only see one side of her face.

Alison says that, although not bullied at school, it was still a very lonely time for her. Like most other people at that time, the teachers' approach to Alison's facial difference was: Let's pretend it's not there. Without the chance to explain or understand, her classmates were left feeling awkward, uneasy and reluctant to make friends while Alison felt rejected and ignored.

Sixth form brought with it new challenges and opportunities and, seemingly, a more open attitude, especially among her peers. With new friends and a blossoming social life, she started to gain confidence and a sense of herself as



Photograph by Andy Flack

Now, I'm the kind of guy who likes meeting new people. This is bad news for you, because I'll probably just walk right up to you and say hello. Which is the very thing you've been dreading from the moment you clapped eyes on me.

But it's quite easy. All you do is look at me for who I am instead of how I look.

OK, maybe not so easy. The best thing to do is establish eye contact, smile and maybe shake hands. If you're the shy, retiring type, I'll start the conversation.

After a couple of minutes chatting, I guarantee you will be thinking less about my features and

more about what I have to say. You'll have stopped looking round the room for someone you half know, who can rescue you. Your palms will have stopped sweating and you'll feel strangely jubilant that you have overcome an irrational fear.

Before you know it, we'll be saying our good-byes. I'll say, 'Nice to meet you,' and this time, you might just agree.

Changing faces
the way you face
disfigurement

more than just a person defined by her disfigurement.

Alison went on to study English Literature and German at university in London, and formed some brilliant relationships with lovely people with whom she remains friends. While teaching in Germany she learnt how to manage the children's curiosity and obvious concern about her face by talking openly about her condition and letting them ask questions until they felt reassured and comfortable with her. Bags of English sweets helped too!

About this time Alison found out about Changing Faces and attended a workshop they were running. She remembers walking into a room and feeling a sense of relaxation and ease because there were other people who also had disfigurements. Alison found the opportunity to learn more communication skills and share experiences with others a tremendous boost.

Alison says that living with a facial difference is a journey, and acknowledges that throughout her life that journey will contain good and bad experiences directly related to her disfigurement.

How, for example, would you handle someone you were chatting to in the pub suddenly exclaiming, in all seriousness, 'You'd be a really lovely person if you weren't so ugly'? Alison's response was to pour her beer over his head. Already I can hear you shouting, 'Yeah! So you should!' as I did, but ask yourself – have you ever thought anything even remotely similar when faced with someone with a physical difference?

On another occasion, Alison was approached by a man at a concert who exclaimed, 'I don't know how you can live looking like you do.'

Alison recounts that she was stunned. She says, 'I thought I had got to the point where I pretty much knew how to deal with every situation, but that night I was shocked and realised that I didn't have all the answers. Initially I felt like I'd failed myself for being unable to respond, but gradually I came to the realisation that there will always be individuals who will say thoughtless things and that it's OK if I don't always have a witty response. After all, I know I can live very successfully looking as I do and that's what matters.'

After three years of working in marketing and publishing, Alison, who has an adventurous spirit, decided to take herself off to Australia for six months. Four great years later she returned to the UK with her partner and applied for a job as communications officer at Changing Faces. For her, it was important to help everyone to find out about how they could face disfigurement with confidence whether or not they had a disfiguring condition.

Alison Rich has a facial disfigurement, but that is just part of who she is.

When Alison and I finished speaking she still had a facial difference but I didn't notice it, not because I was ignoring it but because my lasting impression of Alison is that she smiled lots, had very nice hair, a good tan, oh and she had nice shoes (did I tell you? – I have a thing about shoes).



When you've looked at the ceiling, the coffee machine, your shoes and the far wall,

look me in the eye and say hello.

Photograph by Andy Flack

Don't feel bad. It's a natural response not to know where to look when meeting someone with a facial disfigurement for the first time.

I'm used to having conversations with the side of people's faces, or the top of their heads. I've even had people conduct an entire discussion through the person standing next to me (sometimes even when I don't know the person standing next to me).

What I'm saying is, don't be scared.

Make eye contact, shake hands, or even smile. I won't bite. We could talk about what happened to me, if you like. Or we could discuss something more important, like the weather or the price of fish.

Above all, don't get put off.

Meeting a complete stranger is a difficult business at the best of times. You will find it awkward, but it does get better.

I'm still learning myself. So, until we meet again, get a little practice in. Look me in the eye and say goodbye.

Changing faces
the way you face disfigurement

ten years time



by Lydia Gallaher

I was sitting in our local take-away pizza place the other Saturday night. Suddenly I realised that I hadn't been in there for about ten years! Don't get me wrong, it's not that I haven't had take-away pizza in ten years; I just hadn't been on the premises of that particular pizza place in all that time.

I first went to the pizza place when I started dating my (now) husband. He took me out for a romantic evening – guess where? True love! Now, I cast my mind back to that time ten years ago. Little did I know then that ten years later I would be working

in the office building right next door and that I would be living in a house on the same road! Little did I know that ten years on I would have been married for eight (long) years and be the proud owner of three cats!

If someone had asked me ten years ago, as a mere 18-year-old, what I had planned for my life in the foreseeable future, I would have honestly replied that I had no real plans. I knew what my plans were for a career and I had some expectation that I would be married at least by my 30th birthday – but that was pretty much it.

I went on to think about whether I had any regrets. I remembered some of the things I shouldn't have said or done; hurting my friends or family in the process. Those experiences have taught me to value the relationships and friendships I have more. I thought to myself, though, that it was important not to look back on the past and dwell on the negatives. Unless there is anything I can do now to change the outcome, what's done is done; it will remain in the past.

My trip down 'memory lane', sitting in the take-away pizza place, is not something I do regularly. I think I am part of a society where everyone is very much living 'here and now'. We want everything to be available at our finger-tips. We don't want to wait for anything (but sometimes the rail network has other plans, of course). Only this morning, I received a letter from a credit card company asking me why I should wait for that new car, or that holiday. 'Why wait? If you can't afford it, no problems, borrow money from us so that you can fulfil your dream!' ('And we can make shed-loads of money from the interest.') Modern technology has increased the speed at which we live, and in turn our hunger for more immediate answers to life's problems means more high-speed, hi-tech gadgets and gizmos. We think more about life in the present than we do about life in the past or, for that matter, in the future.

Ironically, the same week I was reminiscing in the pizza place, I heard Gabrielle's single 'Ten Years' Time'. If you haven't heard it, listen out for it on the radio (it's worth listening to!). Some of the song lyrics go along the lines of 'Do you have a vision?' 'Do you have a goal?' 'Is there something you are passionate about?' The chorus goes on to pose these questions: 'Where you gonna be in ten years' time and will you be happy with the way you've been living your life?' 'Will there be something you say that you should have done right in your life?'

When I heard the song I thought 'wow,




LEF/M

that's quite deep!', and it got me thinking – what am I planning for my life in ten years' time? What are you planning? Do we plan ahead *enough*? Are there things you want to achieve? Will I be the type of person I want to be? Only I can do something about it!

If life *isn't* how you want it to be right now – what can you do about it? How can you improve it? Are you prepared to settle for life as it is now or is there something you could do to make things right?

If life *is* how you want it to be right now – what can you put in place to keep it that way? What things or relationships do you need to invest in at present to help you into the future?

There may not be much we can do about the past and we may be too focused on the present even to think about the future, but it soon comes round, so 'where you gonna be in ten years' time?' 

Tell us where *you* want to be in ten years' time and how you plan on getting there and we'll put you in the draw to win a copy of Gabrielle's latest album – we've got three to give away. See the feedback form on page 33.

Stress is a killer. But, says Mara Schulz, there's a lot you can do to prevent it.

coping

with

stress

by Mara Schulz

We all experience stress to a greater or lesser degree, but being 'stressed out' doesn't mean you have bad nerves or can't handle the traffic of daily life. It's simply a part of living and isn't always a negative. Stress can be a motivator for better performance in athletics, education or career.

But it is possible to experience 'good' stress and 'bad' stress. Short of living in a catatonic state, you can't expect to experience a life of no stress.

Life will naturally throw different extremes of stressors at you. To this there are two responses. You can attempt to control or avoid the stressor itself. However, this option is often not viable when stress results from unavoidable situations, such as family conflict or hassles with your boss. In these cases, when you can't simply walk away, you must manage your response to the stressor. As a result, a large component in managing stress is, in fact, your reaction to it, and the coping skills you have at your disposal. This explains why different people respond to exactly the same stressor in very different ways.

Although some stress can be beneficial, clinical stress is that which causes discomfort to an individual. When this form of stress hasn't been adequately dealt with and remains unresolved, *distress* can result.

Effects of stress

Distress affects your thinking, resulting in poor concentration or forgetfulness. It affects your emotions, causing anxiety, depression and tension. And it affects your behaviour, producing weight problems, erratic or antisocial behaviour and loss of sleep. Each of these can aggravate the condition. It can also increase risk behaviours, such as drinking or smoking and other drug abuses.

Causes

There are many causes of stress. In today's society a significant amount is caused by the hassles of daily life, such as time management, juggling work and home life, and managing finances. One's own thinking – if it's 'stinkin' thinkin' – can produce it. The notion, for example, that you need to be

Stressed at work?



Your occupation can be a major source of stress. But there are many ways to deal with that and cope. Here are some tips:

- * Don't take your work home with you; work overtime if necessary then leave the work at the office.
- * Give yourself a full lunch-hour break away from your desk or job; take breaks during the day (and through the year).
- * Discuss your feelings about work with a close person.
- * Don't place your self-worth on the task; you are not your job.
- * Don't over-commit; delegate, prioritise and limit demands on your time.
- * Use relaxation techniques; even 20 minutes of your lunch hour or one minute at your desk will help to relax you and you will work more efficiently.



capable all the time, both at work and home; or irrational self-expectations, like thinking, 'I should be able to cope with this.'

