

March 15 - April 4, 2024

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Special Feature



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Empowerment...

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Cotton Rowe Companies & Cabinet Express: Making Dreams Into Reality

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Cotton Rowe Companies and Cabinet Express have been longtime friends and customers of *Athens Now*, and it is

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What Makes Ronnie Roll

Against All Odds...
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Clean, Green And Beautiful

Be The Change...
We have a busy spring coming! We have BIG cleanups, the Earth Day Expo, and the Household Hazardous Waste Collection planned...
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Mooreville Montessori Homeschool: Accepting New Families For 2024-2025

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

Many in our community know Joseph and Brandi Harris from All Stitched Together where they taught classes on sewing and other topics, not only for homeschoolers but

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Let It Go

by Steve Leland

“Let go and let God” is a phrase from my past. It’s catchy, simplistic, and really hard to do when you have options. It is a lot easier when you are

out of options, because at that point you don’t have anything that you can do.

Where the rubber met the road for us on this one was when we found that

MANY things from our yard and shop had grown legs and walked away. One person was the sole perpetrator. At first there had been reasons given

for things that had obviously been “borrowed.” But the excuses grew as to why they didn’t come back. Then suddenly all the tools disappeared.

And I mean ALL! To top it off, there was a vehicle that had been lent and was being kept from us.

I am leaving many details out, but a man’s life and family were on the verge of being destroyed. I wouldn’t have given a plugged nickel for the value of his soul at that point. It appeared that he had already given it over to the dark side.

So we prayed. It was a sobering decision that had to be made. Let him walk all over us, or unleash the dogs of the law and watch him get taken down. There didn’t seem to be any middle ground.

In prayer, there came a Word from Yah: “Forgive, and let go.” Now, I have come to a point in my life where forgiveness isn’t that hard. It’s just one decision away. A simple choice. But letting go, that’s a horse of a different color. These are a man’s tools that we are talking about here. Did I let go adequately? Only Yah can judge that, but I know in my heart that I didn’t do it as cleanly as I could have.

Now here is the amazing part. The feller realized the error of his ways and has repented. The tools have been returning, albeit not as fast as I would like. The enemy hasn’t given up and the fight over his soul continues, but the Kingdom of Heaven now has a fighting chance.

Believe me, I’m not a man that gives up on his rights readily. But when Yah illuminates a specific path, it’s best to embrace it.

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Publisher's Point

**“Live Bold Or Die”-
Francesca Cabrini**

In this season where new life is celebrated as it pops up in nature, Passover, and the Resurrection, I would like to commend a cinematic celebration in the form of Angel Studios' most recent release, *Cabrini*. It is a biopic whose titular character is Francesca Xavier Cabrini, the woman who, along with the sisters in the order she founded, were able to open a total of 67 schools, orphanages, and hospitals. Her last project was the Cabrini Hospital in Seattle where I was born and raised, and she died not long after the project was complete.

There are many words one could use to describe Mother Cabrini, and they include doggedly deter-

mined, courageous, and at times a plain ol' pain in the southern forty. She came to New York from Italy in 1899, and set to work. No small task, this. Cabrini had a saying, and it was, *We are bold or we die; that's how I learned to live in America.*

She was frail and she was a lioness. She had a vision for building an “empire of hope” around the world, and by the time she opened Cabrini in Seattle, (which she did not name after herself; that happened in 1925, eight years after her death) she had faced death, disease, and despair, especially amongst immigrant children. She got herself arrested, which caused a scandal in the Catholic Church, and she also had

the blessing of Pope Leo XIII to start her first mission in New York City. Prime real estate came her way, and she enlisted the help of other immigrants who had become successful in this nation that some believed had streets paved in gold.

To say that Cabrini faced resistance is an understatement, and at the time of her arrival, Italian immigrants were largely despised in New York. She allegedly told the mayor that one day an Italian would be mayor, a prophecy that has come true more than once, and one of my favorite stories about her is stated below:

I had an elderly friend whose husband met Mother Cabrini when he was a child in the

early 1900s. He suffered a ruptured appendix and the accompanying peritonitis. This happened decades before antibiotics. As he lay dying in the hospital, Mother Cabrini came into his room. She told him that he would not die, but would grow up to save many lives. He became a cardiologist and did just that.

So, if we are going to talk about underdogs, resistance, and downright hatred, I think it only fitting to mention Angel Studios, who produced *Sound of Freedom*, *The Shift*, and other films that dare to venerate virtue, because they are the ones who have given us *Cabrini*. Visually and in terms of the acting it is stunning, and as I looked at what she faced in order to be able to minister, especially to children, I realized that I had been whining about a whole lot of stuff. Fact is, I needed to pipe down and give my own attitude about having to do hard stuff a huge adjustment. This film is a lovely way to do just that, and I hope you'll see *Cabrini*.

Ali Elizabeth Turner

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Rest In Peace, Seaman Thornton

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Rogersville native and long-time Athens resident Leonel White was born in the early 1950s, with World War II having been won just a few years earlier. The cost and loss to families was still fresh, and one of the people about whom she heard often while growing up was Seaman 2nd Class Cecil H. Thornton. Leonel's mother was close to Cecil in age, and when Pearl Harbor occurred on December 7, 1941, Cecil perished along with 429 others who were serving aboard the USS Oklahoma. His death greatly affected the small town of Rogersville, but no one suffered more than Cecil's mother, Lily. For years, because there was no way of determining categorically if Cecil had died, Lily held forth hope that he would return, and now he has. At the time of his death, Cecil was engaged to be married. His only sibling, his sister Christine married and had children that never got a chance to meet their uncle,



but his nephew, John Belue is present to honor him.

In 2019, the Navy, through the use of DNA profiling was able to locate the remains of Cecil Thornton, and to date, the remains of

355 crew members on the Oklahoma have been identified. On March 11, Cecil Thornton was buried with full military honors in Civitan Cemetery in Rogersville, and sadly could not be buried next to his par-

ents, but was laid to rest near his cousins. Leonel told me about the ceremony, which she attended with her grandsons. She certainly understands the importance of honoring the fallen and teaching her grandsons about the sacrifices that have been made for our freedoms.

Cecil Howard Thornton quit school in the 10th grade, and went to work in the cotton fields. Two years later, before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Cecil joined the US Navy in December of 1939, hoping to have a career with the USN. He died two years later while serving his country,

The following is from a press release prepared by the Department of Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency:

To identify Thornton's remains, scientists from

DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis. Additionally, scientists from the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis.

Thornton's name is recorded in the Courts of the Missing at the Punchbowl, (the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific) along with the others who are missing from WWII. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

It has taken eight decades, perseverance, and improved technology, but Seaman Thornton is home in Alabama where he belongs. And I am glad that the people of North Alabama, including my friends were there to honor him. Rest in peace, Cecil Howard Thornton, and thank you for your service.

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Chaj Rondelle Enterprises, L.L.C: *Private Lending Education And Empowerment*

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

Vincent Anderson has had an impressive and varied professional career, having been everything from a radio broadcaster, a social worker, an educational consultant, a foster parent, an adoptive parent, a member of General Motors' sales and marketing team, a private boarding school assistant principal, and a university professor. He also has his private pilot's license, and loves being in the skies.

I met Vincent a little over two years ago when he became a beloved member of our BNI group, which is known as Limestone Leaders. I can confidently say that all of us in our chapter are so glad he decided to join us as a real estate investment professional, and the purpose of this advertorial is to educate anyone that is interested in the possibilities available with a private lending program. As a seasoned educator, Vincent is excellent at taking complex financial concepts and

making them understandable for the average person who wants to grow their nest egg.

Vincent is married to Joyce, who is a nurse practitioner with well over a half-century of experience. Both have been highly successful in their respective fields, and over the last 30 years have bought and sold several properties. "We picked up rentals along the way, and decided to expand what we were doing and give an opportunity for other people to invest," Vincent told me. Close to four years ago, Vincent became aware of and enrolled in a school of real estate investment that is headed up by two men by the names of Ron La Grand and Jay Conner. Vincent became certified as a "Platinum member" of Jay's private money academy and underwent an intensive education process to both learn how to use it himself and teach others. Since then, he has continued his education in the field so he can better

serve his investors.

What is a "private lending program"? It is a system that educates prospective investors regarding alternative real estate financing. It is legal, fiscally legitimate, somewhat sophisticated, and time tested. That being said, the reason why it is such a boon for everyone involved is that it genuinely serves people who have a desire to get in or out of a property safely, as well as for those who choose to be the investors.

