



# Workers' COMPanion

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## VISION, DRIVE, AND INSPIRATION

### THE TEACHERS WHO PUSHED ME TO BECOME WHO I AM TODAY

It's funny how, throughout the years, memories of past teachers accumulate, sticking with you no matter what. The back-to-school season has me thinking about a few of those teachers who helped me get to where I am today.

Back when I was in elementary school, teachers and administrators were known to paddle kids pretty regularly. The fear of God was put in me on more than one occasion, but it's the kindness of Mrs. Livermore, my third-grade teacher, that sticks with me most today. While she looked like "Old Lady" Crump from the "Andy Griffith Show," to my young eyes she seemed like a grandma.

On the school day after I had to get eyeglasses, I was deeply shy and embarrassed. I dreaded the "four eyes" comments and the idea that I might be some kind of nerd. When my dad dropped me off, she stepped out of the classroom before I went in. "Why don't you take Jimmy up the hall to get a drink of water?" she asked my dad. Now, I can't be sure of this, but I'm convinced that while I was taking a walk, she warned the other kids not to make fun of my new frames. I walked into the classroom, all antsy and anxious, but nobody said a word to tease me. You could hear a pin drop. What a relief!

In sixth grade, I had Charles Bunnell, a burly young guy who also butchered cattle. One day, I stumbled in just before 8 a.m., half-asleep, and went to the little sink in the back of the classroom for a drink. I took a long, cool drink with my eyes closed. When I opened them, a bloody, massive beef heart was staring me in the face from the bottom of the sink, two inches away! I howled in terror and backed away. It turned out Mr. Bunnell had brought it in for show and tell to teach us about heart anatomy. I learned more than he intended that day, I think.

Much later in life, I had one law professor joke that "reading law is like eating sawdust without butter," which is true, but a few teachers managed to make it interesting nonetheless. I remember Larry Herman, my criminal law professor, gesticulating wildly as

he outlined the history of case after case. He was a wiry fellow, full of energy and enthusiasm, and he always got nominated as the law school's professor of the year.

I had another professor, Bill Knepper, who, after our months of preparation for our Trial Advocacy case, cut our presentations short so we could make it to the Ohio-Michigan game, to which he had tickets. This was on the day of our oral arguments, and we had put dozens of hours into our cases. "I know you've prepared hard for this," he said, "and there's nothing worse than the pangs of an undelivered speech. But the kickoff is at noon, and I have tickets." We were shocked, but I can't say anybody was too upset. We got that Saturday afternoon off for a rare moment to unwind and cheer for our Buckeyes.

Nearly every person who's spent years and years in school will have hundreds more stories like this, but there's always one commonality. The best teachers inspire us to see beyond our current station, and they give us the imagination to realize our latent potential. They provide us with a vision of our future. I am certain that, without the guidance of such mentors, my life would be a far cry from what it is today. I'm incredibly grateful for each and every one of them.

- Jim Monast





# GET POPPIN'

## SHAKE UP MOVIE NIGHT WITH CRAZY (HEALTHY) POPCORN RECIPES

Popcorn is considered to be a fairly healthy snack by most experts, especially when compared to other salty treats, like corn chips.

Unfortunately, microwave popcorn is another matter. Many popular popcorn brands use trans fats, which the Centers for Disease Control estimate are related to 20,000 heart attacks and 7,000 deaths annually.

Additionally, a study from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health identified a connection between the chemical diacetyl, used to flavor microwave popcorn, and cases of lung disease in workers at popcorn factories.

For popcorn lovers, the answer is clear: Make popcorn yourself! Pour ¼ cup of popcorn kernels into a regular brown paper bag, fold the top of the bag shut tight, then pop in microwave for about two minutes, or until popping slows to

a second between pops. Voila! Fresh popcorn with no factory chemicals. If you're craving some fun flavors, try these simple recipes.

**Traditional Butter** Melt 2 tablespoons of butter, then drizzle it along the sides of a brown paper bag. Pour your already popped popcorn into the bag until it's half full, close the bag tight, and shake vigorously. In no time, you'll have perfectly buttered popcorn!

