

## 'ALL OF YOU ON THE GOOD EARTH'

### A MESSAGE OF UNIFICATION FROM THE APOLLO 8 MISSION

In many respects, the United States in 1968 looked much like it does today. City streets were filled with protesters, political opinions were more polarized than ever, we were sending troops overseas to Vietnam, and a pandemic killed over 100,000 Americans. There was a lot of economic, political, and social strife, and, even though I was only 9 years old, I know many people felt the same stress and hopelessness they do today.

However, during that tumultuous year, something incredible happened that, even for just a moment, led people to look away from the problems of our world and focus above: the Apollo 8 Space Flight.

While the men of the Apollo 11 mission wouldn't actually land on the moon until the following year, Apollo 8 was the first manned trip to fly around the moon and back to Earth. Astronauts Frank Borman, William A. Anders, and James A. Lovell Jr. launched from Cape Kennedy on Dec. 21, 1968, with a primary mission to test the latest space travel technology. However, they also took photos of the moon's surface and mapped its landmarks as they flew around it. They were the first people to ever see the dark side of the moon.

While the journey of these three astronauts was nothing less than revolutionary, one moment

sticks out. During their flight, the crew conducted six telecasts that were broadcast back to Earth. I remember listening to at least a few through the black and white television we had in our house growing up. On Christmas Eve, each astronaut aboard Apollo 8 took turns reading the first 10 verses from the book of Genesis in the Bible. How surreal must that have been to look down on what God created while reading the first verses of the creation story!

To close out their Christmas Eve broadcast, they wished everyone listening, "Good night, good luck, a Merry Christmas, and God bless all of you, all of you on the good Earth." What a way to address a nation — and a world — enduring such contention and strife: "All of you on the good Earth."

When I think back to that memorable Christmas Eve, I can't help but hope for something like that to unify us, even if it's just for a few minutes — something to regrow our pride in our nation. I have a strong love for our country. I am an Eagle Scout. My dad served in the Navy, my father-in-law in the Army, and my son in the Marines. I grew up in a patriotic household and in a country where it felt like anyone could get ahead and make something of themselves.



*The Apollo 8 crew, 1968*

I want to get back to that, and I want to get to where we can all come together to realize that goal. And while no one is scheduled to fly around the moon this Christmas Eve, I hope we as a nation, and as a world, can come together in awe of the planet we call home, an appreciation for the people with whom we share it, and awareness of the God who created both.

Merry Christmas, everyone!

*-Jim Monast*

# BE A BETTER LISTENER FOR SOMEONE

## Who Needs to ‘Get It All Out’

It's not always easy to share feelings of frustration, anger, sadness, or other strong emotions — but it's healthy to share them. Sometimes, we need to vent and get it all out. Venting gives us an opportunity to release these emotions, which often leads to mental clarity.

However, when someone comes to you to vent and share their heavy emotional burden, listening can be just as challenging as sharing. You want to be supportive, but you don't want to interfere. Strong feelings and tough situations may be involved. What can you do to be the listener they really need?

It starts with your body language. Open yourself to their emotional needs. Gregorio Billikopf, an interpersonal relationship expert at the University of California, Berkeley says if you begin the

conversation standing, invite the person to have a seat with you.

Another thing you can do as a listener is position yourself below their eye line. This puts the person venting in a more active “storyteller” position and you in a better “listener” position. While in this position, maintain eye contact. It's okay to look down or away occasionally, but try to keep steady eye contact.

Billikopf also notes that, as a listener, it's important to avoid interjecting. Don't offer input, suggestions, or guidance to the person venting until after the person has had the chance to get it all out. “During this venting process, there is still too much pressure for a person to consider other perspectives,” Billikopf says.

While you don't want to interject, you do want to be an active listener. This means you don't want to be completely silent. This is where “reflective listening” comes in. Occasionally repeat what the speaker says — but don't use their exact phrasing. Reword slightly in a sympathetic manner. Don't spin their words or mistakenly interject an opinion, as it may not be the opinion they're interested in hearing. Alternatively, listening cues like “mm” or “hm” and nods are always welcome.