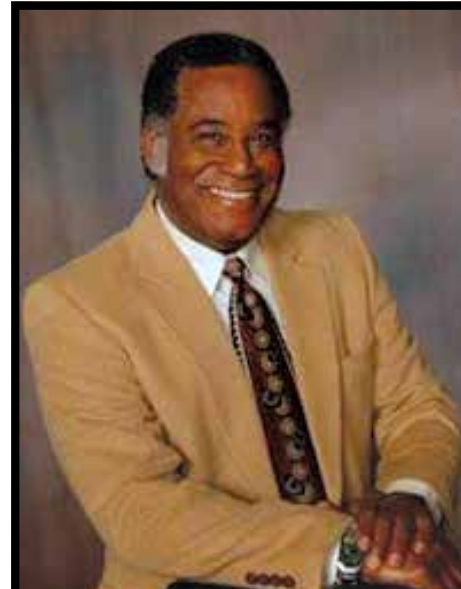
How does it work? Largely it utilizes a self-directed IRA. This allows the investor who actually has the account to be the one that directs the investment, rather than the corporation that issued the IRA in the first place. Vincent described it to me, as someone whose bailiwick is clearly NOT high finance, as follows:

This teaches people to self-direct their IRAs and invest in real estate proper-

ties. There are many people who can invest and don't need to have huge amounts of money in the bank for investments. There are others who have significant investment capital, and the IRA companies don't direct the usage of the funds. When alternative financing is used, the return on investment (ROI) for the investor is 10%, which is paid by Chaj Rondelle Enterprise for as long as we use your money. This is how we are able to leverage a retirement or investment account for the investor. Chaj Rondelle Enterprise uses the funds to make offers on properties for the investor, and sometimes we buy, repair, and sell distressed properties. We can sell them, hold them, and sometimes rent them. We find owners who are willing to use self-financing options. Lease purchase and lease option are the most popular, and they are the simplest.

This approach also makes it possible for a buyer to get into a good property while they are repairing their credit.

I remember the day Vincent came into our BNI group



and with a smile on his face told us that a project that had been retrofitted for senior living with wheelchair access had sold, and he and the investors were getting ready for another project. This is one of several projects that has been completed, and the system of using private funding genuinely works.

Recently I asked Vincent why, if I am going to venture into something like private real estate investing, should I choose Chaj Rondelle? Here is what he told me:

"We make serving our investors the highest priority as well as keeping their money safe while providing an excellent return."

If you are an investor, or are wanting to get in or out of a property and need help to do so, why should you choose Chaj Rondelle Enterprise as a company, and more importantly Vincent Anderson as a person? That's easy. All of their businesses and adventures have one thing in common: they have been born out of a heart to serve. Call Chaj Rondelle Enterprise LLC and Vincent Anderson today to see if this is your next right step. You'll be glad you did.



Chaj Rondelle Enterprises recently remodeled and sold this project located in Hazel Green


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Calendar of Events

Silver Sneakers

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Silver Sneaker classes at the Athens Limestone Public Library are now meeting from 1pm to 1:45pm on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Classes open to all. Equipment is provided. Donations accepted. More info: 256-614-3530 or jhunt9155@gmail.com.

Athens-Limestone County 2024 Home & Garden Show March 15 - 17

Join the Athens-Limestone County Chamber of Commerce and LOCAL vendors. Presented by Impact Roofing. Gold Sponsors: EarthSmart Windows and Doors, Persell Lumber and Mill Shop, Window World and Yellowhammer Roofing Inc. Silver Sponsors: Grayson Carter & Son Contracting, Inc. and Parallel 36 @ Liberty. At Athens State University Gymnasium. \$5 admission, cash only. Kids 12 and under free.

Butterfly Gardening Workshop March 16

10am – 11am. At the Limestone County Extension Office, 1109 W. Market St., Ste. C. Free and open to the public. Presented by Limestone County Master Gardeners, this workshop is about attracting butterflies to your garden. Learn about the flowers that attract butterflies. Learn to recognize some of Limestone Counties' most common butterflies and on which plants they lay their eggs.

VVA Chapter 511 Monthly Meeting April 1

The next monthly meeting of VVA Chapter 511 will be at the Al Veterans Museum, 114 W. Pryor St, Monday, April 1. Dessert

Senior Lunch Matinee Series Third Thursdays Monthly

We are back to full speed with our third Thursday Senior Lunch Matinees and first Saturday Early Dinner Shows, already scheduled through Dec 2023. Public events most often will sell out in advance, welcoming attendees from 17 adjacent counties, and 2 neighboring states. Our Senior Lunch Matinees provide guests with a complete lunch including drink and dessert, and a one hour live show featuring one of our roster of 8 of the best regional oldies groups and performers in rotation throughout the year. E-mail reservations are required in advance for all Lunch Matinees and Early Dinner Shows. web: www.yesterdayevents.com

FB: www.facebook.com/YesterdayEventCenter

only will be served. Members may bring their dinner if desired. Eating begins at 5:30 with meeting at 6.

“If You Plant It – It Will Grow” April 13

10am – 11am. At the Limestone County Extension Office, 1109 W. Market Street, Suite C, Athens. This workshop is about vegetable gardening. Learn how to get the most out of your garden. Find out how to direct sow seeds in the ground. If you are buying plants you will find out how to choose the right plants and how to transplant them. And so much more... Every participant will take home a free vegetable plant. This workshop is free and open to the public, but registration is necessary. Call 256-714-0611 or register online at <https://mastergardeners-limestonecountyalabama.org>

Annual Spring Plant Sale April 20

8am to 4pm. Perennials, annuals, shrubs, and vegetable plants. Silent auction, craft and food vendors, kids table and more. Limestone County Master Gardeners greenhouse behind Athens Middle School, Hwy 31, Athens. More info on Facebook at: Master Gardeners of Limestone County Alabama.

TVA Guided Nature Walk April 20

7:30am. 26979 AL-99, Elkmont, AL. Join TVA's Damien Simbeck to kick off the 2024 Earth Day Expo for a guided nature walk through Marbut's Bend Nature Preserve! Mr. Simbeck is an expert in the native flora and fauna that can be found throughout the trail! Bring your cameras and binoculars, because this trail has it all! Not only is this an easy trail by foot, it is also wheelchair accessible.

2024 North Alabama Canine Expo April 27

11 am-4 pm. Limestone Sheriff's Rodeo Arena. Free! Demonstrations, vendors, food, fun! For info visit daksdogranch.com/North-Alabama-Canine-Expo

Digital Literacy Classes

Athens-Limestone County Public Library will host a series of Digital Literacy Classes in conjunction with Calhoun Community College & Drake State Community & Technical College. Classes will boost your digital confidence & provide you with skills and training needed in today's job market. Courses include: Computer & Internet Basics, Email, Windows OS, & Microsoft Word®. M-W 9:00 – 12:00 or M-W 1:00 – 4:00. Classes start January 24th. Call us at (256) 306-2830 to learn more.

Preparing For The Charging Elephant

by Detri McGhee - Certified Life Underwriter, Chartered Financial Counselor



Remember the feeling when you face a difficult situation or confrontation, and you think of the *perfect comeback*... too late?

A photographer went on safari with the goal of photographing the African savannah elephant so closely he would capture the tiny skin parasites between the folds of skin. The guide warned him repeatedly not to get too close. The elephant is not an aggressive animal unless you venture into his space. Then, he will push back.

The photographer inched closer and closer, all the time the guide warning him he was getting too dangerously close. Finally, the huge bull elephant turned and charged the photographer. With no place to run, no trees to climb, the photographer stood still and tall. At the last moment, he flung his camera aside, grabbed the ivory tusks, and the elephant slammed him to the ground. The force knocked him unconscious for a few moments, but the tusks hit the ground, keeping the elephant from crushing him.

No longer feeling threatened, the elephant turned and walked away. As the guide shook him to, he was also asking "How did you know to do that? That's the most amazing thing I've ever seen! HOW did you know to DO THAT?"

As soon as he could speak, the photographer shared his secret. "I was

prepared for him to charge. You see, I've been charged by bull elephants just like him a thousand times...in my mind."

He anticipated the situation that could arise. He decided what outcome he preferred, and thought through how to accomplish HIS goal, versus letting the others involved decide his fate.

Life is about choices. We all have hundreds of choices we make daily. What we wear, what we eat, where we go, how we respond to others, and much more. Many of those choices don't really affect our lives in measurable ways. Some choices change them forever. Choice. Anticipation. Planning. Thinking.



We have many choices – but we cannot choose the consequences. My goal is to make wise choices so the consequences are more likely to be ones I am pleased with weeks, months and years later.

Principle: Take time to analyze potential problems and consider the

best desired outcome.

Oh, yes. Just a side note about those quick "one-up-them quips": I can only speak for myself, but even worse than cutting my critic to shreds is when I think of the *perfect comeback* that silences them, temporarily puts me above them

in the word battle, and yet almost immediately leaves me ashamed that I let that fly from my mouth. Maybe they did deserve it. Maybe it was sharp – even funny. Maybe it cut them deeply at the moment. But for sure, it ended the confrontation with me looking worse than they did. It left with me causing hurt that, perhaps, was even worse than what they intended for me. And, hurt that cannot be undone. Now, my goal is to hold my tongue when I am angry until I have time to "carry every situation to its logical conclusion." Sometimes a temporary "win" is a permanent loss.

Principle: Keep in mind the first two words of the excuse: "I LOST MY TEMPER!"

Tennessee Valley Spotlight

Mondays at 10am
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What Makes Ronnie Roll

Against All Odds

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Monday, March 11 was a day that was inarguably the proof that spring was going to, in fact, triumph and the symbol of it was in the picture of daffodils that are in Mayor Ronnie's garden. "Look at them!" the mayor exclaimed. "There they are, hidden, and no one can tell that they are going to come back, and every year they do!" I shared his enthusiasm, as each year in the south there is this fight between winter and spring, each dealing the other a significant blow until spring finally triumphs. The thing about daffodils that further intrigues me is that recently I learned they reproduce in two ways -- by planting bulbs, and then they also have the ability to spread through seeds. Not many flowers have two ways of reproducing, and their "work-around" makes them even more a cheery reminder that spring wins, always.

