



Workers' COMPanion

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WORTH FAR MORE THAN RUBIES

I've read before, as written originally, I think, by the well-known Catholic cardinal Francis Spellman, marriage is the highest, most hallowed discipline. Of course, by "highest," he meant the most meaningful and rewarding, but he also meant that it's among the most difficult, effortful institutions we can ever participate in.

My mom used to say she was amazed that anybody could ever live harmoniously in marriage at all. It was a miracle, she thought, that two separate and distinct personalities attempting to coexist over a long, long time could ever work out for anyone.

And it's for this reason, of course, marriages dissolve almost as often as they succeed. I have to admit, there was a time when I became a little skeptical of the institution or, at least, of my participation in it. Coming out of a complicated divorce years back, I wasn't too keen on putting myself out there again because of the possibility I'd be forced to experience it all once more.

But when I met my current wife, Amy, all of that changed.

Oddly enough, it was football that brought us together. One of each of our sons played on the high school team together at one point, so it was football that eventually convinced me to rethink my tentative stance on getting remarried. Well, that and the persistence and support of my future partner, of course.

When Amy and I first met, she was living out in Westerville, while I was in Dublin. We hit it off almost instantly. Her perceptive, level-headed personality meshed easily with my goofball tendencies as we realized our goals and priorities aligned on a deep, personal level. When we'd been dating for about two and a half years, I suddenly found myself seriously considering the idea of marriage yet again.

You see, Amy's son, Jackson, had been noticed in his high school football career and was invited to play at a high school in Dublin where I lived. This was an incredibly promising opportunity for him, as several NFL athletes had started out at this school a couple years before, and it is an impressive program. But in order to do that, Amy

would have to move out to the Dublin district.

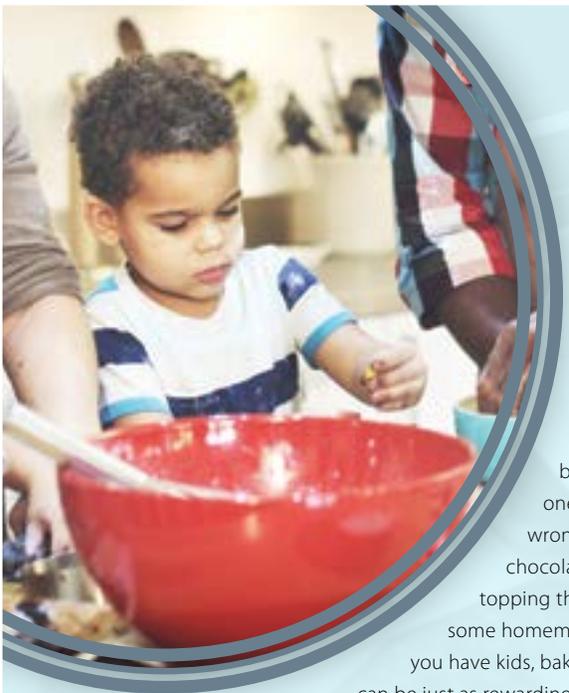
Living together out of wedlock never really aligned with our faith, so suddenly, after two and a half years together, the possibility of marriage became real. Still, with the difficulty I'd experienced in the past, I dragged my feet. Over a couple of months (in addition to the years we'd already dated), Amy steadily worked to win me over until, finally, I was on board. She won my trust, fully overcoming any hesitation I might have ever had, and I asked her to marry me.

Now, she wears the ring I gave her, embedded with a ruby after Proverbs 31:10 declaring a "wife of noble character" to be "worth far more than rubies." Certainly that's who she is to me, among the most important people who have ever come into my life. Though we've certainly had our challenges over the eight years we've been together, blending our families and overcoming the weight of our pasts, I'm so happy she was able to lure me out of my initial hesitation to build this amazing relationship that means the world to us both.

This Valentine's Day, that's what I'm thinking about — just how incredibly lucky I am to have met Amy, who has kept our family together through thick and thin. She sees people more clearly than anyone I've ever met; I'm just glad she took the time to see me with the same loving clarity.

