



# Pratt Connection

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## The Tortoise and the Hare - Updated

Remember the story about the tortoise and the hare? They had an argument about who was faster and decided to settle the argument with a race. They agreed on a route, began the race, and the hare shot ahead and ran briskly for some time. Then, seeing that he was far ahead of the tortoise, he decided to sit under a tree and relax before continuing the race. He fell asleep. The tortoise kept plodding along, overtook the hare and finished the race, emerging as the winner.

Here's where the story gets updated: The hare was disappointed at losing and he did some soul-searching. He realized that he'd lost the race because he'd been overconfident and careless. So he challenged the tortoise to another race. The tortoise agreed. This time, the hare ran without stopping from start to finish.

Now the tortoise did some thinking, and realized there was no way he could beat the hare in a race as it was currently formatted. He then challenged the hare to another race, but on a slightly different route. The hare agreed. They started off, the hare running at top speed until he came to a river, with the finish line on the other side. As the hare sat there wondering what to do, the tortoise plodded up to the riverbank, slid into the water, swam to the opposite bank, and continued across the finish line.

That's when the hare and the tortoise realized that the last race could have been better, if they ran as a team. They started off again, and this time the hare carried the tortoise until they reached the river. Then, the tortoise swam across with the hare on his back. On the opposite side, the hare again carried the tortoise and they reached the finish line together.

## "Crunch, Crunch" or "Knock, Knock"?

Crunch. Crunch. That was the sound of Joe Markham's problem. The three-year-old German Shepherd he'd adopted, Fritz, loved to chew rocks. So much, in fact, that his teeth were one-third their normal size.

In every other way, Fritz was a wonderful and loving companion. But Markham knew the dog's one bad habit was endangering his health. So Markham, a partner in a motorcycle/auto repair shop, encouraged Fritz to try softer substitutes: radiator hoses and motorcycle tires. But the dog didn't favor either of these items enough for it to become a rock replacement.

One day, Fritz stretched under a workbench, pulled out a part from a car, trotted over to Markham, and dropped the part on Markham's foot. With this rubber-knobbed gizmo it was love at first bite. Fritz forgot his beloved rocks. His new obsession had customers asking what kind of toy was making the dog so joyful.

That's when Markham speculated that if his dog loved this type of rubber so much, other dogs would, too.

And so began a long journey of prototypes, rejections, manufacturing woes, ridicule, and late-night commercials. But Markham persevered because he knew his real customers (the furry, four-legged ones) would prove him right.

Today, Markham's toy, the KONG, has sold 50+ million worldwide, and according to the company's Web site, "Millions and millions of dogs have confirmed that KONG is the world's best dog toy!" Is that "crunch, crunch" of a problem really the "knock, knock" of opportunity?

## VISIT MY WEBSITE

You can read this and past issues of the "Pratt Connection" on my website at [www.Cleveland-Home-Finder.com](http://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](mailto:hpratt@remax.net) or call me at 440-925-6774.

# Holly's Household Corner

*"Non-Stick Pans May Pose a Risk"*



We love non-stick cookware - so easy to clean! But did you know that it is coated with polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) may cause respiratory conditions?

When these pans are heated to very high temperatures (518 degrees or higher) - or even normal temperatures if the pans are scratched or damaged - the chemical coating can break down and emit hazardous fumes. In humans and cats and dogs, exposure can cause flu-like symptoms. For pet birds, it's often fatal. Here are some steps to consider:

- If you have non-stick drip pans under the stove burners, dispose of them. They can reach dangerously high temperatures during normal use because of their close proximity to the heating element.
- Don't boil water in a PTFE-coated pan.
- Don't leave the kitchen when a PTFE-coated pan is in use.
- Cook at low or medium heat when using non-stick pans.
- Use a food thermometer to determine the temperature to which your PTFE-coated appliances (deep fryers, waffle makers) rise. If it exceeds 518 degrees, dispose of the appliances.
- Make sure your kitchen is properly ventilated, preferably with a stove hood that vents outdoors.
- Don't keep your pet bird in or near the kitchen.

# Gardens and Greenhouses



*"Spring Has Sprung Into Bloom!"*

Winter is so over! Are you ready to see some beautiful flowers? Spring has sprung at the Cleveland Botanical Garden! Now is the time to enjoy the procession of spring blooms everywhere on the Garden's 10 walkable acres. You'll see something different every time you visit now through May. To enhance your experience, you can download a copy of the Spring Flower Guide at [http://www.cb garden.org/Spring\\_Flowers.html](http://www.cb garden.org/Spring_Flowers.html).

Spring flowers will also be highlighted during Garden Tours leaving from the Geis Terrace at 1:00 pm daily. Garden is open March 30 - May 31, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm. The Cleveland Botanical Garden is located at 11030 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106. Or visit [www.cb garden.org](http://www.cb garden.org).

# Make a Difference

*"Strengthen Family Ties By Volunteering Together"*

While a certain self-focus and greed can be natural among young children, parents can take action to help instill the act of giving instead of getting. Raising a giving child starts with a giving family. Volunteering as a family to help groups or individuals in need can help kids learn the joy of giving and sharing. A side benefit is that emphasis on the act of giving will also help children focus less on the getting end.

Holidays can be ideal occasions to emphasize the spirit of philanthropy with your children. Birthdays are also a memorable way to celebrate turning a year older through volunteerism. Charitable giving and volunteering as a family extend the gift of giving of personal time as well as a loving contribution of helping hands and hearts. Your family CAN make a positive difference in your community when you volunteer as a team. Volunteering as a family helps strengthen family bonds, enhances communication, and sends a message to your children that you're all in it together! What can you and your family do?

