



Pratt Connection

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He Never Gave Up

In 1955 Harland Sanders was 65 years old and virtually broke. Fortunately, he possessed two things: a car, and a recipe for chicken. He took his recipe on the road to sell to restaurants, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Harland "Colonel" Sanders was the founder of Kentucky Fried Chicken, and now KFC restaurants serve more than 12 million customers every day in 109 countries and territories around the world. Colonel Sanders is proof that it's never too late to decide to never give up.

Learning New Skills

Acquiring new skills is a journey. Follow these steps to ensure you're headed in the right direction:

Start with the basics. We often jump past the fundamentals to speed up the learning process. To find the right road, begin with material that explains how and where to get started.

Break down the tasks. The distance ahead can seem overwhelming. Cut down your journey into manageable segments to avoid frustration.

Become an expert at each segment. Don't move on to the next step until you've tested your knowledge. Try to get the same measurable results over and over before you move on.

Let go of the past. As we get older, it can get harder to pick up new skills, sometimes because of fears or bad habits. When you're learning something new, train your mind to let go of pre-conceived ideas that will slow your progress.

Ask for directions. The key to understanding is to ask questions. Consult with experts who can guide you toward your destination. Develop some test questions for yourself as a way to really confirm your understanding of the material, and also to retain the information better.

Place Your Keys Beside Your Bed

Tell your spouse, your children, your neighbors, your parents...tell everyone you run across...put your car keys beside your bed at night! If you hear a noise outside your home or someone trying to get in your house, just press the panic button for your car. The alarm will be set off, and the horn will continue to sound until either you turn it off or the car battery dies.

This tip came from a neighborhood watch coordinator. Next time you come home for the night and you start to put your keys away, think of this: It's a security alarm system that you probably already have and requires no installation. Test it. It will go off from almost anywhere inside your house. To turn it off, reset it with the button on the key fob chain.

It works if you park in your driveway or garage. If your car alarm goes off when someone is trying to break in your house, chances are the burglar/rapist won't stick around. After a few seconds, curious neighbors will be looking out their windows to see who is out there and sure enough, the criminal won't want to be noticed. And remember to carry your keys while walking to your car in a parking lot. The alarm can work the same way there.

This is something that should really be shared with everyone. Maybe it could save a life or prevent a sexual assault.

VISIT MY WEBSITE

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.

Holly's Household Corner



"Let's Use Less Stuff"

It should come as no surprise that between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, our excessiveness hits an annual high, especially where waste is concerned: We throw out 25 percent more garbage than we do the rest of the year. That's a million extra tons of garbage per week. So this year consider some of the ideas below provided by The ULS (Use Less Stuff) Report. Your planet will thank you!

- If every family saved and reused just two feet of ribbon per year, enough ribbon would be saved to tie a bow around the entire planet. When unwrapping gifts, poke two holes in a paper plate and feed the ribbons through so they're easy to find and reuse later.

Gardens and Greenhouses



"Creating a Traditional Cornucopia Centerpiece"

Step 1: Take your empty Cornucopia shell and begin by stuffing the inside with newspaper or shredded paper. This will allow you to not waste your fruits/vegetables on the inner part of the Cornucopia where they won't be seen. Stuff it about half way, then you will want to begin using your fruits/vegetables.

Step 2: Start stuffing the shell with larger fruits/vegetables, and work your way to the opening of the shell. Mix up the fruits/vegetables that you use so you have a variety and don't have all of the same item in one place. Such as, you don't want to have all your apples in one group together.

Step 3: As you get closer to the opening of your cornucopia, use the smaller fruits/vegetables and wedge them in small gaps or openings to help the other fruits and vegetables stay in place.

Step 4: Know where you plan on placing your Cornucopia and position it there. Allow some of the small fruits/vegetables/nuts to spill out onto the table or surface it rests on. This gives an effect of "plenty." If you are using straw or leaves to add texture to your cornucopia, stick them in around the edges of the opening, allowing them to stick out in a spray or feathering fashion. You can even lay a small bunch of the straw under the cornucopia for added texture.

- The more than two billion holiday cards sold in the United States each year could fill a football field 10 stories high. If each family cut back by one card (not that The ULS Report advocates "scrooginess") they'd save 50,000 cubic yards of paper. Try using recycled paper products, and consider sending e-cards when appropriate.
- If each of us throws away just one tablespoon of mashed potatoes, it adds 16 million pounds of waste to landfills. If that's unimaginable in your family, think of it this way: One discarded spoonful of cranberry sauce amounts to over 14 million pounds. Make only as much as you need, then store any leftovers in airtight containers and be sure to use them.
- Reduce the number of bags thrown out by carrying your own, whether you're shopping for gifts or groceries.