- Jim Monast





EDUCATION IN THE KITCHEN

WHAT YOUR CHILD CAN LEARN FROM BAKING

With Valentine's Day right around the corner, you're probably wracking your brain for the perfect recipe to bake for your loved one. There's nothing wrong with store-bought chocolate, but there's no topping the personal touch of some homemade baked goods. If you have kids, baking alongside them can be just as rewarding as enjoying the fruits of your labor. As an added bonus, baking is a hands-on opportunity where your child can learn all sorts of important concepts. Here is a short list of some of the educational lessons hiding in your kitchen.

MATH Baking is a numbers game. Just take a look at any recipe, and you'll recognize the importance of math in building a beautiful cake. Having children measure out ingredients helps them learn about fractions and ratios. You can also test your kids by doubling or halving a recipe for multiplication and division

practice. With older kids, practice unit conversions by asking, for example, how many pints are in half a gallon.

FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS Not unlike computer science, baking requires a strict order of operations. The wet and dry ingredients often need to be mixed separately and then folded together. It only takes one deviation from the instructions for a pastry to go from delicious to disgusting. Spending time in the kitchen, then, is a great way for kids to learn the importance of reading directions carefully and comprehending what they've just read.

CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING Cuisine is a fundamental part of every culture. Introducing your child to dishes from around the world will expand their horizons. Want your child to be a less picky eater? Involving them in the cooking process is the surest way to get them excited about trying new flavors and ingredients.

NUTRITION Now, you might not think that baking cookies will encourage greater nutritional awareness, but hear us out. Sugar is often buried within packaged foods. When you bake something at home, a child gets to see, firsthand, just how much sugar goes into certain sweets. Meanwhile, cooking savory dishes also allows them to learn what constitutes a balanced, healthy diet.

Adam G.

IMPRESSIVE CASE RESULTS

While making deliveries in his employer's work van, Adam G. was involved in a head-on collision that resulted in him being flown via Life Flight to Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton, Ohio. He suffered severe traumatic brain injury, including coma, and multiple orthopedic traumas involving his shoulders, hands, and feet. He underwent placement of an intracranial pressure monitor device and five subsequent surgeries for his orthopedic injuries.

Following six efforts at vocational rehabilitation, Adam acquired certification in welding and secured full-time work for nearly a year and a half. He began having difficulty coping with the stress of the job and was unable to continue working. The medical record in this case was substantial, given the nature of Adam's injuries and treatment.

We obtained records from his treating doctors verifying the limitations resulting from Adam's head injury, including his poor memory and concentration, his inability to cope with stress and production demands, and his difficulty handling changes in his



work environment. Incredibly, his initial application for permanent total disability was denied as an Industrial Commission hearing officer concluded he should be able to do some type of work, as Adam was only in his mid-40s. This decision was particularly surprising since the BWC's examining neurologist opined that Adam had lost significant cognitive function and could work only part-time at best.

After a couple more failed attempts at vocational rehabilitation, we encouraged Adam to refile for permanent total disability. This time, it was granted, and Adam was awarded more than two years of accrued compensation, as well as an estimated 45 years of future benefits. We also recommended that Adam file for Social Security disability. Following preparation and submission of a prehearing memorandum, the administrative law judge assigned to the case determined the record had been so well presented that a hearing was unnecessary. He issued a fully favorable on-the-record decision awarding Adam more than three years of back benefits, an ongoing monthly benefit, and Medicare coverage.

PROTECT YOUR WORK INJURY CLAIM:

5 MISTAKES TO AVOID

After a work injury, filing for and obtaining workers' compensation benefits can be a frustrating, confusing process. With so much complexity at every step, it's understandable that injured workers and their families sometimes make missteps along the way. But here are a few mistakes you can easily avoid to ensure your claim has the best chance possible.

1. Not Reporting the Injury Ohio law provides injured workers with up to a year to file a claim for workers' compensation benefits, depending on the nature of the injury (with two years for occupational disease claims). But as time passes, it can become more difficult to successfully obtain benefits. That's why it's vital that all injured workers report their injury to their employers as soon as possible.