- Donate items to be sold at service organizations' resale stores. Ask your children to go through their things and choose well-loved items in excellent condition. Don't let children pick only broken or items in poor condition. There are no "rules" to helping your child feel good about donating. Remember that the spirit of generosity starts young, and often is a difficult concept to fully embrace among children.
- Shop or volunteer at the resale stores. Great bargains can be found at resale stores, and your business will help support the organizations.
- Organize a food or clothing drive in your neighborhood or school and have all proceeds benefit a charity. Let older children research organizations and determine where the items raised will be donated.
- Involve your children in helping to sort and stack. Even young children can separate big clothes from little sizes; boys styles from girls.
- Ask your school or child care if they have a favorite charity or have children with needs that can be met through some generous donations. Schools often have lists of children needing school supplies; your family can help put together the needed supplies and provide them to the school to anonymously give to the child.
- Recruit others to expand the circle of giving. Often, families want to volunteer but are not sure how or where to get started.

# Listen To Your Kids

Why don't you and your kids communicate better? If you've asked this question more than once, you may want to take a look at your own listening skills. It's as true with children as it is with adults: Good communication is mostly listening.

- Don't interrupt. Kids, especially younger children, may need more time to find the words they need. Be patient. You don't like being cut off by your spouse or boss in mid-sentence, and your children don't enjoy being interrupted, either.
- Ask good questions. Grownups may see a yes-or-no question as an opportunity to expound at length on a subject. Children are more likely to take the query literally and respond with a one-word answer. Structure questions that encourage full answers - what did you do? Why did that happen?
- Be empathetic. You don't have to agree with what your child says to understand how he or she feels. Before giving advice, share your own feelings honestly and succinctly: "I get angry when that happens to me, too. What do you think you could have done differently?"

# Reducing Sodium Can Reduce Weight

For years, diet experts have suggested limiting intake of calorie-rich fats, sugars and carbohydrates. But if none of these restrictions has had the desired effect on your weight, try reducing the amount of sodium.

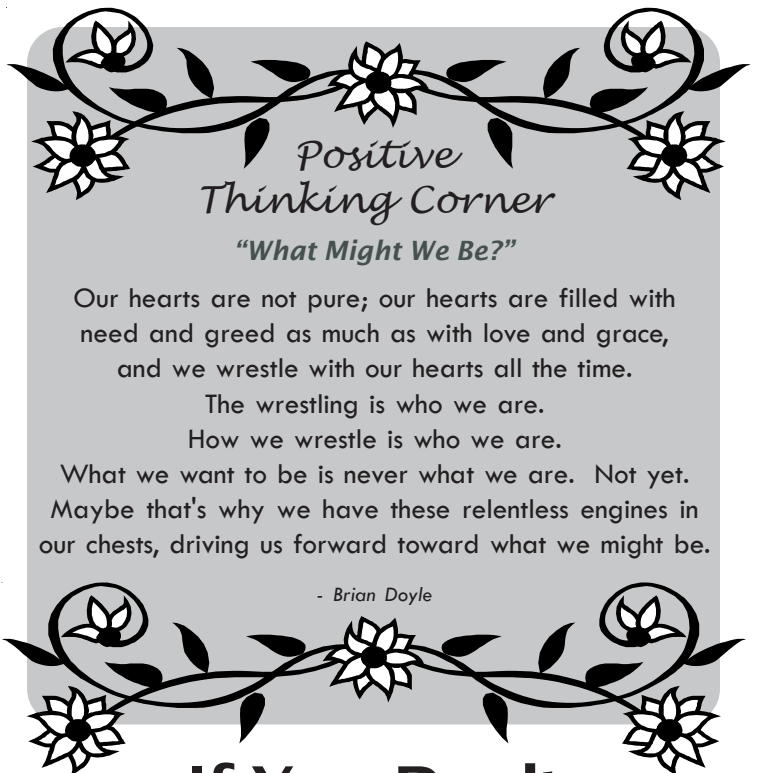
A low-sodium diet - one with 1,000 to 1,500 milligrams a day - can help most people lose five or more pounds a month. Read labels, but as a rule of thumb, keep in mind that most processed foods - those that come in boxes, cans, or jars - are often high in sodium. As an added benefit, switching to a low sodium diet lowers blood pressure.

*Referrals are the ♥ of my business!*

**Thank You for Your Referrals...**

Gene Lim, Kay Coughlin (2), Larry Blau, Jim Hovanec, Connie Smith, Jim & Sue Koshel, Brian Grayson, Nanci Nimrichter, Mike Valerino, Corey Anderle, Durand Hopkins, and Lauren Koskey-Halton

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## Positive Thinking Corner

*"What Might We Be?"*

Our hearts are not pure; our hearts are filled with need and greed as much as with love and grace, and we wrestle with our hearts all the time.

The wrestling is who we are.

How we wrestle is who we are.

What we want to be is never what we are. Not yet. Maybe that's why we have these relentless engines in our chests, driving us forward toward what we might be.

- Brian Doyle

# If You Don't Or Can't Retire

The traditional concept of whiling away your retirement days playing golf just doesn't appeal to lots of people anymore - or it isn't an option in this economy. If you're looking for a new career instead of retiring, be prepared:

- Update your technical skills. The rapid pace of technological change may require that you get additional training for the career you're thinking of pursuing. Check out your options with government, nonprofit, and corporate technology training programs.
- Evaluate your talents and values. Talk to people you know well, both professionally and personally, and find out what they think your strengths are. Have a good handle on your talents and values so your new career matches them.
- Do a little research. If a particular career appeals to you, investigate it. Talk to people already in the field, and find out what they like and don't like about their work.
- Don't ignore the financial implications of the new career. Make sure it will provide the income you need.
- Enjoy the work. Do something you love, and let yourself enjoy it. If, for example, you tended to be a workaholic in your former career, don't let yourself make the same mistake in your new pursuit.