Relationships are a cause of stress. Not just romantic relationships, but also family conflict, parenting difficulties and social pressures.

An additional source of stress is change. The normal changes that occur through a lifetime, such as a new job, shifting from study to work, moving home or getting married can cause huge amounts of stress. Change is an unavoidable part of life, but is often overlooked as a cause of stress.

Identifying

While we may all experience the same stressors, the deeper root of our stress responses differ. For example, the stress of a relationship may really be rooted in the fear of long-term commitment – looking into the future and fearing what it may hold in terms of that relationship. Stress caused by work may be found in the pressure of needing to be focused and capable at all times, the stress of being responsible for others, either because we expect it of ourselves or because others expect it of us.

It is, therefore, important to identify the stressor in order to deal appropriately with it. This often means stopping and taking a

step back to reflect and consider what is causing the stress. And remember, stress is accumulative. Many individual stressors can combine to produce a big stress impact.

Our body responds to the sum of all stressors encountered throughout the day or over time. It often takes only a small, usually insignificant stressor to send you over the edge into a distressed response. It is often hard to discern the pattern when you're experiencing the result of it, but by identifying the individual stressors it's possible to reduce the amount of stress you're experiencing.

Understanding the cause of your stress will, in itself, be comforting and a step towards managing it.

Confront and resolve

It is possible to control your response to stress through your own mental processes. Changing the way you think about a stressor by challenging your thoughts and reactions can do this. You can manage stress by confronting and resolving stress or by developing a coping mechanism so that the stressor doesn't dominate your life. It's important to continually refocus, concentrating on the positives in life rather than dwelling on the negatives.

Relaxation through meditation or prayer, or simply group support through a social network, can help this process. Relaxing enhances self-awareness and purpose, and helps stress reduction by increasing your ability to cope.

You may now be thinking that there are some things in your life you could change, but it's important to master one change at a time, for too much change too quickly can itself cause stress.

Stress and depression

Prolonged stress can lead to depression. It is the most common mental illness and appears to be a growing epidemic affecting 20% of the population at some time, accord-

ing to the Mental Health Association of NSW. It is the primary disorder in young people today. We're more likely to develop major depression before 19 years of age.

There are different forms of depression, ranging from mere feelings of sadness to acute clinical depression.


The symptoms include apathy, feeling down; experiencing no enjoyment from life; pessimism, with everything seeming impossibly difficult; persistent tiredness; talking and thinking slowly; being unable to get out of bed; a loss of interest in sex; and a lack of internal motivation.

We all experience some degree of depression at some time, therefore most of these signs are fairly common. However, if you're experiencing these symptoms for a considerable time and it's causing you dis-

tress, you may be clinically depressed.

If you (or your child) are aware of these symptoms and they are affecting your well-being, seek a mental-health professional. For most people, improvement occurs in three to six weeks. Don't let misconceptions about mental illness or the discouragement of depression stop you from seeking help. Note, depression is not genetic, and it isn't something that you just have to live with. It isn't your fault and it can be treated.

If you're in need of medication, your doctor will most likely refer you to a psychiatrist. Remember, medication takes a few weeks to work, so talk to someone in the meantime. You are not abnormal, and certainly not alone.

Stress is not a death sentence, and both it and its symptoms can be treated. 

Stress-reduction tricks

There are general techniques that can increase your resistance to stress. By adopting a healthful lifestyle, you'll better cope when you encounter a stressor. This includes eating a balanced diet and being physically active. Learn to take your own blood pressure, know the baselines and monitor your stress levels. Remember, stress is addictive, and unhealthy habits will add to the stress load.

Fulfil your emotional needs through spending time with your family and friends. When experiencing a stressful time, it's your friends you need the most. So socialise and invest your time in relationships. Settle conflicts; don't brood over things, rather, resolve them. Give yourself some space, too.

Keep a balance between work and recreation, stress and relaxation. This is the key to good emotional and mental health.

Finally, get plenty of sleep. We all need 8-10 hours a night over an extended period to avoid persistent fatigue.



The ^{new} LIFE.info Pop Quiz

capital cities

How's your geography? See how many of the capital cities you can name from the list of countries below:

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Angola | 13 Finland | 25 Pakistan |
| 2 Australia | 14 Germany | 26 Peru |
| 3 Austria | 15 Iran | 27 Poland |
| 4 Bangladesh | 16 Jamaica | 28 Portugal |
| 5 Belarus | 17 Kenya | 29 Republic of Congo |
| 6 Botswana | 18 Latvia | 30 Singapore |
| 7 Brazil | 19 Libya | 31 South Africa |
| 8 Chile | 20 Malawi | 32 Spain |
| 9 China | 21 Mongolia | 33 St. Lucia |
| 10 Croatia | 22 The Netherlands | 34 Sweden |
| 11 Cuba | 23 New Zealand | 35 Switzerland |
| 12 Egypt | 24 Norway | |

collections

Can you match up the collection with the name of the collectors? We've given you the first one to start you off.

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| aerophilatelist | airmail stamps |
| 1 audiophile | a autographs |
| 2 bibliophile | b books |
| 3 conchologist | c butterflies |
| 4 deltiologist | d corkscrews |
| 5 helixophile | e records/CDs |
| 6 lepidopterist | f prints & engravings |
| 7 numismatist | g shells |
| 8 phillumenist | h matchbook covers |
| 9 philigraphist | i money and medals |
| 10 discophile | j music |
| 11 iconophile | k postcards |

Answers. Capital Cities: 1. Luanda. 2. Canberra. 3. Vienna. 4. Dhaka. 5. Minsk. 6. Gaborone. 7. Brasilia. 8. Santiago. 9. Beijing. 10. Zagreb. 11. Havana. 12. Cairo. 13. Helsinki. 14. Berlin. 15. Teheran. 16. Kingston. 17. Nairobi. 18. Riga. 19. Tripoli. 20. Lilongwe. 21. Ulan Bator. 22. Amsterdam. 23. Wellington. 24. Oslo. 25. Islamabad. 26. Lima. 27. Warsaw. 28. Lisbon. 29. Brazzaville. 30. Singapore. 31. Pretoria. 32. Madrid. 33. Castries. 34. Stockholm. 35. Bern. Collections: 1-j. 2-b. 3-g. 4-k. 5-d. 6-c. 7-l. 8-h. 9-a. 10-e. 11-f.

Ain't misbehaving

(honest)

by Karen Holford

Looking at our newly-born baby daughter, my husband and I could hardly imagine that the tiny bundle of innocence we saw before us would ever get up to any mischief. She was wrapped in a soft white blanket, with pink bows, and as we stared at her in amazement we almost found ourselves feeling her back for the first signs of cherub wings!

A year or so later we began to realise that the wings were never going to grow this side of heaven and it was going to be up to us to help her to be 'good'.

Some relatives were living in Denmark at the time, and they weren't allowed to use physical discipline on their children. We took a tip from them and introduced the 'Naughty Chair'. Whenever our daughter misbehaved she would have to sit on the chair for five minutes. But that was bliss for her! She was happy to sit on the chair, perfectly contented and at peace. A problem with the 'Naughty Chair' arose when we had some guests for dinner and we had to use the 'Naughty Chair' at the table. A cherubic little face smiled up at the lady visitor, and whispered, 'You're sitting in the Naughty Chair! Whatever have you done to upset my mummy? Did you call her a Tellytubby too?' That was the end of the 'Naughty Chair' for a while.

A couple of children later we decided to introduce the Naughty Chair again. We soon discovered that the chair had a powerful effect on one of our bouncy sons. Ten seconds of sitting still on a chair would have him begging for forgiveness and sobbing to get off. After that moment of torture he would promise us oceans of good behaviour, just to be allowed to run around again!



One of the biggest challenges of having more than one child is that they seem to have some in-built ability to wind each other up, and they learn very quickly what will throw the other child over the edge. So child B winds up child A, until child A gets out of control. Parent arrives, punishes child A and child B sits angelically to one side with an innocent, slightly smug look on their face. Child A gets even more furious and hits child B, who gets sympathy from parent, while child A gets even more punishment. Parent has absolutely no idea about the terrible things child B has done to child A.

We finally read in a book that one way to manage sibling conflicts is to put any fighting children out in the back garden and refuse to let them in again until they've made up. According to the author (who had a PhD in psychology) his boys would be at the back door smiling happily within a couple of minutes. Fantastic idea, or so we thought.

One evening, after a long and tiring day, our two eldest children began to fight. I was holding a crying baby and trying to make supper at the same time, and I was operating on a fuse as long as my little finger nail. Suddenly I remembered the garden idea! The solution to every parent's problem! I opened the back door on the dark November garden and told them to come back again when they'd made up. A minute later there was a knock. Great! At last we'd found the perfect solution – or so I thought. My delight dissolved as my daughter triumphantly announced, 'Nathan's run away!' In my rush to implement the new form of discipline I'd forgotten that we lived on a corner plot with a low wooden fence. The fence was slatted like a low ladder. So here I was, with a hungry, crying baby, another small hungry child, and a son running away from home. I had to get three of us ready to go out to look for Nathan, and he could have run a dozen different ways from our home.

I started walking around the block, and as I arrived back home, I was so relieved to see Nathan, hiding in the bushes by the front door. 'I started to run away,' he said, 'but then I realised I had my best clothes on and I didn't want any of my friends at school to see me looking like this.'

We didn't do the garden thing again, and I'm not sure what you do if you live in a block of flats, putting your children out on the balcony to cool off probably isn't a good idea either!

Later on, discipline was a bit more complex. We'd heard about the importance of natural consequences as a useful kind of discipline. That seemed to mean if a child did something, like ruin a new outfit by cutting it up with a pair of scissors, they had to pay for a new one, or at least put some money towards it. If they played up in the morning and were late for school, they still had to walk as normal and wouldn't get a lift to school instead. That was useful for a bit. But it didn't suit every situation.

