

WEATHERING YOUR JOURNEY'S UPS AND DOWNS

ON THE WINDY, BOULDER-FILLED PATH THROUGH LIFE

The summer after I graduated from high school, two of my buddies and I decided to take my dad's Jeep Wagoneer and go on a road trip west through Colorado, Utah, and Arizona. This was in the era of John Denver and "Rocky Mountain High," and the three of us were also Eagle Scouts with extensive experience hiking and camping. Needless to say, we wanted to see some of the most beautiful landscapes that our country offers.

On our trip, we saw the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Zion, and more. Our first stop, however, was in Colorado. We wanted to see the Mount of the Holy Cross and hike around that area. It was definitely different from the hills we hiked in Ohio. We didn't have a destination in mind for the hike, and we didn't have a map. We just wanted to see where the trail would take us. (Ah, the adventurous spirit of youth ...)

After hiking for a while, we saw a lake in the distance. It was dusk but it looked close, so we thought we could reach it before dark to camp there. That was the day we discovered that distances could be deceiving. We spent most of the hike down to the lake trundling over boulders the size of houses and other similarly difficult terrain. I slipped more than once and lost my favorite aluminum frying pan somewhere along the way. Finally, as it was dark, we called it a day and pitched our tents on the face of a jagged boulder. It wasn't comfortable, but there weren't many other options around. The next day, we made it to the lake.

When I think back to that hiking trip, it seems like an analogy for everyone's journey through life. We climb up and over a series of metaphorical mountains, constantly falling down, losing our gear, taking unintentional detours, and otherwise getting waylaid and distracted. Sure, you can have a plan for getting to your destination, but as some old wag once said, to make God laugh, tell him your plans.

Life is full of ups and downs, whether that be in our marriages, family relationships, friendships, or work. I've shared about my marriage and



divorce in past newsletters and about my mother's dementia and my father's struggles with mental health. I've also shared a little about my split from my business partner I worked with for 23 years. We had been friends and fraternity brothers in college, and we both worked for his dad when we graduated. That business split felt a lot like a divorce. Long story short: We all know a thing or two about the ups and downs of life.

And yet, despite the journey not always being easy, it's worth it. Even though I could easily wake up every morning and think of two dozen reasons to be miserable, I can also think of two dozen reasons to be grateful and happy. Sometimes, we just have to keep moving: left foot then right foot, left again, and so on. This too shall pass. And you don't have to do it alone — surround yourself with people who encourage and help you. My mom used to say, "If I wake up and I'm not six feet under, then it's a good day." Interestingly, as I've gotten more and more miles under my (ever-expanding) belt, pithy statements like that have become more meaningful.

When I'm feeling burned out or beaten down by life, I find joy in the little things that have become a part of my journey, like watching my grandsons learn to swim or watching the deer who occasionally wander through our yard. Find the things in your life uplifting and positive, and always remain flexible. Like the Marines say, *Semper Gumby*. Great things are on the horizon. There may be boulders in the path, but you'll reach the refreshing lake eventually.

-Jim Monast

IS THIS GOOD FOR ME? Apps to Help You Make Smart Food Choices

Sometimes going grocery shopping can leave you feeling more like a detective than a human just trying to feed yourself and your family. Sleuthing down the snack aisle brings up questions about whether gluten-free means “good” and whether no added sugars means “nutritious.”

The foundation of healthy snacking includes fresh fruits and vegetables, but how can you make smart (or smarter) choices when buying packaged snack foods? New smartphone apps mean the answer is just one bar code away.

Switch It Up

FoodSwitch is a mobile app developed by an international health advocacy group, The George Institute for Global Health. Even packaged foods that purport to be healthy can have high levels of salt, sugar, and saturated fat. While valuable information appears on nutritional labels, they can also leave you more mystified than empowered.

In that case, simply open the FoodSwitch app, scan the bar code of the item you're interested in, and get instant nutritional information and options for healthier alternatives. Each item gets a Health Star Rating from .5–5, making it easy to understand where the item falls on the health spectrum and how it compares to other brands. If that item doesn't meet your dietary needs, let FoodSwitch recommend an alternative.

In a Snap

If you're already a dedicated Snapchat user and don't want to add another app to your phone, you're in luck. Snapchat has recently implemented a scanning technology powered by the nutrition-tracking app Yuka. While it has similarities to FoodSwitch, the format Snapchat uses lays out the nutritional pros and cons of each item and gives each item an overall rating on the traffic-light system. Green means good to go, yellow means proceed with caution (moderation), and red means reconsider or only eat this item rarely.

With these two apps, you can put down your magnifying glass and pick up your smartphone. Making healthier snack choices is right at your fingertips.



Our own Wilma with Anthony Jennings



Client Success Story

Anthony Jennings

His work has always involved heavy equipment and machinery, driving semis and paving trucks, hauling heavy equipment, using air tools/hammers, and doing auto/truck repairs. The last six years of his work life, he drove heavy dump trucks (the ones with semis) for a demolition, hauling, and removal company. When these trucks dump their loads, they drive onto a ramp that elevates. Anthony was a passenger, working with a newer driver who didn't get the rig centered on the ramp. So, when it tilted, the entire tractor-trailer rolled onto its side.

