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THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE A GOOD BOOK

HERE'S WHAT I'VE READ RECENTLY

There's little better than finding a good book and getting lost in it. If you think books and reading are not for you, think again! One of the best ways to improve reading skills is to read more about things that interest you. There are books available on every topic and genre imaginable. You just need to find something that aligns with your interests. October is National Book Month, and it presents the perfect opportunity to start a new book or reread one of your favorites.

I've read amazing books lately — one I've nearly finished now is "The Power Broker" by Robert Caro. The book tells the story of Robert Moses, a power broker with incredible influence starting around the Great Depression and lasting until the 1960s. Moses was responsible for creating all the park systems in New York state north of New York City. He was a political guy with noble ideas, but once he gained power, he chucked those ideas out of the window and tried to get what he wanted by any means necessary. It's a great depiction of how power can corrupt. It's an incredibly fascinating read but long at over 1,300 pages.

Another book I'm reading is "The Tiger" by John Vaillant. It tells the story of a man-eating tiger in a far east Russian village murdering people as though it has a vendetta. The story follows a group of trackers as they attempt to hunt down the cunning animal. It's a riveting tale about a battle of wits between these trackers and a smart predator. It almost seems like the tiger has an ulterior motive for killing villagers. This book is even more fascinating because it's based on a true story.

I've also been re-reading books by Christian author Brant Hansen. He's a great writer whom I find profound, yet quite funny. Hansen has had a successful radio show for years and often answers many of his listener's questions with his deep-thinking skills. His writing serves as a great reminder that we all have inherent biases and that we figure people think the same way we do — if they don't, they're wrong, and we're right.

The final book I'll mention has been quite eye-opening. It's called "Recovering the Lost Art of Reading" by Leland Ryken. Over the years, our attention spans have gotten shorter — the only times people read are for work or on social media. Not everyone sits down and really chews through a book once or twice a month. Boredom gives us different ways to look at reality — sometimes we need a break from reality. If you're reading solely for work, reading away from work can feel like a burden. I loved reading before I started law school, but reading case studies all the time felt like eating sawdust without butter. It took some time for me to get back into reading, but books by Stephen King and James Rollins helped reignite my passion.

Nothing has been more critical for me the past 25 years or so as spending the first hour of each day praying, meditating and reading devotionals. It helps me regain focus on who I am and whose I am.

Now that I've shared the books I'm reading, I'd love to hear from you. The next time we speak, let me know some of your favorite books you think are worth reading, and I'll add them to my ever-expanding reading list.

-Jim Monast



CREATE CUTE FALL DECORATIONS

WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK

You don't need high-end and expensive decorations to spice up your house this fall. You can make your own from things you may already have inside, or around, your home! Here are four DIY decorations you and your family can make this month.

Autumn Leaf Mason Jars

All you need are five things — Mason jars, leaves, glue, sponges, and tea lights. You can purchase fake autumn leaves at your local craft store or go outside and pick some of your favorites. After you lay out your jars, apply glue onto the jar and spread it with a sponge. Next, place your leaves onto the jar and let the glue dry. Finally, set a candle inside the jar, giving you beautiful ambient lighting for the season.

Glitter Acorns

Use these glitter acorns anywhere in your home to add a festive feel. Once you have several handfuls of acorns, you can either dip the entire acorn in glue

and then add glitter to it, or you can apply glue to only the top and add glitter for a more rustic look. You can place this decoration in a Mason jar or any clear cup so the glitter of the acorns stands out.

Chalkboard Pumpkins

If you want to create a welcome sign that isn't a rug or a wreath, try a chalkboard pumpkin! All you need are a few pumpkins of various sizes, chalkboard paint, and chalk. Paint your pumpkin with chalkboard paint, and once it dries, you can decorate and write anything you want on it. This idea is festive for the entire fall season since you can write and draw items for any holiday.

Apple Candle Holders

Carve about 1 inch into an apple, making room to place a tea light in the center. Once the candle is secured inside the apple, you'll have an apple-scented candle! Use red and green apples for



a diverse look, and please don't leave candles burning unattended.

Creating your own fall decorations from items you already have in your home, or that you can get outside, is a great way to spend time with your loved ones. So, get crafty this season! The ideas and designs you can create are endless.



CLIENT STORY:

DENNIS PATTEN

Gosh, I've gotten old! I don't often see it day-to-day, even when I look in the mirror at my gray beard — I mean, it's been gray for years now, no doubt starting when I had children! When I realize it, though, is when I look back on just how long I've known some of our clients. Gosh, I've represented some folks since before my kiddos came along!

Dennis Patten is one of your "long-timers." He worked at Honda for 31 years, and I've represented him for 30 of those! Born and raised in Springfield, he's been married to

Deborah for 30 years (so we know Dennis is smart about picking his bride AND his attorney). They have three kiddos and three grandchildren.

His first injury at Honda was in 1992 when he herniated a disc in his lower back. He ultimately returned to work and almost made it over 11 years before twisting his back while pulling a frame working the motorcycle assembly line. This time, he herniated two more discs in his lower back. He was off work for about a year because of this injury and had six months of physical therapy treatments that included spinal decompression.