One time, one of our children had done something deliberately destructive, but the result was a bit complicated, and I had no idea how to discipline wisely. I knew that something had to be done, and finally sat down with the child. We talked about what had happened, and the effect it had on me, them, our finances and our life. Then I said, 'Look, I don't know the best way of handling this. Do you have any ideas? If you were me and I was you, what would you do?'

'Well, I would make me pay all my pocket money for six months and make me do all the washing up for a month.'

Wow, that's a bit harsh, I thought. Glad I'm not *their* child! 'Well, how about we compromise and halve your pocket money for a month, and you do the washing up for a week?'

'Mum! Wow, you are so nice to me! I love you! I promise I'll not do anything so stupid ever again!'



Mmm. That was interesting. Let them choose their own punishment, and then add a generous touch of grace, and agree on something much less than they thought they deserved. That way we *all* win! Perhaps at last we'd found the perfect solution.

Then last week one of our teenagers 'accidentally' overshot an evening curfew by an hour or so.

'So what kind of consequences do you think would be suitable this time?' I asked in the morning as he sat falling asleep in his big bowl of 'wake up' cornflakes. But looks can be deceptive and he was obviously not as tired as he looked.

'Well, mum, you know how much I just love going to school, especially as it's maths today – my very favourite subject. If I were you, I think I'd say I couldn't go to school today, because that would be the most awful punishment in the whole world.'

Hmm. OK. Any other good ideas out there?



by CHANCE or by PRAYER? – don't be stupid!

by Llewellyn Edwards



I had parked my car in the car park opposite the old Eye Hospital on Newport Road in Middlesbrough. I walked about 100 metres to a sports shop; spent some time looking at some camping equipment then walked back to the car. In that time and distance I somehow lost the keys to my car. But it wasn't just the car. The bunch had my home keys, and several to my place of work. Looking back, maybe I was a little paranoid, but the area wasn't known for car safety. I had lost one car that was never found and had five thefts from cars; a house burglary; and numerous break-ins where I worked.

After having contacted the police and thoroughly searched the sports shop, I sat on the wall outside the hospital and fretted while I watched my car across the road in the park.

Then the thought occurred to me – if there is a God 'up there' and he knows everything then he must know where my keys are and can get them back to me. 'Some chance – stupid!' you might think.

I have read that the probability of something happening equals the number of ways that that thing could happen divided by the total number of outcomes.

However you do the maths, the possibili-

ty that, from among the hundreds of people from the nearby shopping centre or hospital, someone would step up to me, not knowing that I was the one who had lost the keys, and drop them in my hand was most likely a smaller number than I can understand.

Nevertheless this is what I asked God – 'Please get someone to drop the keys into my hand.' (This action is described as 'prayer') Then I stood back against the hospital wall and looked expectantly at passersby.

People came by and didn't even notice me! Not one said 'If you've lost your keys I'm really sorry but I haven't found them!' Then I decided that rather than expect the person with my keys (if there was such a person) to approach *me* maybe I should approach them – after all how were they to know that I was the one who had lost the keys?

Now this 'asking God' thing was becoming personal – I was asking him to guide me, not just bring the person to me. This is where my story becomes a little scary. It reminded me of something I read, about a person who found a peice of string that trailed off into the darkness and upon picking up the string and giving it a couple of tugs found that someone or something out there in the darkness tugged back.

I decided to approach the hospital receptionist, and began walking into the hospital grounds. Part way there I felt a bit silly doing this and returned to the security of standing by the wall. Then I noticed further down the road a Charlie Brown's (Auto shop) and decided I'd ask there.

'OK, God up there – let's do it.' I walk into the shop and head to the counter. There are two attendants in the shop. One is at the counter, the other is at the far end of the shop stacking shelves. There are no customers in the shop. As I approach the counter another man walks into the shop and makes his way to an aisle about shop centre. I ask the counter attendant if any keys

have been handed in. 'Nope' he says 'but let me ask the other attendant'. At the moment the counter man calls in a loud voice to reach across the store, the man who came in behind me is walking out of the shop. The counter man calls out, 'Has anyone handed any keys in? This guy has lost his car keys!' The other attendant shouts back 'No.' The doors of the store have swung shut, the other shopper is outside but he has just caught the counter man's question and he walks back in. He comes up to me and says 'Describe your keys.' I do and he picks them out of his pocket and drops them into my hands.

Now I am really scared. The 'ifs' pile up. If I had gone to the hospital first . . . If I hadn't dallied by the wall . . . If both shop attendants had been at the counter . . .

If the counter man hadn't called in a loud voice . . .

If the timing hadn't been perfect . . .

As the man left me he said, 'Amazing, I was just walking past and on a whim decided to look at the price of something in the shop!'

I couldn't have said it better myself – AMAZING! It certainly got me thinking. Maybe there is a GOD up there, and maybe taking a CHANCE on PRAYER isn't so stupid.



Fame Live Forever

by Dave Selvage

Do I admit it? I was listening to the song *Fame* by Irene Cara the other day. Well, it just happened to be on the radio, actually – but I was listening to it. I was struck by the words of the chorus, which go:

*'Fame! I'm gonna live forever,
I'm gonna learn how to fly high.
I feel it coming together.
People will see me and cry.
Fame! I'm gonna make it to heaven,
Light up the sky like a flame.
Fame! I'm gonna live forever,
Baby, remember my name.'*

My first thought was, she's asking us on behalf of the *Fame* characters to remember their names, and I can't remember a single one of them (and my second big admission here is that I did used to watch it). Then we found the picture on the opposite page and, to be honest, I'm still struggling. And my guess is, if you're under the age of 25 you haven't got a clue who the people are in the bottom right hand picture.

So, if being in a 80s TV show is not enough to leave you lingering in the thoughts of others, what *do* you have to do to be famous? How do you get to be remembered,

and so gain that ever-elusive quality of immortality?

Well, let's turn to our friends in the film industry. Hollywood has long been in the business of immortalising legends. Here are just a few evocative names that have helped fuel box office success over the years: Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, William Wallace, Rob Roy and, more recently, the heroic Achilles, a name made perhaps even more famous this year thanks to Hollywood's adding the face (and body) of Brad Pitt.

And as with Achilles, so with our other hapless heroes. While they all might be famous now, before any of them really got to enjoy the fruits of their noteworthy endeavours (think of the merchandising and royalties), they all died. Not quite *living forever*, then?

There was a scene in the movie where Achilles couldn't decide if he should stay in Greece or go to Troy and fight, so he went to see his mother for some advice. What she said was basically, 'If you stay here you will find a good woman to settle down with, have children and raise a family and be loved. And when you die your children will miss you and mourn for you and they will

tell their children about you, but eventually you will be forgotten. But if you go to Troy you will be a hero. Men will sing songs about you down through the ages and your name will go down in the history books, never to be forgotten – but you won't come home.' Decisions, decisions. If you don't know what he decided to do then maybe you should go and see the movie but, considering that he is in our history books and that they have made a movie about him, you can probably guess.

But the question now is, did he manage to obtain immortality through it all? Is he still alive today? Are any of the people I've mentioned still living? Or are they actually six feet under, pushing up the daisies? And if that's the case, is it really possible to live forever, as the song suggests?

Well, according to the Bible it is. In the

book of John it says: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'

This verse tells us that we can *all* have eternal life, or 'live forever', simply by believing in Jesus Christ. Well, the word 'believe' here means more than just a *token* knowledge of Jesus; it means believing in him and all that he stands for and letting that belief change your life and how you relate to other people. It means believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he came to die for us all because he loves us – you, me, everybody – and that he is coming back soon to take us all to a place of peace and safety to be with him.

I can't promise that you'll be famous there. But the living forever bit is a dead cert!



REX Features/c.20thC.Fox/Everett



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REX Features/Everett Collection

REX Features/Everett Collection

REX Features/Everett Collection

Count to 10

A teacher in Montana, USA, was helping one of her kindergarten pupils put on his snow boots. He asked for help and she could see why.

Even with her pulling and his pushing, the little boots still didn't want to go on. Finally, when the second boot was on, she had worked up a sweat. She almost cried when the little boy said, 'Teacher, they're on the wrong feet.'

She looked and, sure enough, they were. It wasn't any easier pulling the boots off than it had been putting them on. She managed to keep her cool as, together, they worked to get the boots back on – this time on the right feet.

He then announced: 'These aren't my boots.'

She bit her tongue rather than get right in his face and scream, 'Why didn't you say so?' like she wanted to. And, once again, she struggled to help him pull the ill-fitting boots off his little feet.

When eventually they got the boots off he said, 'They're my brother's boots. My mum made me wear 'em.'

Now, she didn't know if she should laugh or cry. But she mustered up the grace and courage she had left to wrestle the boots on his feet again.



REX Features/Frank Sileman

Helping him into his coat she asked, 'Now, where are your mittens?'

He said, 'I stuffed 'em in the toes of my snow boots.'

Her trial starts next month.

Did you know?

- Q A cat has 32 muscles in each ear.
- Q A 'jiffy' is an actual unit of time for 1/100th of a second.
- Q A snail can sleep for three years.
- Q Almonds are members of the peach family.
- Q Leonardo Da Vinci invented scissors.
- Q Cats have over one hundred vocal sounds. Dogs only have about 10.
- Q If the population of China walked past you, in single file, the line would never end because of the rate of reproduction.
- Q Peanuts are one of the ingredients of

feedback

Vol. 3, Issue No. 4

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

where you gonna be in ten years' time? (p.18)

So, where do you want to be in ten years' time? What are your dreams and how do you plan on achieving them? Let us know, in the space provided below and for your trouble we'll enter you in our draw to win a copy of Gabrielle's latest album, *Play to Win*.