The ULS Report has more useful tips on its web site at <http://use-less-stuff.com>.

Make a Difference

Teach Kids to Care! Help your children get into the spirit of giving this holiday season and they're likely to keep it up. *Parents Magazine* identified some of the biggest health problems faced by kids around the globe and ways that your family can make a difference. The November issue of *Parents* lists six health basics that we take for granted but children in other countries regularly go without. Check out the corresponding organizations that could use your family's support. Here's just one example...

We take for granted...a low rate of HIV. The sub-Saharan African country of Zimbabwe is reeling from the effects of HIV/AIDS. Nearly 16% of the adult population and 132,938 children have the disease, according to a United Nations report. Approximately 1.3 million (one in five) children have lost both parents due to AIDS-related deaths, making Zimbabwe the country with the highest population of orphans.

What can you do? Donate to the American Foundation for Children with AIDS. The organization works with a local group that unites Zimbabwean churches to train members on how to care for orphans. Just \$35 provides a child who has HIV/AIDS or his caregiver (usually an older child or another relative) with one year of Co-trimoxazole, an antibiotic vital to his survival. The foundation has also partnered with an organization that teaches older children to farm so that they can become self-sufficient. helpchildrenwithaids.org.

Stop Before You Shop

Before you head out to that next sale, stop and ask yourself if you really need to go. Why? Because many "sales" aren't really sales at all, and you'll end up spending money that you wouldn't have if you just hadn't gone.

Think about things you've purchased on sale. We've all done it - bought things we didn't need and really didn't want, but we just couldn't pass up that bargain.

If you do find yourself at a sale, try to keep from overspending by stopping and asking yourself, "Do I really need this?" or "Do I really want this?" You might also ask yourself if what you're about to drag home will end up being something that sits in the back of your closet until you drag it out for a yard sale. If so, keep your wallet closed. Don't add clutter, work, and guilt from bad purchases.

You have to be careful when you go grocery shopping as well. First, avoid grocery shopping when you're hungry! Second, always shop with a list, try to resist all that temptation sitting on the shelves, and buy only what you really need. Finally, don't fall prey to using coupons that are for things you'd never buy otherwise. It will just pump up your expenses unnecessarily.

Where's Your Honey?

Honey experts say that the pantry - not the refrigerator - is the best place to store honey, particularly raw varieties. All honey eventually crystallizes, forming a semi-solid, grainy block, but cold temperatures accelerate the process. If your honey crystallized, this doesn't mean it's spoiled or unsafe to eat. To re-liquefy it, put the jar in a pan with hot water and heat it on the lowest setting on your stove. Or microwave the honey in a microwave-safe container, stirring every 30 seconds until it has dissolved back to a liquid state.

Referrals are the ♥ of my business!

Thank You for Your Referrals...

Diane Czinger, Lydia Bishara, Mike Felder,
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Positive Thinking Corner

When the difficulties of life are getting you down, work your way out of the dumps by performing a personal act of power that benefits someone else -- an action that's within your control, such as:

Holding a door open for someone.

Smiling.

Offering kind words to those who need them.

Listening to someone without interrupting him or her.

Picking up the phone and dialing when your intuition tells you to call someone.

Forgiving others and yourself for imperfections.

Cooking a meal for a friend.

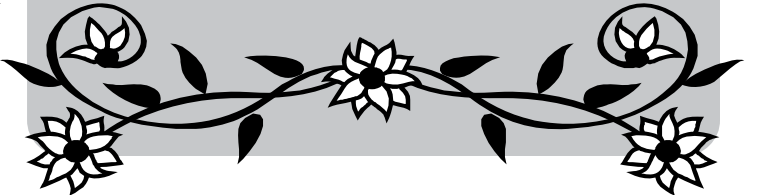
Offering a compliment to someone.

Stopping when you catch yourself judging someone.

Remembering that things can change in a moment.

Focusing on the present and what you can do for someone right now, not sometime in the distant future.

Remembering that everything you do or say matters.



Get Read - Get Results

Do your emails get the attention - and rapid response - they deserve? Here's how to make sure people read and answer your messages while they're still fresh:

- Grab them with your subject. The subject line should read like a compelling newspaper headline. Another technique is to use the subject line to tell people what you want up front: "Please come to the 3pm meeting," for example, or "Do you have the Jones file?"
- Limit yourself to one subject per message. Don't overload readers with questions and data. Single-topic emails are easier to answer than essays or questionnaires.
- Ask for action. Tell the reader what you need him or her to do: present a report at the 3 o'clock meeting, or bring the Jones file to your office. Specify whether you want a response to your email. If it's not necessary, close with a simple NRN (No Reply Necessary).
- Be consistent. Tracking emails is easier when you keep the same subject line.