

THE HONOR OF GIVING BACK

Helping Others Is the Key to Happiness in the New Year

Growing up in a 1,500-square-foot house in Joplin, Missouri, I never thought I'd be in a position to make a significant impact on the lives of others. My dad was a traveling salesman, covering 23 states. My mom worked at the cosmetics counter at Macy's. We were a lower middle-class family and money was never abundant. My parents didn't have college degrees; my mom didn't even finish high school. But they instilled in me the importance of giving, even when we had little to spare.

I remember a defining moment from my childhood that shaped my perspective on giving. I played on a Boys' Club football team, and there was a player who couldn't afford the equipment. My dad bought the gear for him, and we tried to leave it anonymously on the porch of their ramshackle house. But, his mom caught us in the act. The gratitude in her eyes and the joy in my friend's face are memories that have stayed with me. It was a lesson in humility and the power of small acts of kindness.

Fast forward to today, I consider myself blessed. I've worked hard, built a successful business, and have the means to give back. My wife and I contribute to various charities, including CURE International, which provides medical treatment to children in Africa born with deformities. We also support the Nazarene Fund, aiding people persecuted for their faith, and Mercury One, a disaster relief organization. These contributions may not change the world, but they make a world of difference to the individuals they touch.

One organization we support, CURE International, focuses on a condition where children's feet turn inward, making it nearly impossible for them to walk. In many parts of Africa, these children are considered outcasts, even cursed. But the condition is correctable, and volunteer doctors fly in to perform the necessary surgeries. The transformation is not just physical; it's a restoration of dignity and a ticket to a better life.

Another cause close to our hearts is the Nazarene Fund. In a world where religious persecution is rampant, this organization helps those in danger because of their faith. Whether it's Christians in the Middle East or other minorities in China, the Nazarene Fund works to get them to safety, often saving them from a life of torment or even death.



Locally, we contribute to the Faith Mission, providing food and shelter to those in need. It's a reminder that while it's important to look at the bigger picture, we shouldn't forget the immediate community around us.

As we move past the holiday season, the new year is a time for reflection. I think back to that small house in Joplin and the lessons learned there. My parents may not have had much, but they had a lot of compassion and a willingness to help others. They taught me you need not be rich to make a difference; sometimes, a small act of kindness is enough.

Let's shift our focus from ourselves and think about how we can make a difference, even if it's just for one person. It's not about being better than someone else or grudgingly fulfilling a religious duty; it's about doing what's right because it brings joy, not just to the receiver but also to the giver.

In a world that often seems filled with darkness, each act of kindness is a flicker of light. And if enough of us flicker together, who knows, we might just set the world ablaze with goodness. As the saying goes, "It made a difference to that one."

So, let's make a difference, one act at a time.

-Jim Monast

RECONNECT WITH YOUR TRUE SELF

THE EXCITING JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY AFTER PARENTING

We dedicate our lives to our children. There's no doubt about that, and we're not talking a few years. We spend more than 18 years giving every part of ourselves to each child. Then, the inevitable happens: They grow up!

Our kids are no longer kids, and they move on to college or move out, and suddenly, we're on our own. After all these years, it can feel impossible to remember how to live for yourself. What do you enjoy? What do you want to do from now on? Who are you without your children? These can all be questions swirling around in your head as you get closer to having an empty nest.

As you spend more time on your own, you need to start a journey of self-discovery. What have you

been too busy to do as a parent? What hobbies have you left behind due to the hustle and bustle? What friendships and connections do you wish to re-spark? If you're struggling to understand yourself, what you want, and who you want to be, practicing therapeutic activities first can give you a better idea.

One way you can reconnect with your true self is by spending more time reflecting. You can try any of the following:

- Mindfulness meditation
- Journaling
- Creating a vision board
- Yoga
- Volunteering
- Beginning a new hobby

All these activities allow you to dig deeper into yourself, your desires, values, and your place in the world. It can be scary starting over again. But it's time to start seeing this as a whole new beginning, one that's as exciting as it is nerve-wracking. You have so many opportunities open to you now! Think of all the travels you can have now on your own. Imagine all the free time you can spend on fitness, reading, socializing, and more.

Finding yourself again doesn't have to be a bad thing. You're entering a whole new era of your life where you'll experience new freedoms that you haven't experienced in two decades or more. Reclaim your life and enjoy it to the fullest!

Client Story: Sam Allen

AND AN 'AFTER-HOURS' ACCIDENT

Our client and friend, Sam Allen, is a rising star for a "leading broadband connectivity company and cable operator serving more than 32 million customers in 41 states." But he's not your average "cable guy."

A Hilliard-Davidson grad who developed a love for technology from his dad, Sam has been with the company for nearly four years and has already been promoted several times since then. As a field technician (at the time of his injury in March 2022), he typically worked until 10 p.m. or so. Field technicians typically start their day by "clocking in" on their work cellphones and "clocking out" via their cellphones at the end of the work day.

Sam had clocked out and was driving the company van home (which is standard procedure as it lets the employees hit the ground running to their first appointment the next day) when he got into an accident on Interstate 70 west of Wilson Road. His van got trapped between a semi-trailer and a car. The Columbus Fire Department had to get Sam out of the wreckage and he was taken to Grant Trauma Center by ambulance with a fractured skull, brain bleed, concussion, and a broken leg.

The question in Sam's case didn't involve determining "what happened" or the nature of his injuries; it was whether or not he had a workers' compensation claim.