Don't forget, if you want to be in with a chance of getting a CD we'll need your contact details

Cut along the dotted lines, fold in half and stick down the three open sides. Then pop it in the post. **Postage is FREE.**

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2

PuzzlePage

Get searching for the words in the grid below, they appear down and across. All the words relate to the **Facing Change** section of the magazine, which starts on page

F	J	Y	D	H	F	N	E	D	I	F	F	E	R	E	N	C	E	M	Y
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N	L	A	N	G	U	A	G	E	N	K	B	C	R	U	O	Y	H	E	A

Accident	Conversation	Fear	Look	Smiling
Adults	Difference	Fulfilling	Mouth	Staring
Change	Disfigurement	Hide	Outgoing	Support
Children	Experience	Irrational	Practical	Therapy
Communicate	Eye	Journey	Scared	Tragedy
Confidence	Face	Language	Skills	Ugly

Play On Words

- Which of these is a small and dainty person? **Poppet-head/Poppet**
- Which of these is the monetary unit of Ghana? **Cede/Cedi**
- Which of these is a short pithy maxim? **Aphorism/Aphonia**
- Which of these is a system of government? **Regimen/Regime**
- Which of these is an Eskimo? **Intuit/Inuit**
- Which of these is a succulent plant? **Kalanchoe/Kakemono**
- Which of these has to do with gardens? **Bedizen/Bedstraw**
- Which of these has to do with milk? **Homogenetic/Homogenize**

Play On Words: 1. **Poppet** - A poppet-head is the frame at top of a mine shaft. 2. **Cedi** - To cede something is to give up your rights to it. 3. **Aphorism** - Aphonia is the loss of voice through disease of larynx. 4. **Regime** - A regimen is a prescribed course of exercise, or diet. 5. **Inuit** - Inuit means to know by intuition. 6. **Kalanchoe** - A kakemono is an unframed Japanese wall-picture. 7. **Both could** - bedizen means to deck out gaudily/bedstraw is a flower. 8. **Homogenize** - Homogenetic means having a common descent or origin.

air america

In-flight announcements from the USA

'There may be 50 ways to leave your lover, but there are only 4 ways out of this airplane . . .'

'We do feature a smoking section on this flight; if you must smoke, contact a member of the flight crew who will escort you to the wing of the plane.'

'Good morning. As we leave Dallas, it's warm, the sun is shining, and the birds are singing. We are going to Charlotte, where it's dark, windy and raining. Why in the world y'all wanna go there I really don't know.'

'Folks, we have reached our cruising altitude now, so I am going to switch the seat belt sign off. Feel free to move about as you wish, but please stay inside the plane till we land, it's a bit cold outside, and if you walk on the wings it affects our flight pattern.'

'As you exit the plane, please make sure to gather all of your belongings. Anything left behind will be distributed evenly among the flight attendants. Please do not leave children or spouses.'

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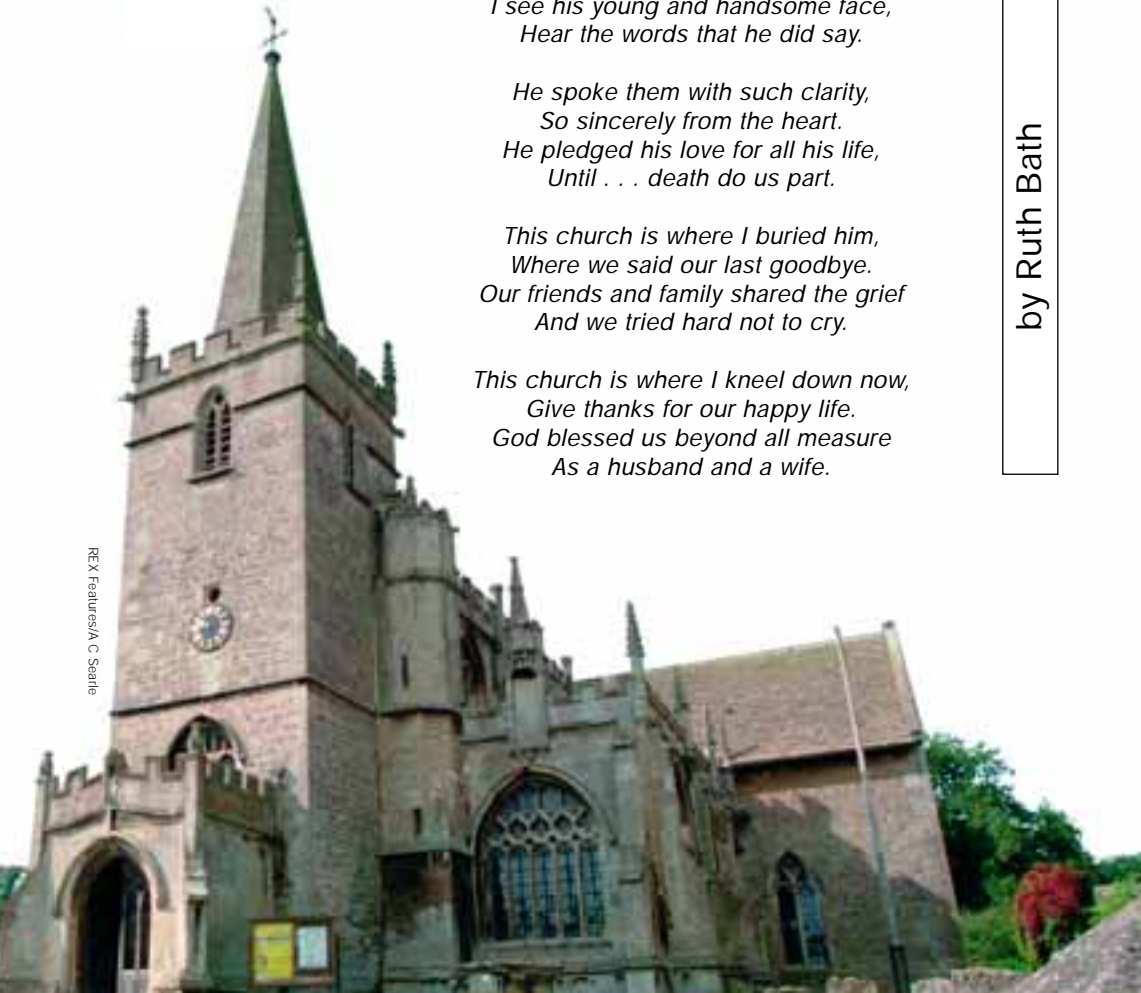
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source: www.gsf1.net



REX Features/A C Searle

*This church was where I married him
Over fifty years ago.
He pledged his vows, as I did mine;
We both loved each other so.*

*This church was full of people –
All our family and friends.
Our hearts were bursting with our love,
True love . . . that never ends.*

*I come and sit here now and then,
Just quietly, on my own,
And think of all the years gone by,
Of the love that I have known.*

*This church, I see just as it was
On our happy wedding day.
I see his young and handsome face,
Hear the words that he did say.*

*He spoke them with such clarity,
So sincerely from the heart.
He pledged his love for all his life,
Until . . . death do us part.*

*This church is where I buried him,
Where we said our last goodbye.
Our friends and family shared the grief
And we tried hard not to cry.*

*This church is where I kneel down now,
Give thanks for our happy life.
God blessed us beyond all measure
As a husband and a wife.*

by Ruth Bath

five lessons

Five lessons to make you think about how you treat people



REX Features/AGB Photo Library

1 First Important Lesson – Cleaning lady

During my second month of college, our professor gave us a pop quiz. I was a conscientious student and breezed through the questions, until I read the last one: 'What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?' Surely this was some kind of joke. I had seen the cleaning woman several times. She was tall, dark-haired and in her 50s, but how would I know her name? I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank. Just before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count towards our quiz grade. 'Absolutely,' said the professor. 'In your careers you will meet many people. *All* are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say "hello".' I've never forgotten that lesson. I also learned her name was Dorothy.

2 Second Important Lesson – Pick-up in the rain

One night, at 11.30pm, an African American woman was standing on the side of an Alabama highway trying to endure a lashing rainstorm. Her car had broken down and she desperately needed a ride. Soaking wet, she decided to flag down the next car. A young white man stopped to help her, generally unheard of in those conflict-filled 1960s. The man took her to safety, helped her get assistance and put her into a taxicab. She seemed to be in a big hurry, but wrote down his address and thanked him. Seven days went by and a knock came on the man's door. To his surprise, a giant console colour TV was delivered to his home. A special note was attached. It read: 'Thank you so much for assisting me on the highway the other



night. The rain drenched not only my clothes, but also my spirits. Then you came along. Because of you I was able to make it to my dying husband's bedside just before he passed away. God bless you for helping me and unselfishly serving others. Sincerely, Mrs Nat King Cole.'

3 Third Important Lesson – Always remember those who serve

In the days when an ice-cream sundae cost much less, a 10-year-old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him. 'How much is an ice-cream sundae?' he asked. 'Fifty cents,' replied the waitress. The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied the coins in it. 'Well, how much is a plain dish of ice-cream?' he enquired. By now more people were waiting for a table and the waitress was growing impatient. 'Thirty-five cents,' she brusquely replied. The little boy again counted his coins. 'I'll have the plain ice-cream,' he said. The waitress brought the ice-cream, put the bill on the table and walked away. The boy finished the ice-cream, paid the cashier and left. When the waitress came back, she began to cry as she wiped down the table. There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were two nickels and five pennies. You see, he couldn't have the sundae, because he had to have enough left to leave her a tip.



4 Fourth Important Lesson – The obstacle in our path

In ancient times, a king had a boulder placed on a roadway. Then he hid himself and watched to see if anyone would remove the huge rock. Some of the king's wealthiest merchants and courtiers came by and simply walked around it. Many loudly blamed the king for not keeping the roads clear, but none did anything about getting the stone out of the way. Then a peasant came along carrying a load of vegetables. Upon approaching the boulder, the peasant laid down his burden and tried to move the stone to the side of the road. After much pushing and straining, he finally succeeded. After the peasant picked up his load of vegetables he noticed a purse lying in the road where the boulder had been. The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the king indicating that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway. The peasant learned what many of us never understand! Every obstacle presents an opportunity to improve our condition.