That's why you see "daffs" down in ditches, and in the oddest places. It is thought that one of the reasons is that they were carried in the skirts of settlers and ended

up being planted randomly. Point is, they emerge against all odds.

One of the best examples in our community of things which have made a comeback, have found a workaround, or what ever you want to call it, is that Chili Challenge demonstrated yet another way to build community after COVID. "There was a good turnout, and I am so glad it's back," said the mayor. I forgot to ask him if he remembered his Tums...

"Learn-to-Read had the Spelling Bee," mentioned the mayor. He went on to say that the teams went sixteen rounds, and St. Paul Catholic School finally prevailed. We talked for a while about daylight saving time, and whether it should go the way of the mastodon. When I was a kid, I hardly paid attention, and now that I am older, it takes me a few days to adjust. "We need to get that settled once and for all," said the mayor, and I agreed.

"This weekend is go-



ing to be a busy one, too," said Mayor Ronnie. We talked about the Difference Dash, the 5K benefitting the Athens-Limestone Hospital Foundation, and I told him I would be running in it. The fact that we are going to have a Home & Garden Show is so encouraging after a long hiatus. Saint Patrick's

Day is going to have two celebrations, one on Friday night at the Athens Alehouse, and another on Saint Patrick's Day itself at several participating restaurants in the area, including Salty Cod and Old Black Bear. "Against all odds, spring is springing," chuckled Mayor Ronnie. We

had to brace for a cold snap or two, as always, but winter is definitely going to be in our rear-view mirror in just a few days, and we have much to celebrate in Athens, Alabama. So, there was only one thing to do, and that was give thanks, pray for our country and our town, and then Ronnie had to roll.



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Rightside Way

The Next Greatest Generation

by Phil Williams

assurance.

In the first instance I spoke to a gathering of veterans on a Saturday morning at the Alabama Veterans Museum in downtown Athens. Veterans of all ages were there celebrating their service, standing for our national anthem, and loving their country. A room full of servants and patriots – the salt of the earth. I related the view that we need a military that is so empowering, so inspiring, and so positive in its presence that the next generation will know that they want to be a part of it too. There was no disdain of the younger generation. Not at all. The reaction was absolute agreement. An upheaval of emotion. America believes that the next generation is so vitally important.

That was encouraging moment number one.

The second was a recent performance on stage at the Grammys. Singer/songwriter Tracy Chapman came out of retirement and sang a duet of

her hit song “Fast Car” with a much younger Luke Combs and took the nation by storm. It was one of those “just right” moments. Every note, every lyric was spot on. Not a single person felt the need to say, “Well, she’s black”...or “Well, he’s white”...or lifestyle this, or politics that...they just sang, and it hit all the right notes. It was magical and seemed to move us away from cultural tensions. It was as if today’s generation and the generation before were bridging some cultural gaps together.

That was encouraging moment number two.

Then there was a National Guard recruiting commercial called “The Next Greatest Generation Is Now.” Wow! In a series of action sequences, the ad showed young men and women stepping up to become warriors. It was a series of visuals filled with young Americans doing the hard things -- slogging through the mud, carrying the loads, help-

ing others, working as a team, and earning the right to wear the uniform. It was everything that should be in a recruiting commercial. Even more moving was learning the soldiers and airmen were not actors. They were the real deal. Young troopers who were proud of their nation, their service, and their effort.

That was encouraging moment number three.

Then the kicker occurred this past week at Cal Poly University in California. Conservative influencer Charlie Kirk held an event on the campus which drew hundreds of supporters but also drew the usual detractors. Refusing to be intimidated, the large crowd of college students began to sing an impromptu rendition of “The Star Spangled Banner.” Video shows a crowd of laughing, cheering, young patriots spontaneously singing their national anthem. Kirk posted the video saying, “The kids are all right!...an incredible moment!” Incredible indeed.

That was encouraging moment number four.

I wish that we didn’t have to be reminded. I wish that it would just naturally be assumed the next generation has got this. Most of us who have some years behind us have a sense of ownership, and a pride of authorship. We desire for the USA to be here for another 250 years. We feel like I do because we know that we’ve been a part of building something great. We just want to know that the greatness of America, the joy of living here, the pride in being a God-blessed great nation, is something that won’t stop when our time is up.

And then I saw those four great moments. Unrelated, and yet related. They brought the feeling you get when you know you have no choice but to trust the next person to do the job

that you’ve always done... then you watch them do it... and it actually works.

The voiceover from the National Guard recruiting ad stated “We’ve come of age in a complex world, face to face with problems we didn’t create, so what’s going to happen next? We are. Because our future is the future and the life we have chosen has prepared us for this. So we’re going to build bridges and hospitals in a day, rescue families from disasters, and feed those left in the cold. We will do all of this and more because we have an appointment with destiny. The next greatest generation is now.”

I agree. I believe that the next greatest generation is now. It has to be. We need it to be.

You men and women of the next generation...you guys have got this.

Phil Williams is a former state senator, retired Army colonel and combat veteran, and a practicing attorney. He has served with the leadership of the Alabama Policy Institute and currently hosts the conservative news/talkshow Rightside Radio M-F 2-5 p.m. on multiple channels throughout north Alabama. (WVNN 92.5FM/770AM-Huntsville/Athens; WXJC 101.FM and WYDE 850AM – Birmingham/Cullman) His column appears every Monday in 1819 News. To contact Phil or request him for a speaking engagement go to www.rightsideradio.org. The views and opinions expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of 1819 News. To comment, please send an email with your name and contact information to Commentary@1819News.com.



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Slinkard On Success

Focus On Living

by D. A. Slinkard

D.A. Slinkard would love your feedback. You can contact him at da.slinkard@gmail.com



We are a distracted society, and we see the perilous times happening around us. We have babies, toddlers, children, tweens, teens, young adults, and older adults who are distracted with the likes of technology. In fact, technology has become the primary babysitter throughout our country. It pains me to see the number of people who have their head down because they are watching something on their phone, tablet, or electronic device. I cannot tell you how many times I see little children who are being kept occupied by having an electronic device in front of them, and the moment you take it away, they begin having withdrawal symptoms. We have a distracted society who has an addiction problem with technology.

This article is about overcoming distractions and having the ability to focus on the tasks at hand. For a person to improve their skillset, this is something that can be developed over time, and it is going to require building some habits. I have found some habits that have been helpful to me, and we are going to address these in this article.

First – Set clear goals. This should be a “no brainer” but many people are walking around without a clue of what they want to achieve. They know what they

want to have in the end, but they have no earthly idea on how they will achieve it. When you take the time to write out clear-cut goals, this gives you something to focus on and yes, you must write them out. No more keeping them in your head. It does not truly become a goal until you commit the thought to paper.

Second – Prioritize what needs to be done. When you have a specific goal in mind, you will be able to see exactly what tasks you need to complete to achieve your goal. When you focus on the priority of what needs to be done, it will help you focus further on completing your goals. Again, an elementary concept but many people struggle seeing their goals to completion.

Third – Put away the distractions. It is time to go

to an area where you are not going to be distracted or bothered. Turn off your electronics, not just to “Do not disturb,” but truly turn them off. Find an area where it can be a distraction-free zone and go do the work that needs to be done.

Fourth – Utilize your time. Too many people are distracted because of a poor ability to properly manage their time. If this is you, start in small increments. Set a timer for 15 minutes and work diligently on your task for the entire 15 minutes. Give yourself a small break and continue to build up your time to 45 to 60 minutes. The longer you do this, the better you will become in remaining focused on what needs to be done. I know, I know – 15 minutes sounds super easy to do, but go ahead and try it. See how well

you do going this short amount of time without getting distracted.

Fifth – Reevaluate your efforts. Too often we underestimate how much work will truly be required, and we overestimate our ability to get work done. We need to continuously examine our efforts and give ourselves some constructive feedback. We need to be able to answer what is working well for us, what is not working for us, and what areas we could im-

prove on. When we take the time to reflect on our daily lives, we can build positive habits that will impact our focus.

The trick to all of this is to put everything into practice, and this is not something you are going to conquer overnight. This is going to take repetition, repetition, repetition -- and then after you have done all that repetition, it is still going to require some more repetition. Having the ability to focus is a tough task and we, as a society, have succumbed to it because we have enabled our brains to tell us we can no longer focus on what matters most. We have become addicted to our electronics for the enjoyment they bring.

When you set meaningful goals, plan the work, work the plan, limit your distractions, utilize your time, and self-reflect on what is and is not working – this is where you begin to grow your focus. Everything you want to achieve in life is possible, but you must learn to focus on living life on purpose.

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Clean, Green And Beautiful

Be The Change

by Claire Tribble - Executive Director, Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful

We have a busy spring coming! We have BIG cleanups, the Earth Day Expo, and the Household Hazardous Waste Collection planned. One thing we will need plenty of is volunteers! Wonderful people who give us their time and hard work make Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful (KALB) events successful! We have plenty of opportunities for people to step in and make a HUGE difference in the next couple of months.

Saturday, March 16, is the first big event of the season, pending the weather (April 6 is the rain date). It's the 8th Annual Ardmore Spring Clean hosted by United Pest and Turf Control. This is a great event that is very well planned by everyone at



United Pest and Turf Control! KALB provides all supplies for volunteers, and County Commissioner Daryl Sammet will provide the trailer to hold all of the litter collected. They have everything mapped out allowing things to run smoothly! There will be a complimentary breakfast at registration, and lunch will be provided afterwards! We can not praise United Pest and Turf Control enough for hosting this great event that is such a help to Ardmore.