His radiating pain and numbness/tingling into the leg required ongoing medication. They resulted in some work restrictions, but he soldiered on for another 11 years before rupturing his left rotator cuff and then

developing flow-through problems with his right shoulder.

Finally, after getting enough time in, and with his injuries slowing him down, Dennis said, "No Mas!" and retired a few years back. Although still receiving treatment, he decided to close his claims. Still a car guy, Dennis loves working on hotrods. He and Deborah enjoy traveling to Myrtle Beach and spending time with the grandchildren.

I don't know that either of us figured the time would go by as quickly as it has ... and, other than our dad bods, I think we still look good ... although it may be time for my annual eye exam! Hahaha!

Seriously, I'm thankful for our good friend, Dennis!

CAN SMARTPHONES BOOST OUR MEMORY SKILLS?



Having a smartphone is an essential part of life for many people. We use them to keep in contact with others, keep ourselves entertained, and keep track of important dates and appointments. Many benefits come with using smartphones, but did you know that using a smartphone can actually boost your memory skills?

Scientists once believed that using too much technology could reduce our brain function, but that appears not to be the case. Research published in "Journal of Experimental Psychology: General" found that digital devices help people store and remember important information, which frees up their memory to recall additional, less important things.

During the study, participants aged 18-71 played a memory task on a touchscreen digital tablet or computer. They were shown up to 12 numbered circles on the screen and needed to drag specific circles to the left or the right. They were paid varying amounts depending on how many circles they dragged to the correct spot. One side was considered high-value, and circles correctly dragged to this side were worth 10 times more than the other side.

Participants needed to use their memory for half of the trials and could set reminders on their devices for the other half. Most participants set reminders for the high-value circles. When they did so, their memory for those circles improved by 18%. Their memory also improved by 27% for low-value circles, even though they didn't set reminders for those. When the reminders were taken away, participants remembered the lower-value circles better than the high-value, which showed they had forgotten about the high-value circles they entrusted to their devices.

"We wanted to explore how storing information in a digital device could influence memory abilities," senior author Dr. Sam Gilbert said. "We found that when people were allowed to use an external memory, the device helped them to remember the information they had saved into it."

Smartphones are an incredible blessing in our lives. They can bring benefits we would never have imagined when used properly, including improved memory.

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ANSWER



MUNCHIES WITH MOLLY

SPOOKY SPAGHETTI AND EYEBALLS

Inspired by FavFamilyRecipes.com

INGREDIENTS

- 24 oz frozen meatballs
- 16 oz spaghetti noodles
- 24-oz jar spaghetti sauce
- 2-3 slices of mozzarella cheese
- Sliced black olives

DIRECTIONS

1. Cook frozen meatballs according to package instructions, then keep warm in oven on low heat.
2. In a large pot, bring water to a boil and add spaghetti noodles. Cook until tender and drain.
3. In a small pot, heat spaghetti sauce over medium heat until warm.
4. After everything is cooked, mix noodles and spaghetti sauce together, then put the mixture into a serving bowl.
5. Slice the meatballs in half and mix half of the slices into spaghetti. Top the spaghetti with the remaining meatball slices with the flat sides up.
6. Cut slices of mozzarella cheese into circles and place one slice on each of the flat-topped meatballs. Then, put one black olive over each cheese circle to form the eyeballs. Serve and enjoy!

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TEENAGER SAVES A WOMAN'S LIFE

AFTER TAKING ONE FIRST-AID TRAINING CLASS

It was a typical day at work for 15-year-old McDonald's worker Sydney Raley — she was taking orders, engaging with customers, and delivering food. Everything went as planned for Raley until the unexpected happened.

After handing a woman part of her order, Raley left the drive-thru window to retrieve the rest of her food. But when she returned, something strange happened. "She was coughing like crazy, and I noticed she was gagging ... I immediately knew, 'Oh, no, she's choking,'" Raley told CNN. The woman's daughter freaked out because she felt so scared for her mother. Even some of the McDonald's employees seemed shocked and momentarily unable to take action. Luckily, Raley knew what to do.

She immediately told her colleague to dial 911 as she dove through the drive-thru window to help the choking woman. Besides working at the fast-food chain, Raley was also a babysitter and had taken a first-aid class through the Red Cross. In this class, she learned the Heimlich maneuver, which Raley used to dislodge the chicken nugget the woman had eaten.



Although the woman was in shock after what she endured, she felt grateful for the teen and her act of heroism. Her bravery didn't go unnoticed by Paul Ostergaard either, the owner-operator of the McDonald's where Raley worked. He told CNN, "Sydney truly personifies what it is to be a hero." In addition to this recognition, Raley also received \$100 from a fund first-responders use to reward people who do brave work within the community.

Thank you, Sydney, for showing us that not all heroes wear capes — they are in our community everywhere we go. We encourage everyone to take a first-aid training course, so all of us can become the heroes of tomorrow. Plus, you never know when that knowledge will come in handy.