One last thing to keep in mind: You do not need to offer a solution to the person's problem or concerns. They may just be venting to get their negative emotions out, not looking for answers or explanations. If they *are* looking for answers or guidance, wait for them to ask. In the meantime, lend your ear and let them know you're there for them going forward.

### CLIENT STORY JEFF LINK



Jeff and Sharon

Remember the “What can brown do for you?” ad campaign for UPS a few years ago? (*Nerd alert:* These ads were an important part of the plot in the “Dimension Space” trilogy by science fiction author Dean Cole.)

I always thought it a rather odd slogan, but Jeff Link lived it! Jeff is one of several UPS clients we have. He started with them 25 years ago, and he did what the delivery drivers typically do: He got up in

the wee hours of the morning to make sure those big brown box trucks are strategically loaded and that they've mapped out the most efficient delivery route as they travel along highways, city streets, and rural roads. (Did you know they plan their routes to make as many right turns as possible? The logic being that left turns take more time because drivers have to wait at lights, and they can save substantial fuel and increase the number of deliveries by planning right turns.)

In November 2011, while unloading a semi, a heavy metal pipe fell from a stack of packages and hit Jeff in the front of the leg, right on his knee. His lateral and medial menisci were torn, as was his PCL. Most of us have heard of the more common ACL or MCL tears; a PCL (posterior cruciate ligament) tear is less common but can result when the knee is bent backward. It's quite painful and leads to considerable instability.

After his first surgery to repair the tears and lots of therapy, Jeff was given a brace and released to return to work after 10 ½ months. But his problems continued, which is not surprising, as these guys are on their feet a lot, jumping in and out of their trucks to deliver packages.

After working while receiving ongoing treatment, Jeff had his first total knee replacement. After he developed extensive scar tissue, his new knee

wouldn't bend, which led to another surgery. He underwent genicular nerve blocks often and has had a half-dozen or more radiofrequency ablation procedures. He developed a rare reaction to nickel, the metal used in a typical replacement knee joint, which resulted in a revision of his total knee replacement (meaning, they had to do another one). By my count, he's had eight operations already, not counting the numerous injections, blocks, and aspirations (draining of fluid), including two this year.

All this has transpired over several years. He had a functional capacity test earlier this year confirming he can't physically do his UPS job.

Meanwhile, what's brown done for him? Well, they've fought him on treatment, tests, and surgeries. They've contested his workers' compensation benefits. They've sent investigators to see if they could video him doing stuff his doctors say he can't do. They haven't won — he has severe limitations that are obvious. He has a wonderfully supportive wife of 39 years, four children, 10 grandchildren, and neighbors who pitch in to help do the things around the house he can't.

He's a good man, doing his best to cope with something he didn't ask for. We're still in the midst of his claim, but we admire him and wanted you to meet him.

# Some Good News

## MEET THE WORLD'S FIRST NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING DOG

Sharing in the collective win with his humans at the World Food Programme (WFP), Foxtrot the dog became the first-ever canine to win the Nobel Peace Prize earlier this year. After hearing about the win, Foxtrot immediately shared the news with his nearly 7,000 followers on his Instagram account, @humanitarian\_pup.

"Woweee," Foxtrot wrote on his account, expressing his incredible excitement at the honor with a third E. "I was so excited to hear that the [World Food Programme] was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize today."

While a high honor like a Nobel Peace Prize would certainly be the highlight of any lovable pooch's life, it's especially remarkable when you consider Foxtrot's humble beginnings. Before entering a life of fighting to end world hunger at the WFP outpost in Bangladesh, Foxtrot himself was lost and hungry. WFP workers found him on a beach in the densely populated South Asian country while they were



cleaning it up. Unable to find the dog's owners, they took him into their care.