The next big cleanup is the TVA Trash Attack on Saturday, March 23, from 8 a.m.-noon. This event will be based at Cowford Campground, and we will be working on the campground, Dairy Road, and Hatchett Ridge Road. We will provide breakfast and all supplies at registration. All volunteers will be provided with a thank-you gift courtesy of TVA. County Commissioner Derrick Gatlin will have his crew working to pick up the litter and debris as we fill up the bags! Last year, we removed 7,820 pounds of litter and debris from this area, and unfortunately, there is still plenty to get.

We have partnered again with Athens State University to host the 2024 Earth Day Expo on April 20. The event kicks off that morning at 7:30 a.m. with a guided nature walk through Marbut's Bend led by TVA expert Damien Simbeck. Damien is an expert in the local flora and fauna. The Earth Day Expo begins at 10 a.m. in and around the Athens State University Carter Gymnasium. We will have lots of vendors, educators, crafts, and shows for all ages! We are very excited to have Steve Trash, Rockin' Eco Hero again this year courtesy of Limestone County Water and Sewer Authority, and a SOAP BUBBLE



CIRCUS thanks to a grant from the DEKKO Foundation. We are adding vendors daily! This event is FREE to the public.

Next up is the Joann Christopher Memorial Elk River Cleanup on April 27, from 8 a.m.-noon. We will meet at the Elk River (we are still determining a good base camp and focus area). We will honor the decades of hard work that Mrs. Christopher dedicated to keeping the Elk River clean! We will have a complimentary breakfast at registration, and a free gift for volunteers complimentary of TVA. KALB will provide all supplies for volunteers. County Commissioner LaDon Townsend will be there assisting us as we fill up bags!

The last big event that we have on the books for this spring is the Household Hazardous Waste Collection! This will be the 5th House-

hold Hazardous Waste Collection we have been able to provide courtesy of the Limestone County Commission and the Limestone County Solid Waste Authority. As of right now, we are planning on May 11 from 8 a.m.-noon. As usual, this will be a drive-thru event in the Athens Middle School parking lot. We will be accepting paint, paint products, household chemicals, lawn chemicals, and the old (large back) televisions. As always, this is a free event for Limestone County residents.

We'll be busy, but we hope to see you at our events! If enough people begin to work together, we can make a positive change in Limestone County. With the current rate of growth, we have a lot of work to be done!

KEEP ATHENS-LIMESTONE BEAUTIFUL
2024 SPRING EVENTS

ARDMORE UNITED PEST AND TURF CONTROL SPRING CLEAN
 MARCH 16TH 8AM-12PM-VOLUNTEERS MEET IN THE JONES DRUGS PARKING LOT TO SIGN IN, GET BREAKFAST AND SUPPLIES. RAIN DATE-APRIL 6TH!

TVA TRASH ATTACK-TENNESSEE RIVER
 MARCH 23RD, 8AM-12PM. MEET AT COWFORD CAMPGROUND FOR BREAKFAST, SUPPLIES AND AREA ASSIGNMENTS!

2024 EARTH DAY
 APRIL 20TH-JOIN TVA'S DAMIEN SIMBECK FOR A GUIDED NATURE WALK AT 7:30AM AT MARBUT'S BEND.
 APRIL 20TH, 10AM-3PM-COME SEE US AT ATHENS STATE UNIVERSITY FOR AN AMAZING EARTH DAY CELEBRATION!

JOANN CHRISTOPHER MEMORIAL ELK RIVER CLEANUP
 APRIL 27TH, 8AM-12PM-MEET AT THE ELK RIVER (EXACT LOCATION TBD) AND HONOR JOANN CHRISTOPHER AND HER DECADES OF DEDICATION TO KEEPING THE ELK RIVER CLEAN. BREAKFAST AND SUPPLIES WILL BE PROVIDED.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION
 MAY 11TH, 8AM-12PM. ATHENS MIDDLE SCHOOL PARKING LOT, 400 HWY 81 WE WILL BE ACCEPTING HOUSEHOLD, AUTOMOTIVE, LAWN CHEMICALS, TV'S, PAINT, ETC! THIS IS A FREE DRIVE THRU EVENT.



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www.KALBCares.com



Cooking with Anna

Grateful Or Anxious

by Anna Hamilton

I struggle with anxiety. Well, I guess that struggle is not the right word to use. It is more like I fight anxiety. Struggle is too gentle of word. A struggle sounds like a mild inconvenience. I definitely fight with anxiety.

When I let my guard down and allow anxious thoughts to run rampant in my mind, I can not focus on anything else. Your brain can't be grateful and anxious at the same time. When anxiety takes hold, the best way to fight it is to look for gratitude.

The Bible tells us to not be anxious. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." (Philippians

4:6) The word of God promises you hope and a future. Fear, worry, and anxiety are all weapons of Satan to keep us from trusting in God and walking by faith with Him.

Anxiety is an emotion that can overwhelm and keep you paralyzed. I suffer from really bad knees. Sometimes the mere thought of walking into a grocery store can cause me to suffer from extreme anxiety. What will people think if I walk with a limp? What happens if my legs give way? What if I move too slowly and I am in the way of others? If I ride on an electric scooter, will others think I'm lazy? The anxiety at times has been crippling, even

continued on page 23

Black Bean and Mango Chicken Salad

Ingredients:

1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breast, cooked and chopped

1 can (16 oz.) black beans, rinsed and drained

1 pkg. (10 oz.) frozen corn, thawed

1 cup mango, chopped

½ cup red pepper, chopped

1/3 cup red onion, chopped

1/3 fresh cilantro, chopped

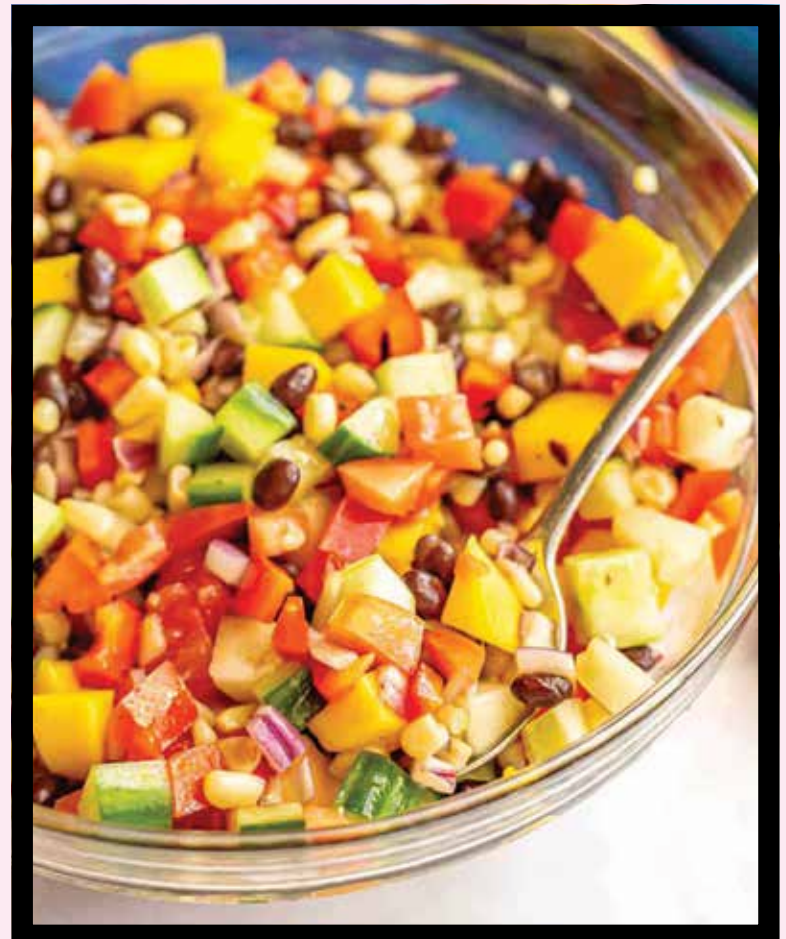
¼ cup lime juice

1 envelope Italian dressing seasoning mix

Salt and pepper to taste

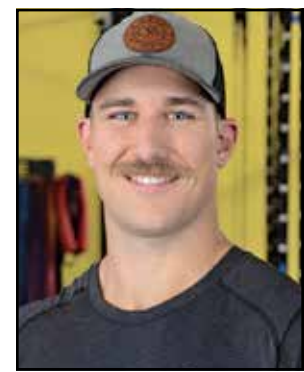
Directions:

Mix all ingredients in a large bowl. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before serving. Stores great in the refrigerator.



The Key to Thriving as You Age

by Nick Niedzwiecki - Owner, CrossFit Athens



As we journey through life, the importance of maintaining our health and fitness becomes increasingly evident, particularly as we age. While traditional forms of exercise offer numerous benefits, CrossFit emerges as a holistic approach uniquely suited to address the physical and mental challenges of aging. Far from being a trend reserved for the young and athletic, CrossFit holds immense potential for individuals of all ages, offering a pathway to vibrant health, functional fitness, and enhanced quality of life well into our golden years.