**Cinna-Sugar Bliss** This is a great recipe to satisfy your sweet tooth. Add 1 teaspoon of cinnamon and 2 tablespoons of sugar to 3 tablespoons of melted butter. Drizzle onto the edges of a brown paper bag, add popped popcorn, and shake well!

**Sriracha Sesame Celebration** Here's to the adventurous popcorn lovers! Combine 1 tablespoon Sriracha, 1 teaspoon of sesame seeds, 1 teaspoon garlic powder, and 1 teaspoon of olive oil. Sprinkle half over popcorn and shake well inside of bag. Repeat with remaining mixture.

Whether you're preparing for a movie marathon or need an after-school snack, any of these recipes will be a tasty alternative to the chemicals saturating microwave popcorn. Enjoy!

## Mary S.

### IMPRESSIVE CASE RESULTS

Mary S. injured her back while performing the Heimlich maneuver on a co-worker who was choking after a seizure. We were originally retained to help Mary obtain workers' compensation benefits that were vigorously contested by her employer. They argued it wasn't Mary's responsibility to save her co-worker's life and, thus, she shouldn't have a valid workers' compensation claim! We also represented her in filing for Social Security disability benefits. She required extensive medical treatment after her selfless act, including lumbar and caudal epidural injections, nerve blocks, hip and pelvic surgery, a spinal cord stimulator, and medications. During one of her surgeries, she developed a fracture in her pelvis when the doctor was harvesting her iliac bone for use in a spinal fusion.

Mary's condition not only failed to improve, but it got worse. She was diagnosed with failed-back syndrome, and she developed severe depression. Recognizing the severity of her injuries, we recommended she apply for Social Security disability benefits. Mary was only 31 years old when her injury occurred, but she had never been able to return to work. Although her request for benefits was denied at the initial stages, we submitted reports from Mary's workers' compensation claim file that established the severity of her injuries. In addition, we asked her

doctors to explain how Mary's injuries prohibited her from returning even to part-time sedentary work. Mary was approximately 35 years old when she was awarded benefits. Although benefits are more difficult to obtain under the age of 50, we have successfully obtained them for many younger clients whose injuries are clearly disabling by presenting medical evidence that explains our client's limitations and restrictions in an understandable way. We also filed for and were successful in having Mary determined permanently and totally disabled under her workers' compensation claim. While being declared disabled by Social Security is no guarantee of permanent total disability in a workers' compensation claim (and vice versa), Mary's case is an example of how a person's injuries may entitle them to both forms of benefits.



# WHAT IF MY EMPLOYER IGNORES SAFETY STANDARDS?

## VSSR Claims Can Result in Additional Compensation

You're working one day at the factory, when suddenly a minor slip up results in a gruesome slice across your right palm. Where were your safety gloves? Did your employer *provide* safety gloves? Did they require their use? If your employer neglected state safety standards, you may be eligible for an additional workers' compensation benefit.

Ohio employers have a legal obligation to protect the safety of their workers at any place of employment. The Ohio Revised Code requires the use of safety devices and safeguards, the adoption of safe work methods, and the maintenance of a safe workplace. Likewise, Ohio workers are responsible to properly use any provided safety equipment.

When an injury occurs while on the job, applying for benefits is the injured worker's sole recourse. The employer may not be sued if negligent — nor may a claim be denied if it resulted from the negligence of the employee. However, if the employee's injury, disease, or death resulted from the employer's violation of a "lawful safety requirement," an injured worker with a BWC claim may

be eligible to receive an additional award of compensation. Such awards are known as VSSR claims.

It's important to note, though, that these claims are difficult to win. Because payment of such an award penalizes the employer, imposing an additional cost penalty, all reasonable doubts in the interpretation of the specific safety requirements are to be resolved in favor of the employer.

For a successful VSSR claim, the injured worker must show that the safety requirement was both specific and applicable, that the employer was not in compliance when the accident occurred, and that their non-compliance contributed to the injury, illness, or death.

