

## ROBOTS IN WENDY'S

### WHEN STRESS OVERTAKES OUR LIFE

**R**ecently, I had some time between hearings and treated myself to lunch at Wendy's. This counted as a treat because I actually went into the restaurant instead of just going through the drive-thru. Nothing like enjoying my french fries nice and hot! When I walked in, I wasn't greeted by someone behind the cash register, but by an automatic kiosk where I just punched in my order. I've seen machines like this before, but I didn't expect to find one in a Wendy's. It's yet another way automation is encroaching on the workforce.

Automation has become a huge concern for workers today. Many of my clients express concern about taking time off due to an injury because, if they take too much time off, then their employers might replace them in a few years with some robot that never takes time off. For many people, this is a huge source of stress, one of many we face in our daily lives, and one that will likely get worse.

April is National Stress Awareness Month. It's not surprising that we need a whole month to talk about stress. In a 2019 Gallup poll, 55% of Americans reported feeling stressed during the day, which makes our country's population one of the most stressed in the world. No one needs to be reminded of their stress, but we could certainly use some help managing it.

If you're feeling stressed out all the time, one thing I recommend is finding a supportive group of people to share your feelings with. These groups can be very helpful if you have depression or anxiety. I've met with certain groups for years (I've had lots of crazies in my family), and it helps a lot. I can be easily overwhelmed by frustration and stress in my life, especially if I don't nip it in the bud. If you're a spiritual person, then it can also help to connect with your faith. Pray. Sing songs of your faith. Talk with a trusted friend, small group, pastor, rabbi, or the like who can support you. There's saying I think is true: Shared joy is doubled; shared sorrow is halved.

Another way to combat stress? Cut down on social media. If you're on Twitter a lot, it's easy to think the whole world is going to hell in a handbag. Meanwhile on Facebook, you can fall in the trap of comparing your life to the carefully curated versions of people's lives that they post online. We tend to compare our insides with other people's outsides, so it's easy to become depressed when you think everyone else is doing so much better than you are. I enjoy going on social media, but I limit my time and remind myself to maintain some perspective. Studies confirm that people tend to be more depressed the more time they spend on Facebook! Good grief, life is challenging enough without adding that to the mix!



One strategy I use to maintain perspective and deal with stress is to keep a gratitude journal. It's as simple as sitting down and writing out some things you're grateful for. If you have a hard time thinking of things, try going in alphabetical order. Each day, think of just one thing you are grateful for that corresponds with a letter of the alphabet. Look back over it periodically and remind yourself that there's so much to be thankful for, even when it doesn't always feel like it.

We all have a certain idea of how our lives will turn out. When the unexpected happens, which we know it will, it can feel like the end of a dream. No one wakes up in the morning thinking they will get injured at work, get divorced, or lose a loved one. These unexpected events can quickly send us spiraling down with stress and depression. It's important to remember that your control over life ends at the tip of your nose. We can't control how life will play out, but we *can* control how we respond to it. Remember: This too shall pass.

Whether you're stressed about your work-related injury, the possibility of losing your job to automation, or that you still need to go grocery shopping, remember that your stress is valid. It's a tough spot to be in, but there's hope in everything. And people can help you through whatever stress you're facing. That includes us at Monast Law Office. If you ever need someone to talk to, please give us a call. I know lots of you already do, and that's a good thing in my book.

**“One strategy I use to maintain perspective and deal with stress is to keep a gratitude journal.”**

*-Jim Monast*

# DO YOUR PART TO KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL

## AND MAINTAIN GREEN LIVING SPACES FOR EVERYONE

Have you ever walked through a park and seen a plastic bottle or wrapper lying on the ground? If so, did you pick it up and properly dispose of it? You might not have realized it, but in that moment, you took a small step toward keeping your community — and, by extension, America — beautiful!

April is Keep America Beautiful Month, and folks who celebrate aim to help each community in every state stay clean and green. Created by the nonprofit organization Keep America Beautiful, this holiday offers a perfect opportunity to roll up your sleeves and work to better the place you live in. Here are three ways to show your appreciation for a green America this month.