Fifth Important Lesson – Giving when it counts

Many years ago, when I worked as a volunteer at a hospital, I got to know a little girl named Liz who was suffering from a rare and serious disease. Her only chance of recovery appeared to be a blood transfusion from her 5-year-old brother, who had miraculously survived the same disease and had developed the antibodies needed to combat the illness. The doctor explained the situation to her brother, and asked the little boy if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister. I saw him hesitate for only a moment before taking a deep breath and saying, 'Yes I'll do it if it will save her.' As the transfusion progressed he lay in bed next to his sister and smiled, as we all did, seeing the colour returning to her cheeks. Then his face grew pale and his smile faded. He looked up at the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, 'Will I start to die right away?' The little boy had misunderstood the doctor. He thought he was going to have to give his sister *all* of his blood in order to save her.

5

SIN

– naughty but *not* very nice

And now, from the world of moral fashion: *Sin* is IN! The buzz on sin is strictly positive! Some samples: Treat yourself to something *sinfully* delicious! Tell a joke that's *wickedly* funny! Be a little *naughty* – have a little fun! Delight in *decadence*! You've got to admit, sin gets great publicity.



REX Features/c.New Line/Everett

Let's be honest. Most of us find sin more interesting, more downright fun, than 'goodness.' Middle Earth might be a pleasant place to live in but without the evil ring, Tolkein's readers would soon have found Hobbit life pretty dull. And the concept of 'righteousness' not only seems priggish and stuffy, but a little frightening.

'Loosen up!' we want to say. 'Sow some wild oats, have a fling. Live a little.' We've come to equate sin with fun, and goodness with dullness.

We celebrate little so-called sins like high-fat desserts, opulent furnishings, and expensive clothes, flattering ourselves that we're beyond believing in that outdated concept called 'sin.' Then we see a public figure who preaches hate, or hear of a corporate executive who loots his company, taking advantage of both stockholders and employees. Or we discover that someone we thought a friend betrayed our confi-

dence. Confronted with these things, we rediscover sin in a hurry. No matter how sophisticated we think ourselves, we never get beyond the notion of evil deeds, of real offences, deadly *sins*. We simply classify them differently.

For example, we prefer to identify sins as something others do. We also rate sins by magnitude, and by how common they are. So if I cheat a little on my expense account – and after all, everybody does it – just chill, man. A 'little' cheating and 'everybody' does it – low magnitude and very common – that's not a *sin*.

We also like to define sin in terms of rules and regulations, because for every rule, there's a loophole. And no matter how carefully written, there are circumstances that make all rules and regulations seem absurd. That gives us an excuse to ignore the absurd rules – you know, the rules we *want* to ignore.

by Ed Dickerson

So what *is* sin, anyway? Religious people seem to classify every pleasure as sinful, especially when it comes to sex. 'Fornication,' the old-fashioned word for 'casual sex,' sounds fussy and silly and judgemental. 'Don't get so excited,' we think, 'it's just recreational sex.' Maybe. But if that's true, then why do two lovers who are in a relationship call 'recreational sex' with someone else – 'cheating.'

And when it happens to us, we *know* that's exactly what it is. Whether we actually say the words or not, every sexual act implies a promise. A promise that the two in the relationship can trust each other in the deepest of ways, to be caring and respectful of each other's bodies and emotions. When one partner decides to have 'casual sex' with someone else, that breaks the promise, and neither partner will be quite so open again, never again quite so trusting. Every future sexual act will be haunted by doubt, clouded by sorrow, inhibited by fear. So 'Free love' inevitably leads to loving less freely.



No, pleasure isn't sin, and never was. Even the old pagan Plato understood that 'Pleasure is the *bait* of sin.' Whatever pleasure-bait you think to gain, when you lie to me, steal my money or affections, wound me physically or kill my hopes, you betray my trust. Betraying a trust to get pleasure, now that's sin. *Real* sin – tear-your-heart-out, cry-your-eyes-out sin – always involves a betrayal of trust. Sin steals innocence and joy and wonder which cannot be replaced.

Oh, yes, and you injure yourself as well. Elbert Hubbard said, 'Men are not punished *for* their sins, but *by* them.' No one is more suspicious than an habitual cheater. Knowing their own cheating ways, they expect everyone else to cheat *them*, too. Psychologists call this tendency to see our motives in others 'projection' – we project our motives onto others. So the liar expects to be lied to; the confidence artist expects to be scammed; the thief fears his possessions will be stolen. The adulterer fears his spouse will be unfaithful. Each violation of trust eats away at our own humanity, erodes our hope and optimism, cripples our ability to enjoy life.

And makes it more likely we will hurt others. Nothing is more dangerous than a wounded animal. The most ghastly serial killers almost always come from horrifically abusive backgrounds themselves. None of us is beyond lashing out in pain, and hurting even those closest to us.

When you get down to it, sin always has consequences. Real grief, real pain, disease, even death. Do you doubt it? Talk to the child of an alcoholic, still bearing the emotional scars of abuse into adulthood. Go into any slum, and look into the dead eyes of a child prostitute, eyes bereft of all joy and light and innocence. Look in the mirror and remember when someone abused your trust, repaid your kindness with cruelty, exploited your openness.

John Donne got it right. No human being is an island, isolated from others, able to act

with impunity, without consequences for anyone else. Even if we could, sin would still be deadly.

In Oscar Wilde's story, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the handsome young title character commissions a portrait of himself. Taken by his comeliness in the portrait, Gray makes a deal with the devil: Every sin he commits will be recorded on the portrait, while his actual face remains young and handsome.

Believing himself immune from the consequences of his actions, Gray descends into evil; betraying the trust of a sweet young woman, committing a murder, driving a friend to suicide. To others, Gray appears as youthful and handsome as when the portrait was *painted*. *Only he* sees the progressive ugliness of his soul, as reflected by the tell-tale portrait hidden in a private place.

Eventually he can no longer abide the frightful accusation the portrait represents. Believing the painting to be the source of his unhappiness, he decides to destroy it. Locking himself inside the room, he makes to slash the canvas with a knife. His servants hear a scream from the room. Eventually they break in, to find a most curious situation. 'When they entered, they found hanging upon the wall a splendid portrait



of their master as they had last seen him, in all the wonder of his exquisite youth and beauty. Lying on the floor was a dead man, in evening dress, with a knife in his heart. He was withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage. It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognized who it was.' (Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*)

Even if our sins affected no one else, each of us has our 'Dorian Gray' portrait. You know what I mean. When our emotional medicators – alcohol, drugs, food, friends, (name your own) – fail to anaesthetise us and we wake in the quiet hours before dawn, that portrait looms before us in the darkness. Etched on it we see the record of every mean, cruel, and despicable act. Every twisted motive haunts our memories. Though carefully concealed from others, we cannot escape it.

No. Sin isn't *chic*. Cruelty and pain never come into fashion. No matter how jaded, how sophisticated, how blasé we may wish to think ourselves, we still know evil exists. We feel it in our bones, and see its deadly effects in our own lives. Whatever we may say, we know that we live as broken people, in a broken world, and sense deep within that it ought not be this way.



You can search through time and space, and you'll discover there's only one remedy for the pain, the betrayal, and the damage of sin. We'll look at that in the next issue.

WARNING signs

– how to spot danger on the roads

by Martin Bell

I was angry – or perhaps it was just the shock. It wasn't exactly road rage but I was definitely upset. You see, my wife and I were nearly killed a few months ago. The ambulance crew and police said we were a metre from certain death.

We were driving on a wide open road in East Anglia, and I could see right down a long stretch of road ahead. There was nothing coming and no traffic behind us. All I needed to do was overtake a huge tractor and trailer that was trundling along in front of us.

I could see that the tractor driver had someone in the cab with him and that they were deep in conversation, but all was clear so I pulled out to overtake. At that moment, the tractor suddenly made a sharp turn to the right, across both carriageways. Brakes, screeching tyres, and 'Oh, God, we are going to die!' CRASH!

It's amazing how many thoughts can go through your mind in three or four seconds. 'I wonder what it's like to die.' 'Well, I've had a good life.' 'My wife and I have been really happy.' 'The children are grown up now, and

independent.' 'I wonder what they'll think at work when they hear that we've gone,' etc. And then silence. We hit the huge wheel of the tractor head on at 65 miles an hour. Several seconds after the splintering, exploding, crushing noises had stopped we realised that we were alive. We had survived a car crash.

There was no rage. The tractor driver was very concerned and very upset. You couldn't get cross with him – he was a really nice guy. He wanted to know why I hadn't seen his flashing indicator to turn right. I had to stagger to the back of his trailer to point out that the whole thing was coated with mud and there was no way that any light could be seen through it.

Blue lights

The blue lights came from all directions and my wife and I were carted off in separate emergency ambulances to the A&E department of Bury St Edmunds Hospital to have treatment for broken bones, burns to arms and face where the airbag had exploded, bruises and severe shock.

Anyway, we were lucky. If I hadn't hit the wheel of the tractor, and we had come into contact three feet to the left, we would have gone underneath the huge trailer and the top of the car would have been sheered away taking our heads with it. As it was, the two-week-old car was a total write-off, but that is of little consequence.

It only takes a bit of thought

Hardly a week has gone by since then when I haven't thought of that near-death experi-

ence. And to think that it could have been avoided if the tractor driver had just wiped his indicator lights clean before he went on the road, or if he had just looked in his mirror to see if anything was coming. It only takes a bit of thought.