Anthony suffered severe injuries to his left shoulder, which required many surgeries that were followed by nerve blocks. Despite treatment, including lots of pain medication, he continues to have debilitating pain in his left shoulder that is aggravated by nearly any activity. While initially hospitalized, he also developed a chronic respiratory bronchitis that has left him unable to tolerate diesel fumes or dusty environments.

Unable to return to the only work he's ever done, Anthony tried a couple stints in vocational rehabilitation to no avail. Even now, he sleeps in a recliner since he can't rest on his left side or his stomach. Also, he moves slower these days because it's hard for him to breathe. In addition to all of this, the depression that resulted is understandable.

Still, he does what he can, even helping friends collect scrap to redeem for extra spending money. He has even offered to come and help Wilma here at the office!

Anthony recently closed his claim, so we are pleased to have negotiated a settlement (with the BWC) that Anthony's pleased with. He still says he'll come help Wilma, so who knows, maybe one day you'll hear him answering phones for her when you call in!

So, our friend and longtime client, Anthony, used to find himself in the dumps quite a bit ... dump truck, that is!

Oh, I crack myself up with the dad-joke humor! Actually, Anthony got cracked up, too — but there I go again!

Anthony grew up in Columbus and went to West High School. He dropped out after 10th grade to help support his family, then he got a job driving a garbage truck at the age of 16. At 17, he drove a dump truck, hauled asphalt, and then moved to tractor trailers at 19. Now, he has driven everywhere in the continental United States except for California.

CLEANING UP AMERICA'S CITIES, ONE TRASH BAG AT A TIME

HOW ONE WOMAN SPENT HER TIME OFF FROM WORK



What would you do if you got a month off from work? Would you treat yourself to a nice vacation? Spend time getting those home renovations done? What about traveling around the country, picking up trash throughout different cities? That last option might not be your first thought, but it was Stefani Shamrowicz's.

The 24-year-old Colorado woman had time off from her job at a campus recreation center, so as a "huge thank you for all the joy and good times" that Shamrowicz said that she's had at the 23 national parks she's visited, she made the rest of the country look a little bit more like the untouched natural beauty she saw there.

For 23 days, Shamrowicz drove 70 hours through 12 states picking up trash. She documented her journey through her Instagram page and let her followers donate \$10 per bag to do part of her cleanup in their name. She used the money to pay for her gas and lodging as she traveled. She collected 126 bags of trash.

Among the most common trash that Shamrowicz found were drinking bottles and face masks, but she also found lawn ornaments and even a tire with a pair of old cowboy boots in it. Sometimes, she would get discouraged by the sheer amount of litter in an area, having filled four trash bags and barely making a dent.

But she never intended to shame people for littering. Instead, she wanted to show people watching her journey at home, or any passersby, that if she could clean up America's cities and roadways, so could they.

Throughout her trip, people would send Shamrowicz supportive messages and even photos of their own trash bags they had filled up while cleaning public areas in their cities. Once, when she was cleaning up a beach in Florida, two women nonchalantly helped her.

Shamrowicz is proud of the work she did, no matter how little it might seem. "I'm just happy to make a little impact everywhere I go," she said.

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ANSWER

NIBBLES WITH NUG

EASY FOIL-GRILLED SAUSAGE AND VEGETABLES



Inspired by NutmegNanny.com

INGREDIENTS

- 4 sausage links of your choice
- 1 lb green beans
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, diced
- 1 red onion, diced
- 1 zucchini, diced
- 1 yellow summer squash, diced
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, grated
- 1 tbsp thyme
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 tsp basil
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp crushed red pepper (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat your grill to medium heat or your oven to 425 F.
2. In a large bowl, add all of the ingredients and mix well. Divide into four equal portions.
3. Prepare four 16-inch pieces of foil and place a portion in the middle of each section. Wrap each foil piece tightly and avoid holes.
4. Grill each foil packet for 20 minutes, flipping halfway through. You can also bake each packet for 20 minutes at 425 F.



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FIGHT SAD EARLY!

START TAKING VITAMIN D NOW, BEFORE THE SUN GOES AWAY

Do you get SAD? We're talking about seasonal affective disorder, which affects 1%–10% of the population depending on the state you live in. Symptoms of SAD are similar to symptoms of depression, but unlike chronic depression, which can occur at any time, people with SAD only experience symptoms during a certain time of year, usually winter.

SAD has been strongly linked with shorter days and less sun — although summertime SAD can result from long days that make sleep difficult, resulting in irritability and mood swings. In most cases, however, winter is the problem season, likely due to a link between less sun and a vitamin D deficiency.

Depression is one common symptom of vitamin D deficiency, especially in patients who aren't prone to depression due to other circumstances. Unfortunately, very few foods are good sources of vitamin D. The best source is sunlight itself.

There are a few ways to combat wintertime SAD. Establishing a regular sleep schedule is important, as is an exercise routine and healthy diet. As mentioned, it's hard to find vitamin D in foods, but milk and other food products are often intentionally enriched with it during processing.

The most common solution, however, is taking a vitamin D supplement, which can be purchased over the counter at drugstores and grocery stores. It is commonly recommended for people living in places with harsher winters, and although there are negative side effects if taken in excess, a regular daily dose of vitamin D is a healthy way to ensure you have the right levels in your system.

This month is the perfect time to begin that process. Vitamin D can take several months to build up to effective levels in our bodies. It may be the hottest time of the year in many places, but it's also the ideal time to start fighting SAD early!