**Volunteer for the Great American Cleanup.** This event is one of America's largest community improvement programs, with hundreds of thousands of people participating each year. In 2019, over 550,000 volunteers participated in the GAC to bring natural beauty back into their communities. 2020 marks this event's 22nd year, and you can be a part of it this month! Volunteer your time with a local Keep America Beautiful affiliate or another community improvement program close to home. Do your part to clean up your parks and spread awareness today.



**Start plogging.** If you're passionate about staying active and cleaning up your neighborhood, then this is the perfect activity for you! Plogging combines jogging and picking up litter, which takes care of your health and keeps your community clean. Anybody can do it: Just throw on your running shoes, grab a bag, head out the door, and pick up any stray bits of trash you see on your morning jog or evening walk.

**Improve recycling through education.** An important goal during Keep America Beautiful Month is to spread awareness about recycling. There are various ways to educate those around you about recycling and encourage them to do their part. At work, for example, you can volunteer to lead a recycling initiative by printing off guides and fostering discussions on why recycling is so essential. At home, you can make a commitment with your family to fulfill the three R's of recycling: reduce, reuse, recycle.

To discover more ways to participate in Keep America Beautiful month, visit their website at [KAB.org](http://KAB.org) today!

Bus drivers do much more than merely drive. In the snow and ice, they have to get up extra early to make sure the Blue Bird is safe. They help calm the nerves of upset children (and anxious parents on those first days of school). They help kiddos with disabilities get on board. They may have to open and close gates in the pouring rain. They befriend shy students and provide a friendly smile to start and end the day.

Candy Knapp is one of these kind souls. A driver for Springfield City schools for 40 years, she delivered a lot of precious cargo. Along the way, she bore her share of battle scars. She tore her shoulder falling on ice. She jammed her thumb pushing a stuck brake release. She hurt her back lifting heavy coolers full of lunches for latchkey students going on a field trip and then aggravated it loading a child into a wheelchair.

Shrugging these off, she kept on keeping on until she fell in a pothole on a hill while pulling gates together to lock up ... during a rainstorm. The resulting knee injury required getting surgeries, undergoing a lot of rehab, using a TENS unit for pain, and ultimately, using a walker. Obviously, performing the work she'd enjoyed for 40 years was now out of the question. The Bureau of Workers' Compensation decided vocational rehabilitation was not feasible, so we filed for permanent total disability. The Industrial Commission doctor thought Candy could do some sit-down work and that her application should be denied. Her scheduled hearing was assigned to a hearing officer who's one of the toughest to win with. (Think of the old Life Cereal commercials: He won't grant it; he hates everything!) Despite the terrible odds, Candy won! I believe the hearing officer saw a woman who had dedicated herself to her students for her entire working life and his heart grew three sizes that day.

I'm glad we could play a part in her story. I thank Candy and all the bus drivers we've represented over the years for the unseen work they do. As with most things, it's a lot more involved than I would've thought at first blush.

## CLIENT STORY: CANDY KNAPP

Oh, those many days of standing in the cold, waiting for the school bus! While my elementary school in Joplin, Missouri, was within walking distance at a couple miles away, I rode the bus for after-school bowling league and field trips. In junior high, though, I was at the bus stop every morning. Bus drivers certainly get their share of ribbing about grinding the gears when they shift (doubtful that's even an issue anymore, since they likely all have automatic transmissions) and running over curbs. But the drivers I have known over the years cared a lot more for their students than I realized as a child.





# Some Good News

## WHAT TRUE HEROES LOOK LIKE

In Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina, there's a local pub called Jimmy's at Red Dogs. It's a place you go to find a cold drink and good company. That's because Jimmy Gilleece, the owner, doesn't just talk about taking care of his customers. A few years ago, Gilleece proved the size of his heart when he helped a woman who'd lost her wallet *and* the thief who stole it.