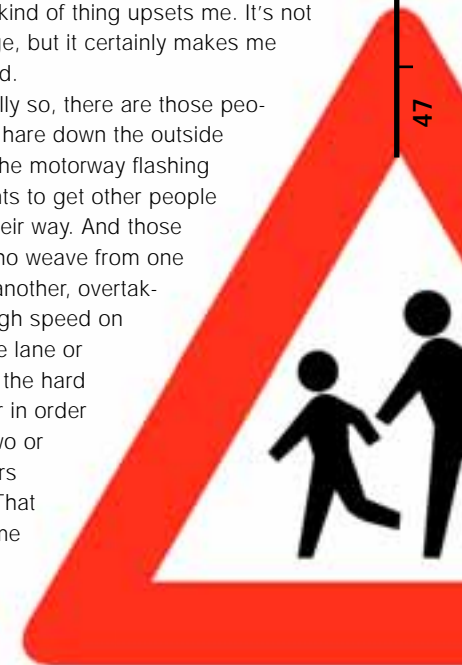
That kind of thing upsets me. It's not road rage, but it certainly makes me frustrated.

Equally so, there are those people who hare down the outside lane of the motorway flashing their lights to get other people out of their way. And those types who weave from one lane to another, overtaking at high speed on an inside lane or even on the hard shoulder in order to get two or three cars ahead. That makes me bristle a little bit.

When I worked with the emergency ambulance service, I picked up – or should I say scraped up – a few of those characters and, sadly, their victims.

Watch out for signs

You want to watch out for vehicles with various signs and notices in the back window. For example, there are the 'Baby on board' vehicles which career past at high speed sometimes even outside school gates. I think the idea of the sign is to warn other motorists that there's a baby in the vehicle, and, therefore, please take care. But on these occasions obviously the baby is absent and the vehicle driver has no interest whatsoever, or indeed concern, for anyone else's child. When they behave like that it



suggests that the sign in the back window says, 'I'm important, don't hurt *my* family – but blow yours.' Some of the 'Baby on board' notices look so old and faded that I imagine the child is now at university and driving his own car, but the notice still swings from side to side as the vehicle pushes past.

Then there's the 'tailgater' who causes a slight twitch to my eyebrow and a little elevation of blood pressure. You might be travelling a stretch of road on which it's impossible to overtake, but he, (or she) leaves no more than a cigarette paper between your respective bumpers. Looking in the mirror, you would think he was sitting in the back seat with you. Then when they do overtake and you catch up with them at the next set of traffic lights, there's a notice in the back window which says, 'If you can read this notice you are too close to me.' Beware of people who have notices like that.

Watch out for anything 'fishy'

Another one to look out for is the people who have the symbol of a fish on the back of their car. Have you seen them? Do you know what it is? It's actually a Christian symbol. Be warned – not all people who profess to be Christians drive like angels. In fact some of them seem wholly dependent on guardian angels just to stay alive! There's definitely something fishy about people who think that they have a special licence granted by heaven to drive at high speed, cut in front of other people, or grab a parking place that you were going to go into. Of course, they're not all like that – but some are.

I understand that some Christians pray to God in the morning and ask for guidance and protection for their family and friends, but somehow they become devils when they get behind the wheel. Perhaps someone should tell

them that guardian angels go off duty when they go over the speed limit?

As it happens, I am a Christian – but I don't have a fish on my car. I don't like labels, or other in-car warning signs.

Heaven on the M1

Just think, road rage could be a thing of the past, and the M1 a little piece of heaven, if we all stuck a sign, not on the back window of the vehicle for others to read, but something on the dashboard that we *drivers* could read from time to time. Something like, 'Treat others the way you would have them treat you.' And, 'Help me to be what I pretend to be.'



Sounds a bit 'pie in the sky', doesn't it? There will still be the proverbial 'bat out of hell' drivers. Some selfish individuals will still insist on using their mobile phones while driving. But we need to start somewhere to reduce road rage and increase thoughtfulness. Perhaps we could start with *us!*

It makes you think when you have been only one metre from certain death.



On the road – the facts

- 3,431 people were killed in road accidents in 2002.
- 35,976 were seriously injured.

source:
www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk

by Anita Marshall



A
little
necessary
chaos

At this time of year, when most gardeners are at least contemplating the autumn tidy-up, I'd like to make a plea. Beware being *too* tidy. I once didn't get the lavenders cut back in autumn, and was thrilled to see, in late October, ten goldfinches having a feast on the seedheads. A lot of plants can be cut back later, on fine winter days, so why not leave them for a while?

There's a lot of room for compromise in the garden. Some people prefer to cut back everything to within an inch of its life, sweep up every leaf, and hoe away every emerging seed. But a little chaos will reap its own rewards, and not just in charms of goldfinches.

For instance, if you *must* cut back the lavender in autumn, lay the seed-laden stalks in a wheelbarrow and the birds will help themselves. If you sweep the leaves from the lawn (very important), but let them lie in flowerbeds, they will provide hiding places for all manner of wildlife which will keep black-birds, thrushes, robins, etc., in fodder for a greater part of the winter, then in spring, these birds will continue to stay on as pest control. Why should they go elsewhere?

If you leave the seedheads on plants you'll never have to buy that particular plant again, but you'll only reap the harvest if you're not too busy with the hoe! Wait till you can identi-

fy the *weedlings*, then hoik them out before they can set seed, while leaving others to grow until you can tell friends from foes. We have buddleias, poppies, foxgloves, sunflowers, flax, and all manner of pretty flowers in our garden because I don't set off at a gallop each spring. Do get grass seedlings out as soon as seen, however, as they can be brutes to remove later. Having said that, this year we've had some amazingly pretty, floaty grasses bedecking our borders that we don't usually see!

So, study any good gardening book till you know the bad guys. Let them grow side by side with the good guys for a while, then get rid of the ones you don't want. No need to panic. Just get 'em before they seed, and enjoy the freebies!



Weed or wildflower? Don't be too quick to call something a weed just because you didn't plant it!



why we're

by Andrew Cate

Britons are getting fat. Andrew Cate investigates the causes and what you can do to prevent weight gain.

Are you carrying a bit too much weight? If you are you're certainly not alone, according to a recent survey 70% of men and 63% of women in the UK are overweight or obese.¹ So, it's OK, right? It's the skinny people who are in the minority, let's celebrate – grab a burger!

While it may be increasingly more socially acceptable – even celebrated to be overweight – we each need to ask the question, 'Is it *personally* acceptable?'

The health implications of being overweight and inactive are huge.

Maintaining a healthy weight and participating in regular physical activity halves the risk of developing coronary heart disease. Research also shows it leads to the prevention of stroke, hypertension, colon cancer, osteoporosis, late-onset diabetes and depression.

According to a report by the House of Commons Health Committee, published earlier this year, if our current pattern of eating and exercise does not change, the future could look pretty bleak: 'Should the gloomier scenarios relating to obesity turn out to be true, the sight of amputees will become more familiar in the streets of Britain. There will be more blind people. There will be a huge demand for kidney dialysis. The positive trends of recent decades in combating heart disease, partly the consequence of the decline in smoking, will be reversed. Indeed, this will be the first generation where children die before their parents as a consequence of childhood obesity.'

So, to put it bluntly, those are the scary facts but the question may still remain: Why?

We consume too much fat

It's simple; we're eating too much and exercising too little. In addition to its taste, it seems there's an innate desire to eat fatty food as if to store enough energy in good times to ensure survival when food is scarce. But in a modern urban society, where fast-food chains occupy almost every corner

5 REASONS... physical activity decreases

- ❖ Less time – longer working hours
- ❖ Sedentary office-based jobs
- ❖ Computers and watching TV rather than playing active sports
- ❖ Lack of energy
- ❖ Fear of exercising in unsafe neighbourhoods

plot, that instinct is working *against* survival. Although our total kilojoule intake hasn't increased hugely, our *fat* intake has.

While the overall food market in the UK has grown by 32% since 1993, spending on fast food, which is typically high in fat, has increased by 80%. Many studies have shown that kilojoules from dietary fat are more likely to end up as body fat, unlike the kilojoules from carbohydrates or protein. 'Meal deals' and 'super-size' servings also contribute to the problem. The result is that we're eating more than double the recommended daily intake of fat.



We shift responsibility

There's been a spate of court cases against the major fast-food chains, claiming their foods contribute to illness. There are claims that consumers aren't adequately warned about meals that could cause obesity, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol levels.

5 REASONS... why we're getting fatter

- Q Wider range of foods available
- Q Increased consumption of fat
- Q Increased consumption of fast foods
- Q Decreased incidental exercise
- Q Decreased consumption of carbohydrates

Yet there has to be some level of restraint, self-control and self-responsibility. Fast-food burgers, pizza, fried chicken and take-away meals contain up to 67 grams of

fat – two days' supply in just one meal.

Obviously, these foods can be an occasional treat to complement a generally healthful eating plan, but not as a regular part of one's diet. It becomes a problem when there are so many treat foods available, that people don't eat healthful foods the majority of the time.

We move too little

As many as two-thirds of men and three-quarters of women in the UK are not physically active enough to protect their health.² Inactivity, together with a poor diet, is leading to rising rates of overweight and obesity, increasing the risk of chronic diseases in later life including coronary heart disease and diabetes. The number of obese six-year-olds doubled in the last ten years and the number of obese 15-year-olds more than trebled.³ This is not just because some are eating more (many studies show that on average they are eating less) but because physical activity has radically decreased. Given the large population of sedentary people, the protective benefits of physical activity make it the UK's best buy in public

health today. It is estimated that getting all sedentary people just one step up from inactivity to regular light exercise such as walking, could reduce deaths from coronary heart disease among men and women by around 14%.⁴

Although our level of exercise for recreation and leisure hasn't necessarily changed, we're moving about less. Modern society's fascination with convenience and energy-saving devices could be partly responsible for our expanding girth.

The use of golf buggies, remote controls, escalators, elevators, home-delivery, drive-in, drive-thru, and even the electronic can opener, to name a few, amounts to a considerable reduction in energy used for everyday living both at work and in the home.