CrossFit's appeal lies in its comprehensive approach to fitness, which combines elements of strength training, cardiovascular conditioning, agility, balance, and flexibility into dynamic, high-intensity workouts. This multifaceted approach addresses the diverse needs of aging bodies, helping to counteract the effects of sarcopenia (age-related muscle loss), osteoporosis, declining cardiovascular health, and decreased mobility—all common concerns associated with advancing age.

One of the primary benefits of CrossFit for older adults is its focus on func-

tional movements that mimic activities of daily living. As we age, maintaining independence and mobility become paramount, and CrossFit's emphasis on movements like squats, lunges, pushing, pulling, and lifting promotes strength, stability, and flexibility in the muscles and joints essential for performing everyday tasks with ease and confidence.

Moreover, CrossFit's emphasis on intensity and variety ensures that workouts remain challenging and engaging, preventing boredom and plateauing while continually stimu-

lating physical adaptation and improvement. This adaptability is particularly beneficial for older adults, as it allows for workouts to be scaled to accommodate individual fitness levels, mobility limitations, and any pre-existing health conditions, ensuring that everyone can participate safely and effectively.

Furthermore, CrossFit's community-oriented approach fosters a supportive and inclusive environment where individuals of all ages and abilities come together to pursue their fitness goals. This sense of camaraderie and shared purpose is especially valuable for older adults, as it provides social connection, accountability, and motivation—key factors in sustaining long-term adherence to an exercise regimen.

From a physiological standpoint, CrossFit offers numerous benefits that are especially relevant to aging adults. High-intensity interval training (HIIT), a cornerstone of CrossFit workouts, has been shown to improve cardiovascular health, boost metabolism, and increase insulin sensitivity—all factors that become increasingly important as we age and seek to maintain optimal health and prevent chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and metabolic syndrome.

Additionally, CrossFit's emphasis on strength training is particularly beneficial for older adults, as it helps to counteract age-related muscle loss, improve bone density,

and enhance overall functional capacity. Research has shown that regular strength training can reduce the risk of falls and fractures, improve balance and coordination, and enhance activities of daily living, allowing older adults to maintain their independence and quality of life.

Furthermore, CrossFit's focus on constantly varied, functional movements challenges not only the body but also the mind, promoting cognitive function and mental acuity—a crucial consideration as we seek to preserve cognitive health and reduce the risk of age-related cognitive decline and dementia.

In conclusion, CrossFit offers a compelling solution to the challenges of aging, providing a holistic approach to fitness that addresses the diverse needs of older adults while fostering a sense of community, camaraderie, and shared purpose. By embracing CrossFit, older adults can unlock the keys to vibrant health, functional fitness, and enhanced quality of life, enabling them to thrive and flourish as they age gracefully. So, whether you're in your 50s, 60s, 70s, or beyond, it's never too late to reap the benefits of CrossFit and embark on a journey to a healthier, happier, and more fulfilling life.

It's never too late to work on your health and fitness, so give CrossFit Athens a call and let's get started living your new life! 256-777-8275.

CROSSFIT ATHENS

CLASS TIMES:

MONDAY - THURSDAY:
5AM, 630AM, 830AM, 430PM, 6PM

FRIDAY:
5AM, 630AM, 830AM, 430PM

SATURDAY:
830AM

CROSSFIT ATHENS

Cotton Rowe Companies & Cabinet Express: Making Dreams Into Reality

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

our great joy to announce that they are going to be part of the “rebirth” of the 2024 Home & Garden Show. This most welcomed event is taking place this weekend on March 15 through March 17, in the Athens State University Gym. Cotton Rowe is owned by Keith Rowe and his family, and recently Keith hired Mike Brazier and Lito Delmo to help both entities manage the grow spurt we are experiencing in Athens-Limestone County.

Mike and Lito have a wealth of experience in helping businesses to grow that have been as varied as the Chamber of Commerce in Huntsville and Kansas City, a family-owned heavy-trucking company, a health club, residential and employment services for the developmentally challenged, and back in the day, dial-up internet service. Both Lito and Mike, along with their families were able to help care for their aging parents before they passed, and that commitment to honor and serve people is wonderfully obvious when you talk to them.

Mike is president of Cotton Rowe Companies, and Lito is vice-president of sales, and while to some executives titles are important, what really matters to both of them is serving people well and being men of faith and their word. They mentioned recently on my radio program how much



Mike Brazier, President

they are looking forward to the Home & Garden show, and especially to help make dreams come true for homeowners. Mike told the story of how a couple had come in to Cabinet Express recently and were not exactly sure what they wanted to do for their home. By asking questions, it became apparent that they had been dreaming of a major remodel for ages, and now they had found a company they could trust who would do an outstanding job for a fair price. Mike told of the deep sense of satisfaction he felt when he heard the couple comment that their dreams were finally going to be able to come true.

Cotton Rowe and Cabinet Express state that their core values are as follows:

- **Reliability:** Consistently delivering on promises, timelines, and exceeding expectations for peace of mind.
- **Versatility:** Whether it's a minor renovation or a grand custom build, your unique vision for your

home is our priority, no matter the scale.

- **Excellence:** Setting the standard for unparalleled quality, service, and customer satisfaction in every project undertaken.

They also have a commitment to customer service that Mike and Lito emphasized throughout our interview. Officially, here is the stated difference of the Cotton Rowe Companies:

We place you, the client, at the heart of everything we do. Customer service isn't just a department; it's a philosophy we live by. Our process ensures that you are well-informed and engaged throughout the project. Your satisfaction is at the forefront of everything we do.

Why should you choose Cotton Rowe & Cabinet Express?

We are your trusted partner in transforming your dream home into a reality. We're your allies in creating your

CABINET EXPRESS



Lito Delmo, VP of Sales

ideal living space. We offer total home renovations, remodels and custom home builds. We do indoor and outdoor remodeling, room additions, add-ons and custom home builds. Cabinet Express creates spaces that are both functional and stunning. They have an extensive selection of cabinets and more.

Mike and Lito are clear about the fact that Cotton Rowe & Cabinet Express are not the cheapest, as well as their commitment that their “customer service is unmatched.” They are fierce about educating and protecting both potential and actual clients. One of the things they plan on doing is providing educational opportunities for people who need to know what to look for, and perhaps more importantly, what to avoid when choosing a home builder or a remodel specialist. Sign-ups will be available at their booth at the Home & Garden Show, and there will be other promotions

announced all weekend.

“We want customers to be heard and feel heard,” said Mike. He continued by saying, “I want to be a blessing; I want people to be comfortable and to know that there are people out there who truly want to help.

For his part, Lito’s vision is to “bring wisdom and strength” to both companies, streamline and digitize some of the operations, and solve problems. Most importantly, he said, “We will keep loving and serving people.” If this level of customer care is what you are seeking, then stop by the 2024 Home & Garden Show, meet Mike and Lito, and see if Cotton Rowe & Cabinet Express can “transform your dream into reality.”

Cotton Rowe Companies & Cabinet Express

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Travel Tips - Part 1

by Stephanie Reynolds, Athens-Limestone Tourism Association



“Can’t you just come now, and your wife can follow when she has the baby?”

“You’re not married, are you?”

“No, sir.”

“No, I can’t. We’ll be there in July”

And so it went. A couple of months later, Ashton, me, our 3-year-old daughter, our 6-week-old son, a dog, and two cats made the long drive from Florida, up the ALCAN, to North Pole, Alaska, to begin our new adventure.

Traveling with a 3-year-old and a newborn was actually incredibly easy. It was also easy when we traveled when they were school age and teens. It’s all about planning and a few tricks. With spring break coming up, I thought I would share some:

1. Plan your trip - Young kids and older people might not be able to handle the cold, heat, or weather of your destination as easily. An Orlando trip in July might sound like fun, but

if you are from a drier, cooler climate, Florida in July can be a real comfort and health challenge. It can actually be dangerous. And nothing prepares you for the massive quantities of water (and oxygen!) one needs when you go from humid lowlands to the Rockies.

2. Manage expectations - Ask each member of the group what the one thing is they really want to do -- what is the ONE THING that person really wants. Then see if it is possible. If not, ask them for their next best thing. This prevents disappointment if someone (perhaps a young girl who had never been to the beach before and was very excited) didn’t realize that “going to the beach” in the winter in the Pacific Northwest is very, very, VERY different than any “going to the beach” commercials she saw on TV.

Let everyone have at least one “favorite” event, food, activity. Celebrate every “one thing” to make the trip extra memorable.



3. Make an itinerary - Now, I am an explorer. I’m the one who wants to see where the road, the path, the creek leads. However, it really is best to save that adventure for when you aren’t traveling with young kids or people who are stressed by changes in plan. There will be enough “new” to satisfy the explorer, and a schedule will give a sense of security which allows the cautious to enjoy themselves.

4. Make driving days short - The reason the long drive up the ALCAN (Alaska-Canadian Highway) was so easy was that we never drove longer than 6 hours. Yes, we were eager to get to where we were going, but Ashton was smart enough to recognize the limitations of a 3-year-old and a newborn. Short drives with lots of breaks makes for a pleasant, if longer, trip.

5. Have wrapped AM and PM gifts - This is something my mom always did for us. She would get little presents labeled “AM” (open in the morning) and “PM” (open literally 1 second after the clock struck noon). This was especially helpful on multi-day car trips through Texas. Very inexpensive for her and made us so happy! Unwrapping presents on the way to adventure is so much fun!

