

## ORDINARY PEOPLE, EXTRAORDINARY COURAGE

### *The Revolutionary Power of Simply Telling the Truth*

We all know that trapped feeling ... when you're in a room full of people where the majority viewpoint differs from your own. The easy route? Just stay quiet, nod along, and do what you can to not rock the boat. Well, Feb. 8 marks the beginning of Hero Week, and I've been thinking a lot about what makes someone a hero, the kind who stands up for the truth, even when it costs them everything. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, John Newton, William Wilberforce, Ignaz Semmelweis ... these names might feel like history lessons, but they're really examples of what it looks like to do the right thing, even when it's hard.

Take Bonhoeffer. He was a priest in Nazi Germany, a time when most people, including clergy, were scared to speak out about the violence and hate spreading across the country. He didn't just talk about faith, he acted, even joining a plot against Hitler. For that, he was executed just days before the war ended. What gets me is that even then, at the very end, he thanked the guard as he was being hanged. That kind of courage? I can barely wrap my head around it.

Then there's John Newton, a former slave trader who wrote "Amazing Grace." He made a fortune exploiting others through slavery, then had a change of heart and became a fierce advocate against slavery despite his peers shunning him for it. He even mentored William Wilberforce, who spent 30 years in Parliament fighting to abolish the slave trade. Both of them were ridiculed and ostracized for their beliefs, but they persevered because they believed in something greater than themselves.

And you can't forget Semmelweis, the doctor who figured out handwashing could save mothers' lives. His peers mocked, dismissed, and even attacked him, but he remained steadfast in his pursuit of the truth. He died unrecognized and institutionalized, but today, his work is considered groundbreaking. He reminds us that sometimes, being right comes with a heavy price.

What connects all these people is simple: **They put the truth above their comfort, their reputation, even their safety.** And that's a lesson we still need today. Misinformation, spin, and bias are everywhere, but the principle is the same. Standing for what's right often comes with resistance, yet it's still worth it.

I don't pretend to be a hero on their level. I face my own moments of avoiding the hard truth or taking the easy way out. But I try to question, to speak carefully, to live intentionally. Because at the end of the day, being honest, and I mean really honest, makes all the difference.

So, this Hero Week, I hope you'll find inspiration in these stories, not just to admire them, but to bring a little of that courage into your own life. George Orwell put it perfectly: "In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act." And maybe, just maybe, that's the kind of revolution we still need.

*- Jim Monast*



# STOP THE SWIPE

## TIPS FOR A MONEY MINDSET MAKEOVER

If you're still feeling the financial sting of the recent holiday shopping season or struggle to pay off your credit card throughout the year, it may be time to rethink your spending routine.

Most of us are guilty of impulsive shopping from time to time, but an occasional indulgence can



become a dangerous habit if we're not careful, especially with technology making it easier than ever to overspend. Here are three ways to curb the urge to splurge.

### WIPE YOUR CARD INFO CLEAN.

There's a reason why many apps and websites enable you to save your credit card information; it makes it easier for you to spend money! If you're looking to reduce how often you experience the rush of an instant purchase, enter your payment manually every time you go to check out. The extra time it takes to do so may be enough to help you realize whatever you wanted a moment ago isn't as necessary as you thought.

### CHOOSE PAPER OVER PLASTIC.

In addition to detaching your credit card information from your phone or computer, consider separating your card from *yourself* when you leave to go shopping. Carrying

cash instead of card is a helpful way to slow spending. For one thing, it helps you maintain a set amount to shell out, which you're reminded of as the dollars disappear. Second, cash doesn't carry an interest rate. When you spend \$4 on that cup of coffee you can't resist, you'll be out \$4, not \$4.80 when using a card that charges an additional 20%.

### DELAY, DON'T DIVE.

There will always be purchases, such as tickets for a concert that sell out within minutes or a future flight that becomes pricier as your departure date approaches, that will require you to reach for your credit card as soon as possible. That said, there are infinitely more things that you simply *don't need* ... at least not right away. When you encounter something online or in a store that you *must have now* despite it not being a scarce item, give it at least a day (or, even better, a week) before making your final decision.

## Keep Your Claim Moving Forward

### AVOID THE TRAPS NOBODY WARNS YOU ABOUT

Getting hurt at work is stressful enough, but you shouldn't also have to worry about your workers' compensation claim getting stuck in limbo. However, even honest and deserving claims can be slowed down by simple mistakes. Let's walk through what really causes delays and how you can avoid them.

#### THE QUIET CLAIM-KILLERS YOU DON'T SEE COMING

Most people assume delays happen because the system is slow. Sometimes that's true, but more often, it's something small and avoidable, like a missing signature or a short comment made to the wrong person at work.

Paperwork trouble is one of the biggest culprits. The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) processes thousands of claims every day, and even one missing detail can send your file straight into the "needs review" pile. That can add weeks or months to your timeline.

Then there are employer disputes. Maybe your boss disagrees with how the injury happened or downplays how serious it is. Just ask Brenda, a client whose claim hit a wall after a supervisor casually questioned her injury's severity. That one offhand comment triggered hearings, paperwork, and unnecessary stress.

