



Pratt Connection

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When Less is More

The Battle of Gettysburg, July 1 to 3, 1863, is considered one of the bloodiest of the American Civil War. In November 1863 a cemetery was dedicated at Gettysburg, and the highlight of the ceremony was speaker Edward Everett, who spoke for two hours. His oration was later praised on the front pages of the nation's newspaper.

Another speaker followed, who delivered a two-minute address. Here is what he said, in part:

We can not dedicate, we can not consecrate, we can not hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.

It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us - that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion - that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

The second speaker was President Abraham Lincoln, and the world has long remembered what he said. Often, less is more - much more.

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You can read this and past issues of the "Pratt Connection" on my website at www.Cleveland-Home-Finder.com. Share these newsletters with friends, family and co-workers. If you know of someone who would like to receive my newsletter by mail, forward their address to me at hpratt@remax.net or call me at 440-925-6774.

ATV Safety Tips

One of the fastest-growing outdoor activities involves four-wheel all-terrain vehicles, or ATVs. Over the past decade, the number of ATVs has more than tripled, from slightly more than two million to more than 6.9 million, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Just as the number of vehicles has grown, so, too, has the number of injuries and deaths among ATV riders.

Of great concern are children under 16 who are injured or killed on ATVs. The latest figures for a 12-month period list the number of children under age 16 killed on ATVs at 120, and the estimated number of emergency room-treated injuries for the same age group was 40,400. Those injuries included skull fractures, brain injuries, spine fractures, spinal cord injuries, injuries to the spleen, liver, kidneys or pancreas, broken legs, and amputations.

ATVs can be great fun, but they're also powerful and potentially dangerous. Yet according to www.atvsafety.gov, less than 10% of all current ATV drivers and only about one-quarter of new drivers receive professional training. The Web site recommends that all ATV drivers, including children under 16, take a hands-on ATV safety course from a certified instructor. These courses are offered by the ATV Safety Institute, local ATV rider groups, some state departments of natural resources, state highway departments, and other agencies responsible for regulating ATV use. Visit www.atvsafety.gov for more information.

Save a Tree...

Each year, 19 billion catalogues are mailed to American consumers. That's 63 catalogues for every man, woman, and child in America. To produce these catalogues, 3.6 million tons of paper are required, which translates into 53 million trees.

If you want your name removed from catalogue mailing lists, check out www.CatalogChoice.org.

Holly's Household Corner

"Mystery Spending"



If you can't account for every dollar you spend, take solace in knowing you're not alone. Nearly half of us say we lose track of about \$2,340 per year, according to a study by Visa, Inc. The money simply "disappears," and we're not really sure where it's gone, the study's authors say.

Nearly half of us report spending about \$120 in cash per week, and losing track of \$45 of it. Men under 35 are the biggest "mystery spenders," reporting that they lose track of \$3,078 per year, or an average of \$59 per week, mostly during a night out. Women fared a little better, reporting losing track of \$2,709 per year, or \$52 a week, mostly while out shopping.

Visa's survey of 2,036 adults found that 48% of us suffer from "mystery spending." Check out this breakdown of when money usually "disappears" and see if it sounds familiar:

- Fifty-eight percent while on a night on the town.
- Fifty-five percent while grocery shopping.
- Fifty percent while out with the kids.
- Forty percent while shopping during a sale.
- Thirty-three percent while shopping with friends.

It's not surprising that consumers would lose track of some cash spending, but the Visa spokespeople were taken aback at how much - 7% of the survey participants reported losing track of up to \$100 per week! Visa said the lesson to remember is that a dollar here and a dollar there do add up. One bright note: Of those who acknowledge their "mystery spending," 59% said using their debit cards rather than cash helps them keep better track of their money.

Gardens and Greenhouses

"July Harvesting Tips"



In the Midwest, the July garden requires little more than some good deadheading, weeding, and just plain puttering around. Most vegetables reach their peak flavor when they're young and tender. Try these strategies for the freshest, tastiest home-grown vegetables.

- Keep new plantings well-watered, but at this time of year, pay attention to other parts of the landscape, too. Container gardens can need watering as often as twice a day in hot, windy weather. (Lawns need about an inch of water a week.)

Go Blue! (berry)

July is Blueberry Month and a great time to celebrate this native American species that adds so much to our breakfast cereal, pancakes, muffins, desserts, and makes a great snack all year round.