The barriers to exercise?

According to Kenneth Cooper, founder of the aerobics movement, the four main reasons people don't exercise are 'no time', 'no place', 'no motivation' and 'no money'.

A seeming lack of time to exercise also features strongly in recently released research about the reasons people do not exercise. This was followed by 'laziness, the fear of injury, initial poor health and the need to rest'.

5 REASONS... why food intake increases

- Q Social life – eating out, entertaining, holidays
- Q Comfort eating – bereavement, loneliness, boredom, stress
- Q Convenience foods – busy life (work, caring and family), enjoyment
- Q Greater choice and variety of food
- Q More money to spend on eating out and on holidays



5 REASONS... to 'accumulate' exercise

- Q Walk all, or part of the way to work
- Q Where possible, walk or ride a bike instead of taking the car
- Q Take the stairs instead of the lift
- Q Take a walk in your lunch break
- Q Choose to park your car some distance from your destination, then walk

You can overcome any of these barriers; it depends on the way you think – your attitude – and that's all. According to Dr Garry Egger, an obesity treatment specialist, a key component of weight control is to focus on your attitude towards movement. 'We need to look at extra movement as an opportunity, not an inconvenience,' he says.

What's needed?

To achieve health benefits from physical activity, it's recommended to accumulate 30 minutes or more of moderate intensity physical activity on most days – but preferably every day.

Accumulative exercise is a relatively new concept based on research suggesting the benefits of regular activity can be obtained from shorter, more frequent bouts of exercise.

A study of 56 obese, sedentary females examined the differences between a short-bout exercise group (performing multiple 10-minute bouts of exercise) and a long-bout exercise group (performing one exercise bout). Both groups were instructed to exercise five days a week progressing from 20 to 40 minutes.

The group who exercised in short bouts exercised on a greater number of days, for a greater total duration, and had similar improvements in cardio-respiratory fitness

and weight loss compared with the group who performed one extended bout of exercise. Prescribing exercise in several short bouts may also help tackle some of the major issues preventing people from exercising.

So, what's the best way?

The current pattern of food consumption and energy expenditure is making Britons fat. A major shift is needed to incorporate more movement into our lifestyles, and increase our consumption of high-fibre, low-fat foods, such as beans, peas, lentils, unprocessed grain products, fruits and vegetables. Ultimately the buck stops with us. When we start to take responsibility and make a conscious decision to look after ourselves then we're on the road to a healthier, happier life.



¹Source: Royal College of Physicians/Faculty of Public Health

²Joint Health Surveys Unit. 1999. *Health survey for England 1998*. London: The Stationery Office.

³Chinn S, Rona RJ. 1994. Trends in weight-for-height and triceps skinfold thickness for English and Scottish children 1972-1982 and 1982-1990. *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology*; 8; 1: 90-106.

⁴Britton A, McPherson K. (In press.) *Monitoring the progress of the 2010 target for coronary heart disease mortality: Estimated consequences on CHD incidence and mortality from changing prevalence of risk factors*. London: National Heart Forum.

LIFEresources

Facing change [p.10]

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Tel. 0845 4500 275
Email: info@changingfaces.co.uk
www.changingfaces.co.uk

Coping with stress [p.20]

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Tel. 0845 46 47
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
www.stressbusting.co.uk
www.mentalhealth.org.uk
Samaritans
Tel. 08457 90 90 90
1850 60 90 90 (Rol)
www.samaritans.org

Ain't misbehaving [p.25]

www.bbc.co.uk/parenting
www.practicalparent.org.uk
www.workingfamilies.org.uk

Why we're fat [p.50]

NHS Direct
Tel. 0845 46 47
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
www.bbc.co.uk/health/
www.doh.gov.uk
www.nutrition.org.uk



Messing about in boats

It seems that a year ago, some Boeing employees decided to steal a life raft from one of the 747s. They were successful in getting it out of the plant and home. When they took it for a float on a nearby river, however, they were surprised by the arrival of a Coast Guard helicopter which had homed-in on the emergency locator that is activated when the raft is inflated. D'oh! The men no longer work for Boeing.

source: www.gcll.net

be your own financial manager

by Gordon Botting



When there seem to be more bills than money in a month, you proclaim to the family: 'Once and for all this family is going to get its finances in order!' Many individuals and families are trapped in a cycle of deficit spending, but I assure you, there is hope.

The secret is a household budget.

Budget is a word that causes people to either cringe or guffaw. It conjures up such negatives as restraint, confinement and limits. To some the irksome side is simply doing the maths. Others will protest, 'We've tried it. It didn't work for us.'

But what are the alternatives? More worries, family arguments and hurt feelings? Ultimately, if you don't solve your financial troubles, you'll end up filing for bankruptcy and, possibly, a divorce. Or you can take a few moments to read this, develop a budget and get on with life.

Getting started

First, you'll probably need to change your attitude to budgeting. Don't think of your household budget in terms of how *little* you've got to spend, but how *much* you've got to

Financial freedom – now!

The largest outlay of funds after taxes is for regular monthly expenses. Your spending plan should have the following three major sections:

Firm – items whose payments never vary by much, including mortgage/rent or a vehicle lease/loan.

Flexible – payments you make on a regular basis, but the amount you pay varies from month to month, such as electricity and telephone.

Fixed – all other necessary items. You decide what amount covers the need – for example, groceries, household necessities, clothing, recreation and allowances.

spend.

In other words, think of the budget first as a spending plan: most people spend up to 70% of their budget on themselves. It may be for electricity, housing or food, but they're all things that make your lifestyle enjoyable. Not everything, though, is a necessity.

Budget basics

1. Why you need a plan

First, a family budget is simply a means of maximising your resources and controlling outgoings; second, it helps keep your family financial goals in focus; and, third, it helps you to avoid overspending or over-commitment by bringing agreement between income and expenses.

2. The launch phase

Make time for discussion of your spending plan. If the budget is to succeed, it must be developed as a team. In most cases that's you and your spouse, but if you have them, it doesn't hurt to include teenagers so they grasp what it costs to provide for a household.

3. List your income

Since the majority of people are salaried, this is easy. If you are self-employed with a fluctuating income, take an average of the previous three years, watching out for seasonal dips. Avoid the temptation to include extraordinary income, such as tax refunds or end-of-year bonuses.

4. Log expenses

This means *all* of them. While regular expenses, such as mortgage and vehicle payments, utilities and telephone are easy to track, there are periodical expenses such as biannual house or vehicle insurance premiums that are

Developing a budget

The savings plan

Put away at least 10% of your net income for those rainy-day emergencies or a sunny retirement. Try to build an emergency account with, say, £500 for unexpected emergencies. Examples include vehicle repairs, a new fridge after meltdown, or the annual school trip.

Once you have that in place, put something in a reserve account for times when either income earner is without employment. A job loss can happen suddenly. An amount equal to two or three months' net salary is a good start. After you've covered these two, you can begin to save for your dream home, an exciting overseas holiday, or investments for your retirement.

The sharing plan

Set aside some money in your budget to help others. This may seem like a ludicrous waste of money or even a luxury you can't afford if your money is tight, but setting aside a small percentage of your income to benefit others will bring benefits you cannot measure financially. You might put some money aside to support some worthwhile cause or to support your local church or even to help out a friend in need.

The security plan

In life bad things happen, often when you least expect them. Your teenage driver accidentally hits the accelerator instead of the brake; the washing machine and drier die within twenty-four hours; you lose your job. Such things are inevitable, so the answer isn't hand-wringing and recrimination when it happens, but to have anticipated it with an insurance plan.

You can get cover for public liability, medical, fusion, vehicle extended warranty, fire, theft, death and disability to name a few. Think of the premiums as a savings plan for when you need it, and it gives predictable, regular payments.

If you are unable to afford all of them, at least make sure you make financial allowances to meet basic legal requirements such as third party cover for your vehicle if you have one; and life insurance to provide for your spouse and children's basic needs of shelter, food and education when they need it.



easily overlooked. Calculate these as monthly in your spending plan.

Limit discretionary spending. The biggest problem with most budgets is in this. Most people faithfully pay the electricity because they don't want to be disconnected. But in the areas of food, clothing, entertainment and holidays they don't set amounts and stick to them. So pledge to resist such optional purchases.

Here is the secret to success: purchase from a list; have a limit on the amount you



will spend; don't use credit cards to exceed these limits or buy items not on the list.

Living with a budget

The budget can be written in a notebook or methodically entered into a computer programme or ledger. A workable method is to pay all regular fixed items – rent, telephone, utilities, school fees, weekly church offerings – from one account so you have a record of these transactions. Don't use this account for incidental items. An alternative is to pay bills with direct debit.

The money for such items as groceries, clothes, allowances and recreation is taken from your pay in cash, then placed in labelled envelopes. The amount you've decided on should be written on the

envelope for a two-week period.

You can spend what's in the envelope, but remember that it must last the two-week period. If you spend your food allowance in the first week, live on what's in the pantry for the next – or study the benefits of fasting! Seriously, you'll soon learn to make it go the distance, or make some modest upward adjustments to be more realistic. It's here where the budget system succeeds or fails.

Loving a budget

A household budget is designed to *reduce* financial stress. It will bring you security knowing you have money for all the items listed in your spending plan and that, in turn, will bring peace of mind.

The household budget is designed to reduce *economic* stress, not increase it. So take control of your monthly income and expenditures. Become your own financial manager, planning for rather than responding to financial needs and necessities.

The Bible and budgeting

It may seem hard to believe that a dusty old book like the Bible could provide any useful advice regarding practical areas of life like personal finances but here are a few interesting thoughts on the subject of Budgeting:

Saving

'The wise man saves for the future'
(Proverbs 21:20.)

Sharing

'If you give, you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use in giving – large or small – it will be used to measure what is given back to you.'
(Luke 6:38.)