6. Drive early, stop early - If you need to drive for a long day, consider starting it early in the morning, even before sunrise. Make a nest of blankets and pillows in the back for the kids, get some coffee for the adults, and let the kids finish their sleep in the car. That makes for a peace-

ful, quiet morning. As a kid, I loved waking up in the car to realize that we already had 3 hours under our belt!

7. Probably my favorite “Long road trip with lots of stuff” tip - Pack by day, not by person. For multi-day trips, pack ONE full set of clothing and pajamas for each person all in the same bag—small duffels are great for this. Put a big piece of tape on the duffel that says what day it’s for (Monday, Tuesday, etc.).

Then pack a separate, actual suitcase for items you need every day (makeup, toiletries, diapers, slippers, charging cables, etc.). That way when you get to the hotel, you are only taking 2 bags in: the daily duffel and the suitcase.

Why take a duffel AND a suitcase? It makes it easy to tell at a glance which bags to take in that night at the hotel and what to put back in the “daily items” bag when you are packing in the morning.

What is YOUR favorite tip for traveling either with or without children? Feel free to call or email me, and I’ll try to include them in a future article!



Mooreville Montessori Homeschool: *Accepting New Families For 2024-2025*

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

for adults. When COVID hit and so many families were thrown into homeschooling for the first time, the Harrises stepped up to help their neighbors. Their homeschool went from a little classroom at the back of All Stitched Together to a large homeschooling family, both in person and online. The Harrises began to offer free tutoring services for students enrolled in other schooling programs and free mentoring to parents who wanted to begin their own homeschooling journey. They also worked with a small group of families on-site in a homeschool collective where parents and students met a few days each week.

The Harrises have transformed their learning space and four acres into a Montessori classroom and community called **Mooreville Montessori**. In 2023, Mrs. Harris completed her 9-12 years Montessori training and expanded their classroom. In addition to their 900-square-foot classroom space full of authentic Montessori materials, **Mooreville Montessori** has a year-round creek, animals, and a large garden area. The children in their

program learn about life cycles from the care and raising of animals such as chickens, exploring the creek area to observe animals such as crayfish, and from participating in growing small crops such as mammoth strawberries. Their mission statement reads:

Our mission is to create lifelong learners who have the confidence to learn new things and become independent well-rounded adults. As Maria Montessori put it, "Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavor always to keep burning within him a light which is called the intelligence." At Mooreville Montessori, we strive to create a learning experience that fosters the children's self-esteem, encourages awe in God's world around them, and fosters a lifelong love of learning.

How is **Mooreville Montessori** unique? Some of their approach stems from the kinds of values and educational philosophies that were mainstream nearly a century ago. Students and teachers practice "grace and courtesy" in the classroom. Students create journals for each subject, a kind of scrapbook that documents their learning and

work. They are introduced to handicrafts, such as woodworking and sewing, and complete group projects. They are given the freedom to design learning experiences, plan and complete projects, and use hands on materials for accomplishing their educational goals.

At **Mooreville Montessori**, all learning begins with hands-on, tangible materials that engage concentration. All material has a specific learning purpose and is introduced as the child reaches the sensitive period for that learning material. Each concept has a three-period lesson that begins with the teacher demonstrating the materials or concept, followed by a second period where the child practices uninterrupted for as many days or sessions as he or she likes, and a third period in which the child demonstrates mastery back to the teacher. **Mooreville Montessori** does not grade elementary children on their work, but instead focuses on progress and mastery for intrinsic value versus external reward. Progress is tracked by the guide, but control over correction is given to the child in the form of materials that point out errors as the child works with them. The Harrises say this has raised a few eyebrows over the years but is one of the most important parts of their program in terms of fostering self-esteem and independence. Once a child moves into the 12-18-year-old program, he or she moves from more independent work into group work during class time. Students have a weekly meeting to discuss learning objectives for the week and then work with their peers and guide to complete those learning objectives.

Mooreville Montessori of-



fers a drop-off program for ages 6 through high school, monthly family field trips, and family-oriented events. Parent volunteering is welcome but not required. They also host classroom parties during the school year and work closely in keeping parents involved in their child's progress.

Mooreville Montessori is in East Limestone near Highway 72 and Mooreville Rd. They are hosting prospective family meetings through March 23 for families interested in joining their homeschool community. The 2024-2025 program is a full 3-day-per-week program held Monday-Wednesday. The cost is \$325 per month for elementary aged children. There is a discount for multiple children and a tuition cap for families with four or more children. The deadline for regular registration is April

1, 2024.

Private tutoring is available for students who are enrolled in other programs or in public school. Tutoring is available this school year and is scheduled online at www.moorevillemontessori.com.

Open House Events There will be two open house/parent interest meetings held on Friday, March 15 at 6 p.m., as well as on Saturday, March 23 at 3 p.m. Online registration is required. In addition, families must complete an online application, and the application fee is \$125.00 per family.

To attend a 2024-2025 parent interest meeting, please visit:
www.moorevillemontessori.com.
Email: moorevillemontessori@gmail.com



Leadership Equilibrium: *The Art Of Balancing Hope And Realism In Leadership*

by Eric Betts, Assistant Professor | Course Developer, Hampton University School of Religion



In the quest for fostering an environment conducive to progress and success, leaders often traverse a tightrope walk between nurturing aspirations and assessing the stark landscapes of reality. The nuanced capability to harmonize hope with realistic anticipation is a hallmark of remarkable leadership. The essence of this balance, navigating through the philosophical underpinnings of optimism and the rigorous scrutiny of pragmatism, is important to explore.

Discerning Realism from Pessimism

The axis of realistic leadership is grounded in the objective analysis of circumstances, tempered by experience and empirical evidence. An astute leader distinguishes between being realistic, which is the recognition of limitations and challenges, versus succumbing to pessimism—an unduly negative outlook that undermines potential and morale. While realism anchors expectations, it should not encumber the visionary aspect of leadership that propels teams towards pursuing excellence.

The Synergy of Hope and Realism

Hope serves as the beacon that guides teams through adversity, instilling belief in the collective capacity to achieve lofty objectives. It fuels perseverance and kindles passion, charting a course for in-

novation and unwavering pursuit. A perceptive leader appreciates the indispensability of hope as a motivational tool while conscientiously aligning it with calculable outcomes. This synergy galvanizes the workforce, fostering a culture where pragmatic approaches and optimistic aspirations are not mutually exclusive but rather interdependent.

Overcoming the Hurdles of Overthinking

Careful scrutiny and meticulous deliberations are inherent to the decision-making processes within leadership; however, an excessive fixation on the intricacies can be counterproductive. Overthinking can precipitate a paralyzing effect where the focus shifts predominantly towards impediments. Astute leaders adeptly circumvent this impediment by advocating proactive problem-solving and adaptability. By emphasizing what can be cultivated from present resources and potentialities, they steer clear of the quagmire of over analysis.

Confronting the Apprehensions Surrounding Hope

The trepidation that unabridged hope could culminate in disillusionment is not unfounded. Leaders must tread cautiously to ensure that the hopes they engender are interlaced with tangible plans and structured pathways to attain them. This necessitates transparent communication, setting forth

achievable milestones, and conveying a coherent strategy that conveys sincerity and forethought.