But did you know that eating blueberries could also be one of the keys to living longer and healthier? According to the North American Blueberry Council, foods that are rich in antioxidants can help reduce your chance of getting cancer, heart disease, and diseases associated with the aging process. Blueberries are loaded with antioxidants; in fact, out of 40 different fruits, juices and vegetables, the blueberry comes in with the highest antioxidant level. Blueberries may also help prevent urinary tract infections, macular degeneration, and the effects of Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

A cup of blueberries has about 80 calories, no cholesterol, is low in saturated fat and sodium, and high in dietary fiber. They're a good source of vitamins A, C and E, calcium and iron. Like many fruits they're also high in sugar, so go easy on the sweetener!

Though local blueberries are available only from May through October, you can enjoy them year round by purchasing them now and freezing them. The Blueberry Council suggests not washing blueberries before freezing. If you buy the berries in a pint box, simply wrap the box tightly in cellophane to make it airtight, or slip it into a resealable plastic bag (squeezing out as much air as possible) and freeze. If you buy berries in bulk, freeze them on a cookie sheet first and then transfer them into a freezer container. Keep your blueberries frozen until ready to use - they should last up to a year in your freezer.

- Keep up with the harvest from your vegetable garden. Be sure to pick small and often. Tiny filet green beans, for example, need picking daily.
- Clean up as you harvest. Toss overgrown or rotting produce on the compost heap. And remove dying plant matter, such as pea vines. All attract diseases and pests.
- Water deeply and well rather than shallow and often - this is especially important for tomatoes, which get various diseases from erratic watering. Educate yourself by taking a trowel after a watering or two and digging down a bit to see how deeply the water has penetrated. Also, when running the sprinkler, set out a pan so you can gauge just how much you're applying.

Do You Know Why You Are Here?

To discover your true purpose in life - not your job or your goals - you'll need just 20 minutes, says personal growth specialist Steve Pavlina (www.StevePavlina.com). What he's talking about, he says, is answering the question of why you are here on the planet.

To find your purpose, here's what Pavlina suggests: Get a pen and piece of paper or sit at your computer and write or type the question, "What is my purpose in life?" Then write whatever pops into your head. Repeat this process and keep writing answers until you hit an answer that raises your emotions. You'll know when you've got it, he says.

And Pavlina should know a thing or two about finding purpose. When he was 19 he found himself in jail for felony grand theft, and when he got out of jail he learned he'd been kicked out of school. Then, he says, something clicked. He woke up and grew up instead of giving up. He took responsibility for his actions, and he's not in jail or living a life of crime. Instead, Pavlina is helping others find their way to more meaningful lives.

Time to Sit and Think

If everything seems to be working against you these days, maybe it's time to sit down and think about life for a little while. What is it that you're struggling against? Is it something you can change? If not, why are you struggling against it? Is what you're doing worthy of your time and energy?

Effort to change something can bring about wonderful results, but only if the thing you're trying to change is appropriate. Contemplate the words of Jimmy Dean: "I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination."

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Positive Thinking Corner

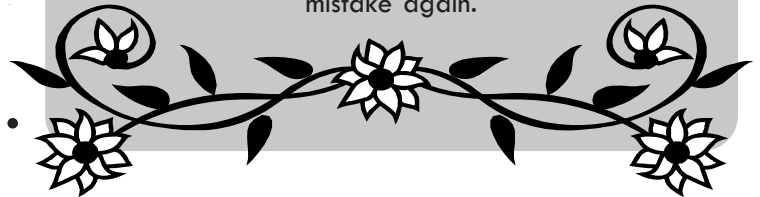
"Make the Most Out of Your Mistakes"

Have you ever made a mistake?
Did you find yourself reluctant to admit it?

If you answered "yes" to both questions,
Congratulations! You're human.

Most of us are reluctant to own our mistakes, yet most of the time, we respect those who take responsibility for their mistakes. You're better off admitting to a mistake than spending considerably more energy trying to avoid the subject.

The truth? Everyone makes mistakes. And if you take the time to learn from what went wrong, you'll be a lot less likely to make the same mistake again.



Older, Someday; Grumpier, No Way!

If you're afraid of getting older and meaner, here's some great news.

That stereotype is starting to shrivel because it's just not true, says Laura Cartensen, founding director of the Stanford Center on Longevity. Cartensen says older people have an ability to block out negative information and so are more content than younger people - even college students. There are grumpy seniors, but they were probably always grumpy, even when they were young. Older people experience less depression than their younger counterparts, says Cartensen, and when seniors do experience a negative emotion, it usually passes more quickly than it does in young people.

What's the secret? As we get older, we know our time is limited and we try to make the most of it by focusing on the positive. We get rid of the riff-raff and time wasters in our lives and spend our time with those who are important to us and doing things that matter to us. And we're happier because of it.