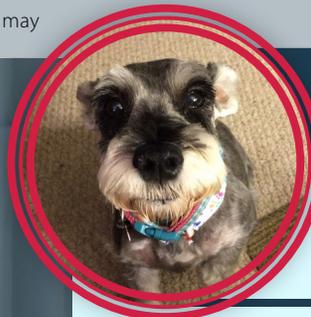
If you believe your workplace injury is the result of a safety code violation by your employer, it's important to know your options and course of action. Call us today, and we'll guide you through the process.

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ANSWERS



## ABBY'S APPETIZERS

### GRILLED MEXICAN STREET CORN

*Make the most of these remaining summer weeks and take dinner outside to the grill! You don't need to visit the fair for this delicious, classic street food.*

#### INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup sour cream
- ½ cup finely crumbled feta cheese
- ½ teaspoon chili powder
- 1 medium clove garlic, minced
- ¼ cup finely chopped cilantro leaves
- 4 ears corn, shucked
- 1 lime, cut into wedges

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Set burners of gas grill to high heat and allow to preheat for 5 minutes.
2. Combine mayonnaise, sour cream, cheese, chili powder, garlic, and cilantro in large bowl. Stir until well combined and set aside.
3. Place corn on hot grill, rotating occasionally. Grill until cooked through and charred in spots on all sides, for about 8 minutes.
4. Transfer corn to bowl with cheese mixture and use large spoon to evenly coat each ear on all sides. Sprinkle with extra cheese and chili powder and serve immediately with lime wedges.

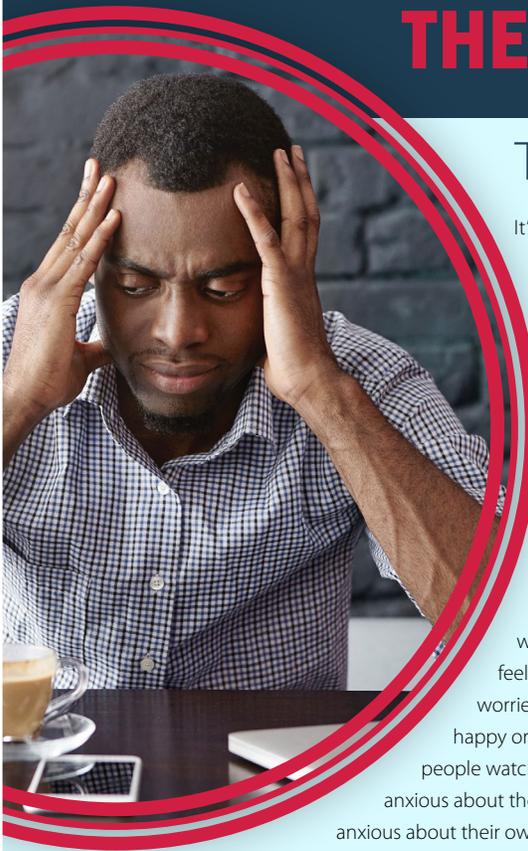
*Recipe inspired by [seriouseats.com](http://seriouseats.com).*



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# THE EFFECTS OF NEGATIVE NEWS



## They Say Ignorance Is Bliss ... But Is It Healthy?

It's nearly impossible to log on to social media or turn on the TV without seeing something distressing. Instead of dwelling on what's troubling, let's focus on how to protect our mental health.

### The Psychology of Bad News

A study by Psychology Today found that people who watch negative news feel worse about pre-existing worries than people who watch happy or neutral events. That means people watching the news don't just feel anxious about the world — they feel more anxious about their own lives.

British psychologist Dr. Graham Davey, who specializes in the effects of media violence, says negative news can affect how you interact with the world around you. As you consume threatening news, you're more likely to spot threats in your day-to-day activities that aren't there, which leads to anxiety.

### Why Is the News So Negative?

As news media revenue goes down and people become desensitized, news organizations feel the pressure to show emotionally relevant material such as crime and accidents. At a basic level, for something to be "newsworthy" — negative or not — it needs to be the exception to the rule, not the norm. That means watching the news might give you an inaccurate view of what daily life is like in the world.

### How to Fight the Negativity

It's important to understand important issues of the day. But when the news becomes too much, psychologists encourage you to take a break with some good news — or no news at all. Advances in medicine and technology happen all the time! Seek out those stories, or take a break from news altogether. That's when no news can become good news.