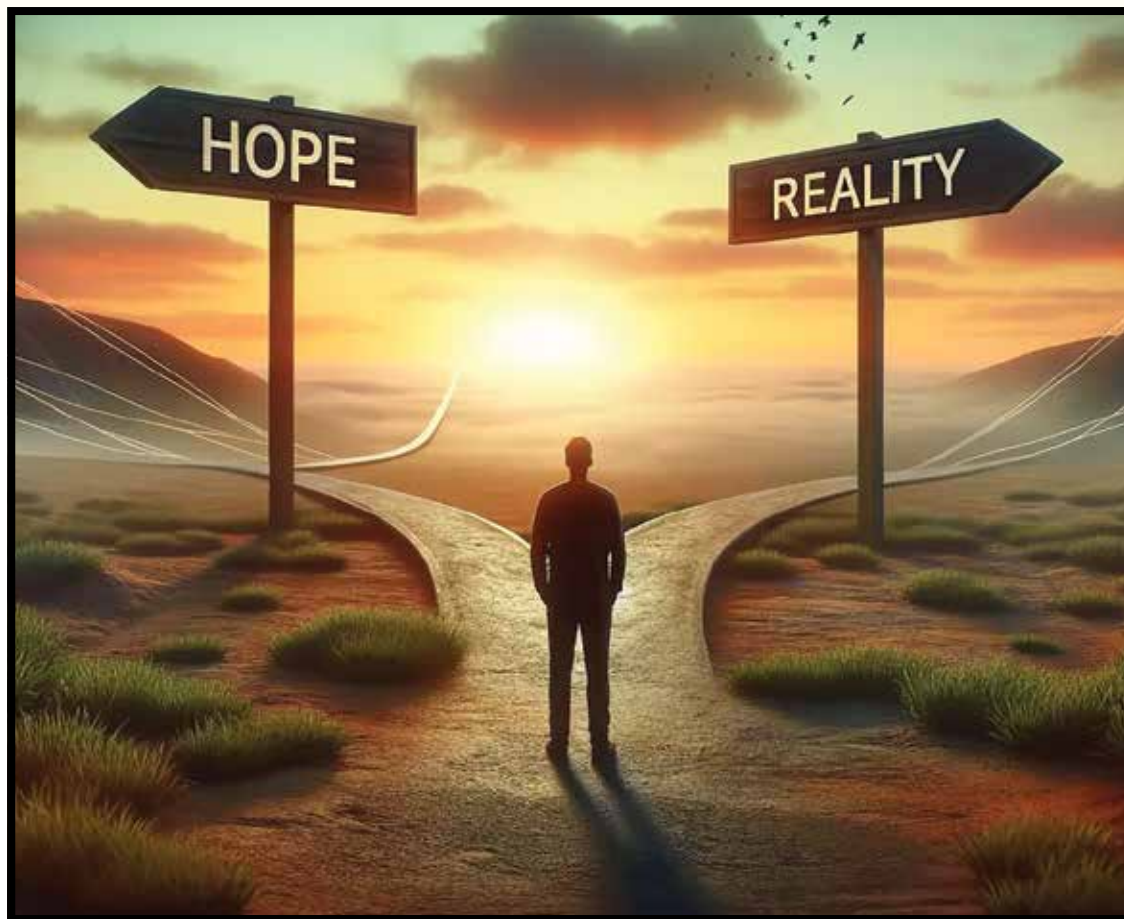
Envisioning the Pathway to Equilibrium

The convergence of hope and realism is most commendably manifested when leaders exhibit an uncanny prowess in strategic foresight—where every step is a calculated move that contemplates probable outcomes without extinguishing the embers of ambition. To reach this equilibrium, one must also recognize the inherent value of collective input and diverse perspectives. It is the amalgamation of the team's innovative spirit and the grounded directives of the leader that fortifies an organization's trajectory towards its pin-

nacle.

In conclusion, the symbiotic balance of hope and realism in leadership is not serendipitous but rather the product of a deliberate and conscientious approach. It is a paradigm where transparency, wisdom, and enthusiasm coalesce to form an actionable ethos. Leaders are entrusted with the formidable task of piloting their teams through the ebb and flow of challenges, armed with an unwavering resolve and a calculated roadmap towards breakthroughs and triumphs. The pursuit of transformation into a pragmatically hopeful leader is an endeavor that holds boundless value for the modern organization. Such leaders serve not only as beacons of inspiration but

also as architects of feasible, forward-looking plans that ground their vision in realistic expectations and achievable outcomes. They embody the rare combination of optimism and practicality, which instills a sense of trust and credibility among their teams. This balanced leadership style enables organizations to maneuver through uncertainties with agility and confidence, ensuring that ambitions are met with effective strategies and collaborative efforts. In doing so, pragmatically hopeful leaders lay the foundation for sustained growth and success, making their development an essential investment for any entity aspiring to thrive in the complexities of today's business landscape.



The View From The Bridge

Sometimes You Have To Bring Your Own Chair!

by Jackie Warner

Career Development Facilitator
"Impact, Engage, Grow" Community Matters



Who will speak for you when you are not in the room? I pray we all have some champions and spon-

sors out there who advocate for others. If you have a seat at the table, then don't just sit! Leverage

it for the good of all. There are many "holding" a seat at the table, bringing little if any value. Having the

seat means recognizing that it comes with purpose and responsibilities. Your seat at the table is a place of influence and power for those not in the room; take it seriously.

Let's flip it to those who have the opportunity to invite participants to the table: choose wisely. Selections must come with intentional inclusion for real progress instead of group think.

Speak up!

1. Give voice to those who need it
2. Promote inclusion

3. Be present, listen to learn, and then share

4. Get up and out of the seat — to take action

5. Move over to make room for others

6. Debate and question when necessary

Until Next Time, Be Sincere, Kind and Intentional

Jackie Warner, Community Outreach Specialist

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Timing

by Deb Kitchenmaster

During a twenty-four hour frame of time, how many times do you ask or are asked, "What time is it?" We gauge our choices and decisions on the time it is, the time we have, the estimated time it will take to accomplish something, or whether we want to put our time toward something or someone.

Yogi Berra is known for a quote he made about timing. "You don't have to swing hard to hit a home run. If you got the timing, it'll go."

This baseball principle applies to horsemanship as well. If we get 'timing' with our horse (groundwork or in the saddle) we will score with our horse, and that is what we want. Here are a few pointers to clarify and encourage you with timing.

Simply, it starts with something you cannot buy or pay someone to give you. It starts IN YOU. In understanding the instinctual behavior of equines, you enter a zone where YOU notice, YOU observe, YOU become aware. This equine awakening comes from understanding the horse wants a sense of safety. Always! The horse responds to pressure to get back into that safety zone. For horses to learn as fast as possible, the release of the cue (or the application of pressure) must come within 3 seconds of the horse's behavior. If the horse benefits from the release of pressure immediately, he will try for a release in the new position again. This timing comes from an understanding of equines and an awareness



of that specific horse, not a program -- a connection between human and horse, that you are personally in that 3-second communication zone with THAT specific horse.

Horses learn quickly. In the wild, they learn to read the environment and react in ways that will save

their lives. In the power of awareness, horses know if a sound or object is dangerous or safe to ignore. Horses read situations in a moment and immediately know how to respond. An example would be horses grazing peacefully in the grassland aware a lion is nearby and horses on the run from a lion. They know if the lion is hungry or not. They know if they are safe in the lion's presence.

Meadow Run Annie, a chestnut Morgan mare, was ten years old when we got her. I only met one handler and heard her story regarding this mare. Annie was an alpha horse and she had little RESPECT for humans. Yep, there's a story here. HERS!

A group of women from a community 85 miles away had scheduled a round-pen session that day. This is where a horse and I are inside the round pen and the humans are outside the round-pen listening and watching. I have a headset on, speakers are on, rope in my right hand, and the horse is simply a horse --



no equipment, not even a halter.

School was delayed 2 hours because of the heavy fog this day. The phone call let me know the women were coming but might be a few minutes late. Annie and I were ready for them when they arrived on this gloomy, foggy day. That day we were going to give our attention to RESPECT. Annie was circling clockwise and counterclockwise in the round pen under my promptings. One thing I wanted from Annie was that when I asked her to change direction, she would choose to turn and face me in the change and not turn away from me, giving me her butt. Again and again and again; butt, butt, and butt. I wanted face. The gals were rooting for Annie. Annie was having a challenging time trying to figure out what this human was asking. Then it happened. For the first time, in transition, she faced me; and when she did, the sun burst through the clouds! (Literally) A horse broke through some fear and hope and joy broke through to humans.

Psalms 27:8 When you said, "Seek My face (in prayer, require My presence as your greatest need)," my heart said to you, "Your face, O LORD, I will seek (on the authority of your word)."

Your NEIGHbor,
Deb Kitchenmaster

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Space For What's Important: *Navigate A Neater Car*

by Sonya Fehér



Get on the road to organization by decluttering and organizing your vehicle. Organizing your car is a great project to give you a quick win, a much more functional space, and to build your organizing muscles for tackling bigger projects.

The first crucial step in organizing your car is to completely empty it. While it might seem tempting to skip this step, things just don't get organized when you're looking at one thing at a time and trying to declutter and rearrange. Clearing your car enables you to organize based on how much space you need and where you actually need those particular things.

When you're removing items from the car, put them in category piles so that you can see all you have of each type of thing. Being able to assess one category at a time makes it easier to let go of items when you see you have more than enough and helps you plan the storage needed for each category.

Car categories might include:

- **Glove compartment items** including owner's manual, proof of insurance, tire pressure gauge, car repair receipts, and a flashlight.

- **Vehicle maintenance and emergency supplies** including jumper cables, tire jacks, flares, first aid kits, etc.

- **Electronic devices** might include charging cables, phone mounts,

adaptors, media players, and the like.

- **Entertainment on-the-go** with magazines, books, and games for passengers.

- **Personal care items** including tissue, hand sanitizer, lotion, makeup, wet wipes, or medicine.

- **Reusable grocery and other shopping bags.**

- **Car kitchen items** napkins, plasticware, salt and ketchup packets, and more.

- **Work-related materials** like a laptop, files, or tools.

- **Kids' items** might include toys, coloring books, snacks, and on-the-go items.

- **Activity bags** for the gym, pool, sports, hobbies, playgroups, or other grouped items that you need outside of the house.

- **Pet supplies** including a leash, water bowl, waste bags, and toys.

- **Comfort items** like lumbar support pillows or a blanket.

- **Outdoor provisions** with umbrella, sunglasses, a hat, gloves, or other clothing.

- **Anything specific to you or your lifestyle.**

Beyond items you actually want to carry in your vehicle, you may find all sorts of things you've left there but don't want to make space for. These might include trash, packaging, toys, store returns, and so very many things. Trash them, do-

nate them, or put them where they actually live in your house or garage, or otherwise return them to the people and places they go.

Taking everything out of your vehicle offers an excellent opportunity to clean it thoroughly. Whether you choose to do it yourself or have it professionally detailed, vacuuming the upholstery, cleaning the floor mats, and wiping down the doors and dashboard are much easier when the car is empty

With the items that you want to put back in the car, think about who

needs to reach them and where. Use the built-in car storage including pockets in the doors and behind the seats, glove compartment, middle consoles, and more. You might also choose to add storage solutions like bins, trunk organizers, a car trash can, and other containers that will help you keep everything tidy and easily accessible.

