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December 2019

## **The Best Gift Of All**

With the holidays fast approaching, everything was rolling along steadily in the little blue house on the corner. Mom had shopped throughout the year and already had most everything wrapped and waiting, except for the one thing her littlest girl wished for more than anything else in the world: a kitten. She would find a kitten closer to the big day.

As the weeks went by, parties came and went, the house was filled with the scent of sugar and spice, and December was shaping up to be a great month, when Mom took a quick trip to the corner store one night and unexpectedly had her world go dark. She got stuck in a snowstorm and lost control of her car on the icy road.

The whole family sat at the hospital and waited for news. Finally, they were allowed in to see Mom, but were told that she'd have to stay in the hospital and heal for a few days.

As she struggled to sit up in the hospital bed, her oldest son, Loren, held back his tears and bravely told her that he'd make sure everything was taken care of for his younger siblings.

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True to his word, Loren made sure that everything was in place (with a little help from teachers and friends). When the neighbor brought Mom home, she smiled at her mostly-clean house... then heard a faint meowing.

Loren brought a tiny orange tabby kitten out of his room and gently placed it on Mom's lap, letting her be the one to gift the kitty to his sister. When nobody else was looking, he traded a wink with his mother, who said that being home with family was the best gift of all.

~Jim A. Urban

## You're Mine, Molecule!

A solar-powered device that soaks up water from the air could provide relief in water-starved regions, according to an article on the website of the *American Association for the Advancement of Science*.

The device is a metal-organic framework (MOF), a crystalline net that can suck water vapor out of the air - even in a desert - and then release it as liquid water. It's the brainchild of Jordanian-born Omar Yaghi, now a chemist at the University of California, Berkeley. He and his colleagues created their first MOF in 1995, and tens of thousands have been produced since.

The MOFs are made of metal atoms that work like hubs in a Tinkertoy set. The atoms are connected in a porous network held together by organic linkers, creating containers that trap molecular particles. Using different metals and linkers, scientists can tailor the structure to capture molecules like water and carbon dioxide.

Early versions were expensive and degraded quickly, but Yaghi's team has managed to create a more robust model that promises commercial applications. A recent market report predicted that sales of MOFs for detecting and storing gases will grow to \$410 million annually over the next five years, up from \$70 million in 2019.

## Fun Day Monday November

**Q:** *This is nearly half the size for women than men?*

**A:**

- A. Mouth
- B. Nose
- C. **Pockets on Blue Jeans**
- D. Feet

**Congratulations to: Tony & Gayle Mohr**

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## Doing Good for the World

Did you know? December 5th was designated International Volunteer Day by the United Nations in 1985 as an international observance day to celebrate the power and potential of volunteerism.



It is a lovely opportunity for volunteers, and volunteer organizations, to raise awareness of personal causes and gain understanding for the contribution they make to their communities and the world at large. It is also a welcome chance for volunteers and organizations to share their accomplishments and celebrate their success over the past year.

# The Clever Canine

A dog was on safari with his humans. One afternoon, he started chasing after a butterfly near the camp and suddenly found himself deep within the wilderness.

He saw a leopard approaching him from the grass.

*"Oh boy, guess I'm gonna have to show this cat who's boss,"* thought the dog as he plopped down next to a pile of bones. He reached for the largest bone and began to chew on it.

The leopard hid in the tall grass and waited for just the right moment to pounce on the canine, yet the dog continued chewing on the bone as the leopard slowly inched closer.

When the dog heard the movement of the grass, he said loudly, *"Mmm, mmm. That was one tasty leopard. I think I'll eat another one."*

The leopard froze in his tracks. He figured he was no match for this vicious dog and retreated to safety. But there was a monkey seated in a nearby tree. He'd seen everything and impishly decided to tell the leopard what had really happened.

The dog realized that something was amiss when he saw the monkey chasing after the leopard. (After all, monkeys don't usually chase leopards.) But the clever dog decided to outsmart both the leopard and the mischievous monkey.

When the monkey informed the leopard of what had happened, the leopard grew angry. *"No one makes a fool of me,"* the leopard growled. *"Come, my little friend! Let's show that dog who's running things around here!"*

The leopard ran back through the tall grass with the monkey on his back. *"Here we go,"* the dog thought to himself as he relaxed and chewed on the bones.

He could feel the big cat watching him from the grass. From the corner of his eye, he could see the monkey scampering toward a nearby tree - this was the moment to make his move.