2. Not Seeking Medical Care This also applies to those who are not following the doctor's treatment plan. If a worker doesn't seek care following an injury, it may seem as though there is no injury at all. Additionally, failure to comply with a doctor's prescribed plan will be viewed negatively by the BWC.

3. Talking to the Third-Party Administrator Make no mistake about the intentions of a third-party administrator (TPA) — they're out to

protect the interests of their client, the employer, and not you. While they may seem friendly and nonthreatening, they will not hesitate to use anything you say against you later down the line.

4. Signing Documents Without a Lawyer Never sign your name on anything without having the document reviewed by an experienced attorney. Once you agree in writing to a settlement offer, for example, your claim is closed. It's usually impossible to revisit your claim if you later discover you're unhappy with the settlement.

5. Not Hiring an Experienced Attorney There are many reasons injured workers hesitate to hire representation. Perhaps they don't know how to find one, think they won't need one, or worry they can't afford one. While it's true that some simple cases can be handled on your own, the help of an attorney can ensure that you are able to obtain the maximum amount of compensation you deserve. Additionally, most workers' compensation lawyers, including us at Monast Law Office, work on a contingency basis, meaning you won't have to pay any attorney fees unless your claim is successful.

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ANSWERS



ABBY'S APPETIZERS

SWEET AND ZESTY

DETOX SALAD

Recipe inspired by GimmeSomeOven.com.

INGREDIENTS

For the Salad

- 3 cups chopped kale leaves
- 2 cups chopped broccoli florets
- 2 cups chopped red cabbage
- 1 cup matchstick carrots
- 1 cup chopped cilantro
- 1/2 cup toasted slivered almonds
- 1/3 cup sliced green onions
- 1 diced avocado

For the Dressing

- 1 large carrot, roughly chopped
- 1/4 cup rice wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped ginger
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon white miso
- 1/2 teaspoon sesame oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. To make the salad, add all ingredients to a large bowl; toss to combine.
2. To make the dressing, add all ingredients to a blender or food processor. Pulse until smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper or add extra honey for a sweeter taste.
3. Drizzle dressing over salad and serve immediately.

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The Best **VALENTINE'S** Getaways to Fantasize About



Valentine's Day is for fancy dinners, heart-shaped boxes packed with subpar chocolates, and fantasizing about the magical places you and your beau would have escaped to — if only you had the PTO. So, grab a glass of bottom-shelf cab sauv, cuddle up next to your special someone, and try to make them feel bad for taking you to Chili's instead of whisking you away to one of these picturesque fantasy lands.

Udaipur, India

These days, meandering through the cobblestone streets of Paris with your loved one is *très passé*. All the real high-rolling romantics are migrating southeast to the famous Oberoi Udaivilas hotel in western India. Set in a traditional Mewari palace, visitors will feel like royalty as they stroll around the labyrinthine

gardens that surround the elaborate cream-colored structure. Travelers can relax beside one of the many glassy pools sprinkled throughout the estate, all of which are enthusiastically attended by an unparalleled service staff.

Positano, Italy

More than perhaps anywhere in the world, this place looks like it was lifted straight from a sappy romance novelist's imagination. You and your partner can kick back on a balcony overlooking the entirety of this seaside town, taking in the century-old multicolored Italian architecture perched precariously on the verdant mountainside. Too small to accommodate swarms of tourists, it's the perfect place to while away the hours ambling from shop to shop, sampling the delicious local cuisine, and maybe taking a dip along the 300-meter beach.

The Maldives

From a water villa smack dab in the midst of the glassy, ultra-blue Indian Ocean, you and your main squeeze can enjoy utter seclusion. Sip champagne in the shade of a palm overlooking an otherworldly sunset or get a little more adventurous, strap on a mask, and check out the abundant aquatic wildlife. Many hotels in the area even include access to an array of boats, perfect for your own private excursion along the mild waves. Of course, you could also always just stare, dumbfounded, into the horizon, wondering how such a place could actually exist on Earth.