Security

'A prudent person foresees the danger ahead and takes precautions. The simpleton goes



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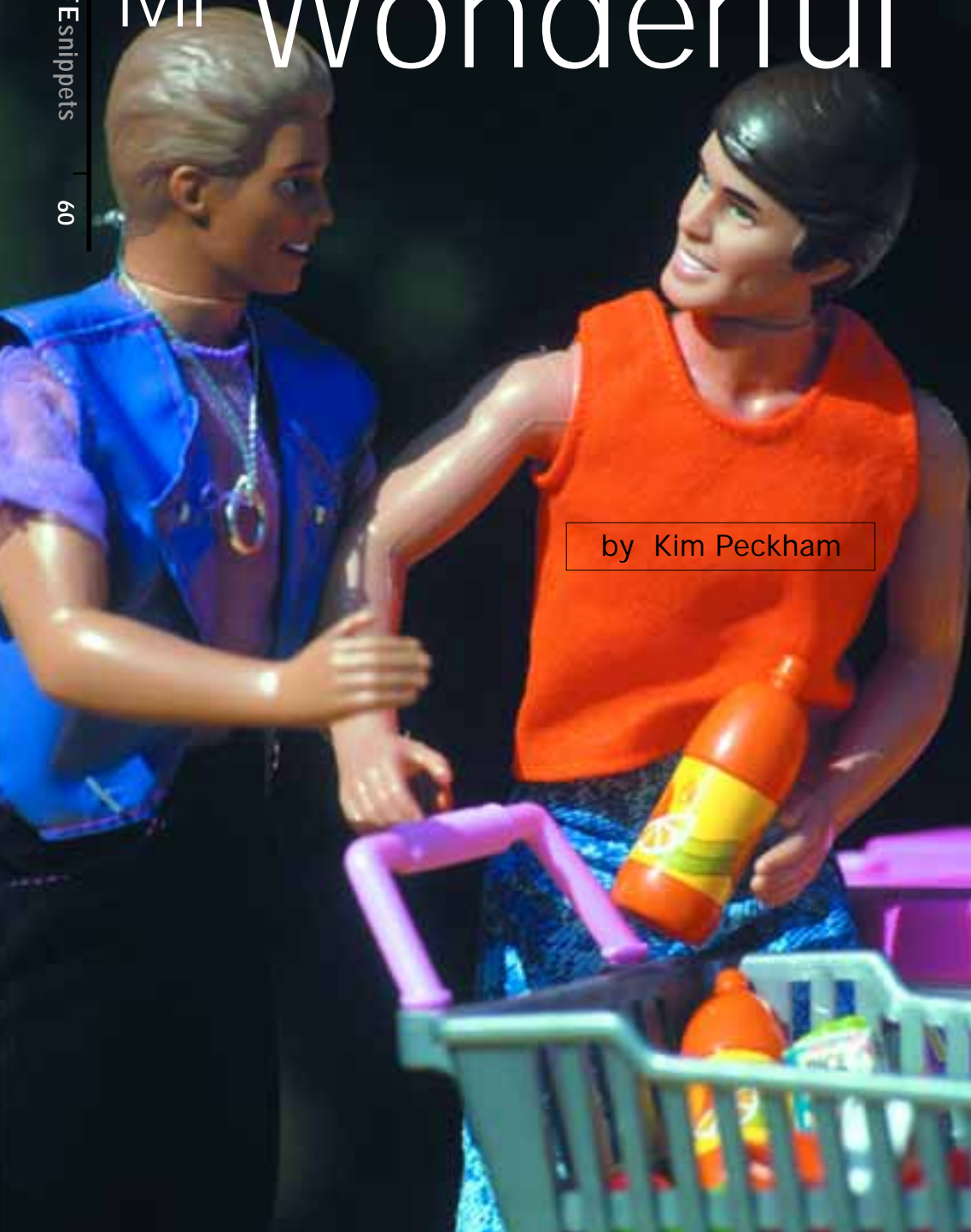
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Mr Wonderful



by Kim Peckham

REX Features/Peter Brooker

My wife Lori shocked me recently. She brought home a man to serve as an example of what a good husband should be like.

'Couldn't you just buy me a self-help book?' I asked. 'It would be less humiliating.'

'Shhh,' she replied. 'Listen to this.'

And then Mr Wonderful began to talk. 'You're going shopping by yourself? How about I tag along and carry your bags?'

When I heard him say that, I began to suspect that he was not human. Even Gandhi never volunteered to go shopping with the little woman. (Some say the whole idea of non-violent resistance came to him while he was trying to avoid a trip to pick out new curtains.)

Mr Wonderful, as it turned out, is a *talking doll*. Apparently women buy him for the amusement of hearing a man say, 'Here, you take the remote. As long as I'm with you, I don't care what we watch.' Or 'Actually, I'm not sure which way to go. I'll turn in here and ask directions.'

Perhaps you're wondering, Is there a *Mrs Wonderful*?

The answer is no. Mrs Wonderful is not necessary, because men already have a special circuit in their brain that takes whatever a woman says and changes it to what they're hoping to hear. Scientists call this circuit the reality bypass valve.

What the woman says: 'We need a new four-wheel-drive truck like we need a hole in the head. I thought we were going to pay off our credit cards.'

What the man hears: 'We need a new four-wheel-drive truck. Why don't you pay for it with our credit card?'

What the woman says: 'Dear, would you clean out the garage?'

What the man hears: 'Dear, why don't you get some snacks, put your feet up and enjoy the footy?'

What the woman says: 'No.'

What the man hears: 'Yes.'

Mr Wonderful comes in a box that adver-

tises, 'He always knows just what to say.'

There are some people like that. You find them on daytime TV shows telling an amusing anecdote about filming in the south of France, or explaining why a vote for them is a vote for more jobs, better schools, and less graffiti on railway bridges.

Sometimes I imagine I'm being interviewed on TV – and then I imagine the years of humiliation that would follow after I said the exact wrong thing. Such as the time I meant to ask a colleague if she'd succeeded in having her car fixed, and instead asked if she'd had her cat fixed.

Opening my mouth is like letting a 2-year-old loose in a Wedgewood shop – there's a high risk of disaster. Sooner or later there will be misunderstandings, hurt feelings, or a restraining order. This is particularly distressing because I claim to be a Christian, and Christians are not supposed to be yelling into the phone, 'Let me send you a dictionary, because I think you've confused the meaning of customer service with criminal neglect.'

I've prayed for God to stop me from saying anything unkind. I'm not sure how that sort of prayer gets answered. Will I wake up one morning talking like one of Tony Blair's spin doctors? Or will God take the easy way and just wire my jaw shut?

Perhaps you're also one of those people who lets words slip out of your mouth that you regret. Obviously, I don't have any advice. But I have found this clue in the Bible. Jesus said, 'Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.'^{*}

Apparently, if you want to speak like Mr Wonderful, you need to have him inside.

*Matthew 12:34.



Kim Peckham lives in West Virginia, USA, with his wife Lori. They have a 2-year-old boy who once came close to turning a six-piece place setting at a Wedgewood shop into a 66-piece setting.

Chronic crooks

Great customer service

It seems a man, wanting to rob a downtown Bank of America, walked into the branch and wrote 'This iz a stickup. Put all your munny in this bag,' on a deposit slip. While standing in line, waiting to give his note to the teller, he began to worry that someone had seen him write the note and might call the police before he reached the teller window. So he left the Bank of America and crossed the street to Wells Fargo Bank.

After waiting a few minutes in line, he handed his note to the Wells Fargo teller. She read it, and surmising from his spelling errors that he was not the brightest light in the harbour, told him that she could not accept his stick-up note because it was written on a Bank of America deposit slip and that he would either have to fill out a Wells Fargo deposit slip or go back to Bank of America.

Looking somewhat defeated, the man said, 'OK,' and left the Wells Fargo Bank. The Wells Fargo teller then called the police, who arrested the man a few minutes later. He was waiting in line back at the Bank of America!

License to steal

Two Kentucky men tried to pull the front off a cash machine by running a chain from the machine to the bumper of their pickup truck. Instead, they pulled the bumper off the truck. They panicked, fled and left the chain still attached to the machine and their bumper (license plate still attached).

Can I pay by cheque?

A Texan convicted of robbery worked out a deal to pay \$9600 in damages rather than serve a two-year prison sentence. He provided the court a forged cheque. He got his prison term back, plus eight more years.

You mean me?

A pair of Michigan robbers entered a record shop nervously waving revolvers. The first one shouted, 'Nobody move!' His partner moved and the startled first bandit shot him.

Mistaken identity

The judge called the case of People vs. Steven Lewon Crook. The bailiff opened the door to the holding cell and called, 'Crook, come forward.' Five of the prisoners entered the courtroom.

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Llv.3/1



Rocket science

Scientists at NASA have developed a gun built specifically to launch dead chickens at the windshields of airliners, military jets and the space shuttle, all traveling at maximum velocity. The idea is to simulate the frequent incidents of collisions with airborne fowl to test the strength of the windshields.

British engineers heard about the gun and were eager to test it on the windshields of their new high speed trains. Arrangements were made. But when the gun was fired, the engineers stood shocked as the chicken hurtled out of the barrel, crashed into the shatterproof shield, smashed it to smithereens, crashed through the control console, snapped the engineer's backrest in two and embedded itself in the back wall of the cab.

Horrified Britons sent NASA the disastrous results of the experiment, along with the designs of the windshield, and begged the U.S. scientists for suggestions.

NASA's response was just one sentence, 'Thaw the chicken.'



One-liners

source: www.gcff.net

- Q Eagles may soar, but weasels don't get sucked into jet engines
- Q The early bird gets the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese
- Q I intend to live forever - so far, so good
- Q When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
- Q If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.
- Q Everyone has a photographic memory. Some don't have film.
- Q What happens if you get scared half to death twice?

source: www.gcff.net

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