*"What has that monkey done with my dinner?"* howled the dog. *"I sent him to fetch me another leopard a half hour ago and he's still not back!"*

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## A-B-C Creativity

Is creativity as simple as ABC? Harvey Mackay thinks so. The businessman and bestselling author shared his formula for innovation and inspiration in a column on the *Daily Herald* website. Here's how his list begins:

- A:** Advertising. *"Expand your brand beyond media-generated advertising. For example, we painted our company name and phone numbers on top of our delivery trucks so they were visible to people who worked on upper floors of tall buildings."*
- B:** Bold. *"People are not inspired by ordinary messages, so give them a reason to remember you."*
- C:** Curious. *"Curiosity may not have been good for the cat, but it's a winning formula for people."*
- D:** Different. *"Don't be afraid to do things that have never been tried before. You have to have enough faith in yourself to trust your instincts."*
- E:** Everyone. *"I firmly believe that everyone has the capacity to be creative, if only they allow themselves to be."*

### Need to find a Business who gives Exceptional Service?

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In the search engine type in the type of business you are looking for to see the list of businesses Jim refers to his family, friends and clients.

Mackay came up with unique ideas for the entire alphabet, but how would **you** finish it up?

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## The Loch Ness Eel?



The Loch Ness monster has haunted imaginations for more than 1,000 years, although it probably is not really haunting a lake in Scotland.

According to the *Live Science* website, a DNA survey of the waters of the famous loch uncovered no evidence of any kind of giant reptile, let alone a giant sea monster.

However, the survey did reveal DNA traces of more than 3,000 species living in or near the banks of Loch Ness, including fish, deer, pigs, birds, humans, and bacteria. Although there was no evidence of reptiles, they did find lots of eels living in the water.

Researchers believe it's possible - though unlikely - that the monster sightings could really be glimpses of oversized eels.

# Obstacle Course

In college, *Detroit Free Press* business columnist Josh Linkner had a jazz guitar professor with an interesting technique: he'd make Linkner remove a few strings from his instrument. Then the professor would tell Linkner to perform.

*"You might guess that gutting half of my available resources would crush my ability to play, let alone be creative,"* Linkner writes.

*"Yet a surprising and counterintuitive thing happened. When those strings were off, I could no longer rely on the patterns I knew. I was forced to solve musical problems in totally different ways. As a result, my creativity didn't crumble... it soared."*

The lesson? All of us are faced with obstacles. But confronting those obstacles can actually inspire new ways of thinking.

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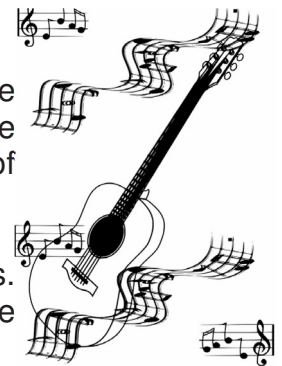
## Like a Rolling Stone

Even after playing together for more than 50 years, the Rolling Stones still understand the value of practicing together. According to the *Scoreo* website, the band commits to two months of rehearsal before every tour.

The routine helps them reconnect with each other's rhythm until they can communicate and perform almost telepathically. Keith Richards knows what's going on just by watching Charlie Watts' left hand, for example. If the tempo of the show starts to sag, a single quick glance between the two sparks a pick up in the pace.

The group understands each member's distinctive roles: Richards is the band's spiritual leader, Watts is the backbone, Ronnie Wood is the mediator, and lead singer Mick Jagger is the CEO, in charge of everything.

"This is the secret to becoming an excellent team," the website says. "There is no substitute for the ongoing commitment and deliberate practice required to build better teams."



# Improve Your Self-Discipline

Success in any endeavor is a matter of self-discipline. If you can't stay focused on your goals, you'll never achieve them. The *Ladders* website shares this list of tips for improving your self-discipline:

- **Start on Monday.** Begin working on your goals on the first day of the week. Researchers say this can help you follow through.
- **Write down the reasons behind your goals.** Positive affirmations can solidify your goals in your mind and help you stay focused.
- **Visualize the benefits.** Think about what you'll gain as you work toward your goals and eventually achieve them. They'll become more real in your mind and help you work past obstacles.
- **Plan for temptation.** You'll sometimes want to abandon your goals, or at least set them aside. Think about how you can respond - "If I want to quit early, I'll work 10 more minutes before making a final decision."
- **Combine needs and wants.** For example, if you have to go to a networking event, concentrate on meeting old friends as much as on making new contacts. Or plan a reward once you've completed a particular step toward your goal.
- **Don't make snap decisions.** A quick decision can easily lead you down the wrong path. Teach yourself to analyze information and consider your options before going ahead on a new move.



## Lighting Up the Night



Holiday lights are often used to bring a general ambiance of warmth and happiness to outdoor areas, no matter what time of year they're plugged in. Here are a few things from the *Lowe's* website to think about when deciding how to decorate:

- Do I want incandescent or light-emitting diode (LED) lights?
- What bulb shape or style best suits my design requirements?
- How many strands will it take to cover the area?
- Do I want all-white, colored or multicolored lights?
- What are my energy requirements?



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