To have a valid claim in Ohio, an injury must arise out of, and be sustained in the course of, employment. In Sam's case, he had clocked out. Typically, this would mean his work day was over and his claim wouldn't be valid. In Ohio, generally, injuries on the way to or from work are not compensable as workers' compensation claims. But, like holes in Swiss cheese, there are exceptions to the general rule. Sam was driving in a company van sporting the company logo. He could've been called out again to another job.

His situation wasn't clear-cut either way, and the initial Industrial Commission ruling would likely be appealed to a court (meaning more expense and it would be drawn out even longer than the administrative hearings). So, it required creative thinking.

Fortunately, having done this long enough, I know most players on the field, including the defense attorney representing the employer. We approached the company's disability insurance



provider about covering the medical costs and Sam's time off work. At first, they balked as Sam had the workers' compensation claim pending (company disability and health insurance does not like to pay for work injuries); so, since a claim may be withdrawn and refiled within a year of the injury, we withdrew it. Insurance companies are more maddeningly slow than the workers' compensation process, so ultimately, we refiled his workers' comp claim while waiting for the insurance provider to make its decision. They finally agreed to the reimbursements, and Sam closed his claim and kept his employment. Sam was happy to get the bills and paid time off, his employer was thrilled to keep an excellent employee, and I was grateful that "outside the box thinking" could help a great guy.

Fortunately, Sam has recovered and is back to rock climbing in Kentucky and West Virginia while still moving up the company ladder. Keep an eye out for when he's promoted to running the company!

FROM FAST FOOD TO FAST ACTION

WENDY'S EMPLOYEE SAVES MAN'S LIFE IN LEXINGTON PARKING LOT!

When most of us pull up to a Wendy's, we're likely looking for a quick bite or a savory treat. But at one Wendy's on Richmond Road in Lexington, Kentucky, a man pulled up for life-saving care. After parking his car, the man quickly stepped out to make his way inside when he collapsed and fell unconscious in the parking lot.

Inside that same Wendy's, 22-year-old Alexandria Cowheard was going about her shift as usual until a coworker burst in from the parking lot, saying that a man was unconscious outside. Alexandria immediately called 911 and ran to the parking lot to assist. When she got there, she noticed the man's face was turning blue — he couldn't wait until medical professionals arrived.

"I didn't panic visibly, but in the back of my mind, I was like, what do I do?" she said. "I kind of short-circuited a little bit before I was like, 'Girl, you know how to do CPR. Get over here and do these chest compressions!'"



Alexandria works at Wendy's while going to school at Bluegrass Community & Technical College (BCTC) to become a certified nursing assistant. Her dream is to work in a hospital neonatal intensive care unit after she graduates. Because she learned CPR in high school, Alexandria immediately began chest compressions on the man. After the first few, the man started gasping for air.

Shortly after, medical personnel arrived on the scene and took the man to the hospital. Alexandria, now a hero, went right back to work.

"I helped a man. I'm proud of myself for that," she said. Who knows how the situation would have turned out without her aid that day? We're so thankful for the men and women like Alexandria who aren't afraid to jump in when someone needs help!

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ANSWER



INGREDIENTS

- 2/3 cup butter
- 2 oz unsweetened chocolate
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 F and grease an 8-inch square baking pan.
2. Melt butter and chocolate in a saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly, then remove from heat and let cool slightly.
3. In a large bowl, beat together sugar, eggs, and vanilla, then add melted chocolate mixture and blend well.
4. In a separate bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, and salt.
5. Gradually add flour mixture to chocolate mixture, stirring until blended, then stir in nuts if desired.
6. Pour batter into prepared pan and spread evenly.
7. Bake for 25–30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

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WHAT DID MAYANS CONSIDER TO BE 'MODEL' LOOKS?



Beauty and fashion trends come and go throughout the years, with some — such as matte makeup, fringe, and ripped jeans — even making comebacks in recent years. The ancient Mayans also sought to be beautiful, but their practices were

different compared to modern standards, as they were willing to completely change their bodies to conform to their beauty standards.

A smile is a universal expression of happiness, which was also true in Mayan culture. However, the difference came with what you saw when they smiled, as Mayans enjoyed shaping and

filing their teeth to sharp points. They then drilled holes through the center of their teeth to insert gems.

Tattoos were also considered stylish among Mayans, but they weren't like modern tattoos. The big difference in their skin designs was that they were achieved by actually carving into the skin to create 3D wounds.

Hair accessories were big during Mayan times — really big. It wasn't unusual for women to construct large, elaborate headdresses adorned with precious metals and gems and shaped to honor local animals.

Another Mayan beauty standard relates to one of their prized crops: corn. It is said that Mayans correlated beauty with face and head structures that were long and narrow, much like an ear of corn. To accomplish that, Mayan families bound the heads of their infant children between two boards while the skull

was growing to achieve an extended cranial shape that would last the child's whole life.

Eyes are a universal source of beauty, but the Mayans thought the ultimate set of beautiful eyes were crossed eyes. To create crossed eyes, they put a band around the heads of children with a bead suspended right in front of their eyes. They continued this until the children were permanently cross-eyed.

Noses were also a central sign of beauty among Mayans, and for them, the bigger the better. A large, hooked nose symbolized their bird-like gods and was so important to them that they added specially designed artificial nose bridges that were often multicolored and decorated with gems.

Beauty is influenced by cultural values, and the Mayans invested a lot of time, energy, and creativity to achieve their vision of beauty, even if that vastly differs from today's standards.