#### PROTECT YOUR CLAIM

Think of your workers' comp claim as a fragile package: Handle it carefully, or someone else might mishandle it for you.

- **Skip the social media updates.** Even innocent posts get misinterpreted. If you're injured and post a photo smiling at a birthday dinner, someone may try to use it against you.
- **Don't talk about your case at work.** A well-meaning coworker or supervisor may give "advice," share your situation with others, or accidentally say something that complicates your claim.

- **Have an attorney review your paperwork.** A professional can find any potential errors and correct them to avoid delays.

These small choices add up, and they can be the difference between a smoothly processed claim and one that keeps getting pushed to the bottom of the pile.

#### NAVIGATING DELAYS

When your benefits are delayed, you deserve clear answers and a plan. Our team at Monast Law Office digs into the specifics, finds the holdup, and takes action quickly. We know how the BWC works, and we know how to move claims forward, often faster than clients can on their own.

If your claim is stuck, confusing, or unfairly challenged, reach out. We're here to help you protect your rights, regain control, and get the support you need to heal and move forward.

# A WINNING SHOT FOR WILDLIFE

## HOW WIMBLEDON'S TENNIS BALLS RESCUE TINY WILDLIFE

In the heart of Leicestershire, a small act of compassion has grown into a heartwarming partnership between wildlife caretakers and one of the world's most iconic sporting events. It began back in 2013, when park ranger Dale Osborne noticed that heavy rains were transforming Watermead Country Park North into a sprawling, soggy floodplain. As the land disappeared under water, so did the delicate nests of local harvest mice. Osborne recalled the moment he realized he had to step in: "I was picking mice up swimming around in the water and putting them on dry land because some had been washed out of their homes," he told the BBC.

Determined to give these tiny creatures a fighting chance, Osborne and a colleague turned to an unusual but ingenious idea gaining momentum in the UK: turning old tennis balls into mouse-sized homes. By cutting small openings into the rubber shells and placing them on short stakes, they created snug, elevated shelters safe from rising waters and hungry predators. As Osborne explained, "They will lay their young in there, and they are so small you could probably get 10 in a tennis ball."

The community loved the idea. That very summer, locals donated 550 used tennis balls, each one

transformed into a warm and dry refuge for the park's smallest residents. And the kindness didn't stop there.

More than a decade later, the project has grown, now with a little help from Wimbledon itself. The championship goes through more than 50,000 tennis balls every year, and many now skip the landfill entirely, heading straight to new life as tiny wildlife homes. It's a simple act with a big impact, supporting conservation while reducing waste.

For Wimbledon, it's another meaningful step in its journey toward net-zero emissions by 2030, part of a broader effort to reuse, recycle, and rethink materials. As sustainability manager, Hattie Park shared, "What I try to demonstrate in a holistic way is that there is something that every single one of us can do to be part of the solution to help the environment."

And in the end, that's what this story celebrates: community, creativity, and the collective joy of doing a little good.



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ANSWER



## EATS WITH ELLIE VODKA CREAM PASTA

*A delightful dinner party entree, this flavorful Italian dish promises to warm hearts on wintry nights!*

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp butter
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 shallots, minced
- 1 cup vodka
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 32-oz can crushed tomatoes
- Coarse salt and pepper
- 16 oz penne rigate pasta
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 20 basil leaves, torn

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a large skillet over moderate heat, sauté oil, butter, garlic, and shallots for 3–5 minutes.
2. Add vodka in a steady stream and heat for 2–3 minutes to reduce by half.
3. Add chicken stock and tomatoes, bring to a light boil, then reduce to a simmer.
4. Season with salt and pepper.
5. In a large pot, cook pasta to al dente in salted boiling water while sauce simmers.
6. Stir cream into sauce until it bubbles and remove from heat.
7. Drain pasta, toss with sauce and basil leaves, and serve with sides of your choosing.

Inspired by FoodNetwork.com





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# THE CURE FOR BURNOUT ISN'T ALWAYS A VACATION

We live in a hustle culture, where we're encouraged to push ourselves to our limits: accomplish everything at work, get the kids ready for school and extracurricular activities, and take care of all of our other needs and responsibilities. These unending demands inevitably lead to burnout, which causes us to feel like we *need* a vacation.

But wouldn't it be nice if you enjoyed your life so much that you didn't need to escape? Adjusting your habits, routine, and schedule can make this possible. It starts with your workday.

For many Americans, work is the greatest source of stress and burnout in their lives, but it doesn't have to be. You can change that by adding practices that make your workday more enjoyable. Depending on what your workplace allows, you might try things like taking regular breaks, listening to music you enjoy,

walking throughout the day, and putting work out of your mind when you leave for the day.



When we get caught up in the chaos of everyday life, we often lose sight of what truly matters. Staying present in the moment and focusing on all the good things in life can help turn any sour experience into something sweet. Focus on all your blessings, from your home to your loved ones.

Lastly, be sure to practice self-care and make time for the things you enjoy. Spend time with the people you love, participate in your favorite hobbies and activities, take a nature walk, and add elements to your home that inspire happiness.

If you feel like it's time for a vacation, you may need more than just a change of scenery!