To maintain a clutter-free car, make it a habit to regularly take things inside your home, conduct daily or weekly cleanouts, and schedule seasonal organizing ses-

sions as recurring appointments on your calendar.

Have a burning question about organizing your space, managing your time, or streamlining any other aspect of your life? Send it to sonya@spacewiseorganizing.com for a chance to have it featured in a future column! Your inquiries help shape the content, so don't hesitate to reach out."

Sonya Fehér

Organizer, Coach, Author, & Speaker

<https://spacewiseorganizing.com>



The Alternative Approach

Let's Talk Mangosteen

by Roy Williams



A few years ago, a wonderful product came out called Xango. It was a liquid that was derived from the fruit of the mangosteen tree that contained some very powerful, health-enhancing nutrients. The fruit juice tastes great and truly changed people's lives based on medical reports. For about five years, Xango was a huge seller at Herbs & More in Athens and at NHC Herb Shop in Killen because of the wonderful benefits people experienced.

For some reason, the company that manufactured Xango went out of business. Over the last few years, many people have asked about it, so we did our research and located the source of the fruit and the processing plant that made the juice. We found out that the health-enhancing benefits that made this particular fruit juice so effective was that they used the fruit and the peel, which contained some amazing anti-oxidants and anti-inflammatories called xanthones.

It took a while to formulate a capsule that

would deliver the same nutrients as the juice. The result is a product that not only meets all the nutrient values that was in the juice, but we enhanced it with many other synergistic qualities. We decided to call it **Mangosteen Supreme**, because it is far superior to the benefits derived from the juice alone. Each bottle is a two-month supply when taken as suggested and is even more affordable than the juice was.

In a few months, it became the go-to product for the people who could no longer get the juice. Amazingly, those same people who loved the juice began to let us know that the capsules gave them the same results and, in many cases, even greater benefits. My favorite was those who sent us their medical reports comparing their blood tests showing lower cholesterol, lower blood pressure, and lower CRP levels, which proves that it lowers inflammation and pain. So many other results came in that **Mangosteen Supreme** has become one



of our fastest growing products. You don't have to take my word for it though. Read about what doctors are saying.

According to J. Frederic Templeman, M.D., "Studies are showing that xanthones have positive effects on nearly all the body's systems. From increased energy to protection from free radical damage, and decreased inflammation, xanthones have a wide range of medical benefits." Dr. Templeman has been using this remarkable, all-natural product in his practice for years with some very amazing results.

Les Berenson, M.D. adds, "We're now aware of many diseases where inflammation is the central component: cancer, Alzheimer's, heart disease, diabetes, allergies, asthma, arthritis, autoimmune disorders, Lou Gehrig's disease, Parkinson's disease, and many others...The traditional approach to treating inflammation and pain is

with anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen or Naprosyn and COX-2 inhibitors. These man-made drugs have serious side effects including ulcers, bleeding problems, and now reported increases in heart attacks. Mangosteen is a natural COX-2 inhibitor and a powerful natural anti-inflammatory, without the side effects of those synthetic drugs."

Here are some of the health supporting benefits of taking mangosteen: allergies, asthma, sinus infections, neck pain, acid reflux, osteo- and rheumatoid arthritis, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, appetite, migraines, constipation, stamina, ADD, autism, down syndrome, high blood pressure, several types of cancer, muscle spasms, cholesterol, cystic fibrosis, endometriosis, type I and type II diabetes, IBS, fibromyalgia, obsessive disorder, anxiety, sinus headaches, bursitis pain, Meniere's, kidney stones, numbness in limbs, MS, en-

ergy, acne, eczema, fungal infections, psoriasis, burns, fatigue, allergies, UTI, tremors, pain, sleep, chronic obstruction pulmonary disease, gastroesophageal reflux disease and many more.

Mangosteen has been used for many disorders in Asia for thousands of years. It is so safe that if a child ate the whole bottle, you would not even have to call the doctor. It does not interfere with any other drugs.

Mangosteen Supreme is also a perfect product to take along with **MSM+C**. Talk about the perfect combination, this is it. With this article you can receive the same 20% discount off both products making this the perfect time to truly support your health naturally and learn just how great you can feel again.

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Abbie Cooper



Cooking with Anna (continued from page 13)

Grateful Or Anxious

by Anna Hamilton

more than my knee pain.

On our recent cruise, we rented an electric scooter for me to be able to move around the ship and the ports of call. It was the absolute best decision we could have made. I was able to enjoy myself. I fought past the anxiety with gratitude. I focused on how thankful I was to be able to travel. How thankful I was to be on this amazing vacation with my husband. The more I focused on the gifts God had blessed me with, the more I was able to relax and become more comfortable.

Learning how to be free from worry and anxiety by focusing on God's word and casting your cares upon Jesus is an absolute game changer! I am trying to take small steps every day toward living fully free from the anxieties that plague my mind.

This week's recipe is inspired by the tropical

flavors we enjoyed on our cruise. We had so many good tropical fruits. Mango is one of my favorites. It is so sweet and works perfectly in this yummy salad. It is the perfect salad to make for meal prep. It tastes delicious and lasts for days in your refrigerator. You can enjoy it on a bed of leafy greens or as a sandwich on a buttery croissant. I hope you enjoy it as much as my family does.

“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” Matthew 6:31-34

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Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)

by Lisa Philippart,
Licensed Professional Counselor



Maybe the fear is that we are less than we think we are, when the actuality of it is that we are much, much more.
- Jon Kabat-Zinn

Mind. As you might imagine, not many of us truly achieve Wise Mind...that perfect balance between the emotional and rational sides of our brains. However, there are 3 “what” skills and 3 “how” skills that can help us work toward that goal. These are actually some of the life skills I was talking about earlier – observe, describe, participate; non-judgmentally, one-mindfully, effectively. By remembering to focus on the *what* and *how* skills, we can find ourselves in that place called the present moment.

Distress Tolerance is the ability to use stress survival techniques that our Wise Mind has allowed us to accept. These strategies include the use of distraction, self-soothing through the senses, and improving the moment. One distress tolerance skill I use quite often with many of my clients is pros and cons. The chart goes beyond simply the positives and negatives of a behavior or situation. It includes looking at both sides of making and not making changes in your life. Another distress tolerance skill I use in my practice is called radical acceptance. Radical acceptance is the ability to acknowledge what is, to allow you to move on. The key concept emphasized is that acceptance does not mean approval.

Emotion Regulation is the effective management of our feelings. Dr. Linehan uses acronyms quite often to assist clients in remembering the strategies taught in each area. For example, one emotion regulation skill is called PLEASE, used to remind you to take care of yourself by reducing vulnerability. P and L stand for: Treat Physical Illness, E is Balanced Eating, A is Avoid Mood Altering Drugs, S is Balanced Sleep, and E is Get Exercise. Another commonly used ER skill is called **Opposite to Emotion Action**, which encourages you to alter your emotions by altering your actions. For example, if you are feeling depressed and just want to spend the day in bed, you can choose to challenge the emotion by going for a walk, or visiting with a friend.

Interpersonal Effectiveness brings all the

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previously learned skills together to improve your ability to interact with others. The acronyms for this skill set are DEARMAN, GIVE, and FAST. I often use GIVE to teach relationship effectiveness with my clients who are struggling in their marriages. GIVE stands for Gentle, Interested, Validate, and Easy Manner. I encourage you to do an internet search for the meanings of some other interpersonal effectiveness acronyms such as DEARMAN and FAST. I believe that most of us need reminders on how to communicate with our fellow human be-

ings.
As you might imagine, DBT training required a year-long commitment to learning and using these techniques in the group settings, as well as providing a continuity of care through individual counseling support. Understanding and using DBT has proven to be an effective tool in my counseling toolbox.

Until next time...Lisa
Lisa Philippart is a Licensed Professional Counselor whose practice is in Madison, Alabama



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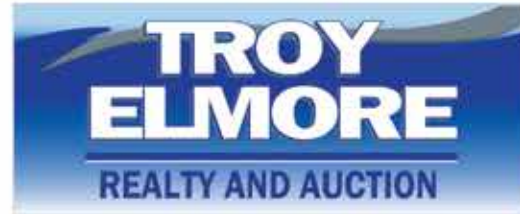
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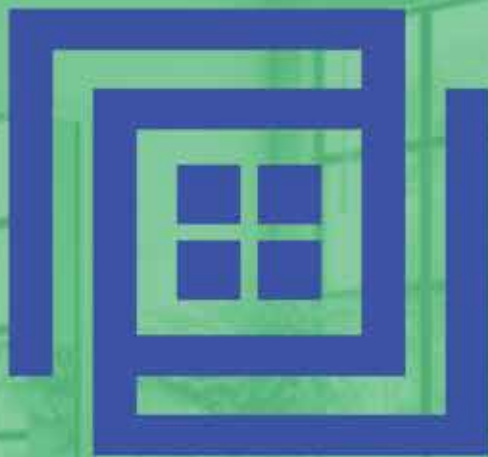
Intelligence
without
ambition
is a bird
without wings.

~ Salvador Dali



ANSWER KEY:

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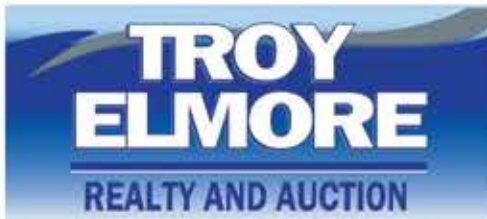
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