In March 2018, Gilleece got a call from a woman who had left her wallet on a bench outside of his bar. She was frantic because her wedding ring, valued at \$10,000, was inside the wallet. Gilleece combed through hours of security camera footage before he spotted the wallet on the bench just as a young man approached. Gilleece posted about the crime on Facebook, and it wasn't long before the thief came forward.

The thief was 17-year-old Rivers Prather, a homeless boy who'd been living alone in the forest outside of town. Prather admitted to taking the money

inside the wallet to buy a sandwich, then throwing the wallet in an ocean channel. Rather than giving up the search, Gilleece hired divers to search the channel. It was a miracle when they found the wallet with the ring still tucked inside. After returning the ring to its owner, Gilleece helped Prather.

"I could tell he wasn't a criminal," Gilleece said. "He was just somebody who needed a little help." Gilleece invited Prather to come live at his house with his family and even gave the young man a job helping out around the bar. Prather says his future looks bright for the first time in years.

"I couldn't have been luckier," Prather said. "Most other people would have just [given] the footage to police, and he chose to help me. He's made me part of his family."

Gilleece's good deeds weren't a one-time thing. This past December, Jimmy's at Red Dogs collected almost 800 bicycles and donated them to Toys for Tots. Now that's an outstanding member of the community.

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ANSWER

## NIBBLES WITH NUG

### EASY DEVEILED EGGS



Inspired by TasteOfHome.com

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp milk
- 1 tsp dried parsley flakes
- 1/2 tsp dill weed
- 1/2 tsp fresh chives, minced
- 1/2 tsp ground mustard
- Salt, paprika, garlic powder, and pepper, to taste
- 12 large eggs, hard-boiled
- Fresh parsley, minced, and paprika for garnish

#### DIRECTIONS

1. In a large bowl, combine mayonnaise, milk, parsley flakes, dill, chives, mustard, salt, paprika, garlic powder, and pepper. Mix well and set aside.
2. Cut eggs lengthwise and remove yolks carefully to preserve egg whites.
3. In a small bowl, mash yolks.
4. Mix mashed yolks with mayonnaise mixture.
5. Spoon or pipe the mixture back into the egg whites.
6. Garnish with fresh parsley and paprika. Refrigerate before serving.

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# LAUGH WITH ME!

## A LIGHTHEARTED APPROACH TO DECREASING STRESS

We've all heard that laughter is the best medicine, and it turns out that human physiology supports this claim. When we laugh, our body releases a flood of feel-good chemicals and neurotransmitters. Our blood flow increases, and our production of cortisol, a hormone associated with stress, decreases. Oh, and laughing also burns calories!

The feel-good, endorphin-inducing benefits of laughter are exactly what prompted Dr. Madan Kataria to develop laughter yoga in 1995. Laughter yoga incorporates breathing, stretching, clapping, and of course, laughing.

Kataria developed the initial idea after coming across research into the benefits of laughter on overall health and well-being. He began to put the research into practice by telling jokes to his patients, and after seeing the positive effects, he took his material to a local park. Parkgoers, who were initially skeptical, joined in on the practice, and the first laughter yoga club was born.

The laughter meetup had everyone in high spirits — until the group ran out of jokes. Unsure of what to do next, Kataria found another medical book suggesting the group didn't need jokes to laugh. Fake laughter is just as beneficial as the real

thing because the body can't tell the difference between the two.

Collaborating with this wife, Madhuri, Kataria combined common yoga warmups and breathing techniques with facilitated laughter to create the form of laughter yoga that is practiced worldwide today.

If you're interested in trying laughter yoga for yourself, then you're in luck. Laughter yoga clubs exist across the United States and the world. Videos on YouTube can teach the basics, but laughter yoga tends to be most beneficial in a group setting.

Just think about the last time you found yourself in a fit of giggles with a group of friends or during a comedy show. Didn't it feel great? Rather than wait for a silly situation to trigger laughter, use laughter yoga to promote laughter and alleviate stress on any day at any time.