Foxtrot was only 1 month old, and over the past few years, he's fought to end hunger in Bangladesh right alongside his humans. He often "writes" on his Instagram account about the latest efforts the WFP is taking to reach its goal of ending world hunger and shares pictures of what a day in the life of a WFP mascot looks like. In most pictures, he's donning his official WFP doggy cape.

The World Food Programme operates in over 80 countries, using its fleet of helicopters, cargo planes, and boats to drop food into villages destroyed by typhoons and move people out of disaster zones. In Bangladesh, Foxtrot's home base, the organization flattened hillsides to make shelters for Rohingya refugees. Even through the COVID-19 pandemic, the WFP's work has been a bright spot in a world ravaged by war, famine, and climate change. Its Nobel Prize win was well deserved, even for its four-legged mascot.

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ANSWER

## NIBBLES WITH NUG



## NOT YOUR GRANDMA'S FRUITCAKE

Inspired by [SimplyRecipes.com](http://SimplyRecipes.com)

Fruitcake gets a bad rap, but when made correctly, it's delicious! Try this recipe to upend your preconceived dessert notions.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 cup sour cream
- 3 1/2 cups mixed dried fruit of your choice, chopped
- 1 cup nuts of your choice, chopped
- 2 cups all-purpose flour, divided
- 1 stick butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg, room temperature
- Zest of 1 orange
- 1 tsp salt

### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 325 F. Line a 9x5-inch loaf pan with greased baking paper. Ensure the piece running the length of the pan stands 1 inch above each side to form "handles."
2. In a small bowl, mix baking soda and sour cream.
3. In a second bowl, combine fruit, nuts, and 1/4 cup flour.
4. In a third bowl, beat butter and sugar until fluffy. Add egg, zest, and sour cream mixture. Then, add remaining flour and salt. Mix, then add fruit mixture.
5. Pour batter into lined pan. Fill up a separate loaf pan halfway with water. Bake both pans in oven for 1 1/2-2 hours or until a skewer leaves the cake clean.
6. Use "handles" to remove cake from pan and cool completely on a rack before serving.

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# Snow Shoveling Hacks

## HOW TO SPEND LESS TIME CLEARING YOUR DRIVEWAY EVERY WINTER

**E**veryone loves the snow — at least until it settles on the driveway, a barrier between your car and the open road. Shoveling snow off your driveway and walkway can be so tedious that you might be tempted to just hope and pray that the sun melts it all before you have to shovel it — which, of course, almost never happens. However, there are a few tools and methods you can use to clear the snow away that are faster than shoveling for hours on end. Check them out below.

### CREATE A NONSTICK SHOVEL.

Wet, partially melted snow might work well for packing snowballs, but it's a pain to shovel. It has a tendency to stick to the scoop and not let go — unless you spray it with some common household cooking spray. This will make it a lot easier for the snow to slide off your shovel. Just remember to wipe your shovel down afterward!

### MAKE YOUR OWN SALT ALTERNATIVE.

Sometimes you start shoveling, only to find that the snow concealed a layer of ice that you can't scoop up with your shovel. However, if you combine 1 teaspoon of dish soap, 1



tablespoon of rubbing alcohol, and 1/2 gallon of water in a bucket, you can spread the mixture over the ice and melt it away, much like the salt you see on major roadways.

### BE PREEMPTIVE WITH SOME TARPS.

Did you see on the weather forecast that your area is about to get some major snowfall? Throw down some tarps on your walkways and driveway. Then, after the snow stops falling, lift the snow off to the side, and your walkways will be as clear as if it hadn't snowed at all.

### BLOW THE SNOW AWAY.

If you're lucky enough to be clearing your driveway while the snow is still powdery, rev up your leaf blower instead of breaking out your shovel. You'll be able to clear your driveway in a fraction of the time it would take to shovel and dump it off to the sides of your driveway.

With one (or a few) of these methods, you can clear your driveway and enjoy the fun side of snowfall in no time!