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Helping Bring People Together

One Lawn at a Time

Today, there is a divide between younger and older generations, but one man is trying to bridge that gap by encouraging boys and girls to give back to their community.

In 2016, Rodney A. Smith Jr. saw an elderly man struggling to mow his lawn and decided to finish the job for him. It inspired him to start a movement for children aged 7–17 to give back to their communities by taking on the 50-yard challenge. Kids contribute by mowing lawns for single parents, veterans, seniors, and people who have disabilities. Once they reach their goal, kids will receive T-shirts, a brand-new mower, a weed eater, and a leaf blower. Smith Jr. will also come out to your community and help you with your lawn care services.



At first, the 50-yard challenge took place locally in Alabama. But in the last few years, kids across the U.S. have begun participating. "Right now, we have over 2,400 kids nationwide taking part in our challenge. We also have kids in eight other countries taking part as well," Smith Jr. says.

This challenge teaches children the value of giving back to their communities, but it also encourages them to learn skills in lawn service — which not a lot of young adults know how to do. It also helps them interact with others who they wouldn't typically talk with. "[Unity and interaction] is important in this day and age. A lot of elderly people are stuck at home, and they don't get to have a lot of human interaction. So when kids come by, they can talk, get to know each other, and build relationships. They can learn things from each other," Smith Jr. says.

Are you and your kids up for the 50-yard challenge? Send a picture of your child holding a sign that says, "I Accept The 50 Yard Challenge" to WeAreRaisingMen.com/The-50-Yard-Challenge to join. If you're looking for someone to tend to your yard, you can use the form on WeAreRaisingMen.com/Find-A-Mower to search for kids who are mowing lawns in your area.

We Can Learn a Lot From Children

4 Takeaways After Spending Time With My Granddaughters

Cory and I were blessed this summer with frequent visits with our grandchildren. Every other weekend, we would bring the girls to our lake house and spend our days enjoying fun activities together. Our granddaughters are 4 and 5 years old, and it was a pleasure creating memories with them — there was never a dull moment! But as summer quickly comes to an end, I begin to reflect on the time we spent with them. With all the different activities we enjoyed together, several takeaways struck me. Here are a few of the highlights.

1. Ditch the electronics.

I'm convinced that while kids haven't changed much, the environment they're growing up in certainly has. Kids and adults are easily distracted if the TV is on or phones are present. And living in the moment and spending quality time with your loved ones with these distractions is difficult. So, Cory and I decided to leave the TV off and keep our cellphones out of reach when our granddaughters were with us. We noticed that they have much more to say when we are all present and listening. Frankly, it's a lot more enjoyable and relaxing for everyone. Simple pleasures become accentuated when no one is distracted by electronic buzz, talking heads, or random noise.

2. Drawing with crayons, markers, and sidewalk chalk still rules.

When you hand a 5-year-old something to write with and a piece of paper, it's incredible to see what they can come up with. Their imagination seems to awaken quickly and effortlessly as they begin to draw, color, and design without care or hesitation! You should have seen the girls when they got to decorate the driveway with 20 shades of chalk. It's as if their imagination increased when provided a larger canvas. Seeing them have so much fun with simple things was a good reminder that children don't often need much to be entertained. Just a little imagination, a canvas, and something to draw with.

3. It's good to stop and smell the zinnias.

We decided to give the girls a flower garden experience and help them bloom beautiful flowers. We did everything from scratch, from digging the soil to planting the zinnia seeds. They excitedly ran to the area every morning, expecting full-grown flowers with beautiful blossoms. Although they had to be patient, within a week, they could see the sprouts of the flowers begin to develop. Recently, the zinnias fully bloomed, and we enjoyed fresh flowers in a makeshift vase at the breakfast table. Some lessons in life are best experienced firsthand, and the girls enjoyed working with their hands and knowing they were helping these plants grow and blossom. We were delighted to witness them learning how to plant, grow, and harvest.

4. Little ones can help us re-discover our surroundings.

It is fascinating to see how children marvel at the seemingly commonplace. Young children can intently watch a rabbit or a bird for long periods. They will stay in one place and watch in awe as the animal engages with its habitat. They notice so many little details — how something moves, its color, and what it eats. Which prompts a lot of questions and comments. And suddenly, you find yourself re-discovering nature's beauty with them.

But the most important thing I learned is to cherish the time we have with our grandkids. We know that they will grow up in the blink of an eye, and these wonder years will pass — just as they passed for our children. So, although these moments won't last forever, no matter how much I wish they would, it's fun having a second chance to experience them again.

I hope you and your family had a wonderful summer. Until next time.



- Bill Steffens

Breaking the Busy-Bored Cycle

3 Strategies You Can Use Right Now

It's a common problem: People spend most of their days feeling too busy, only to feel bored during their free time. So how can you break the habit of scrolling through your phone and watching TV and make the most of the little time you have for yourself? Let's talk about ways to break the cycle of boredom and busyness thus creating a more fulfilling life.

1. Plan ahead.

Schedule your days and weeks for an even workload to ensure your day doesn't have huge gaps or work overflow. For example, if you have a large project, you can divide it into smaller tasks to keep yourself busy, yet not overwhelmed, throughout the week. You can also plan fun activities each day. This will help fight boredom and give you something to look forward to when you're at work or while completing daily tasks.

2. Prioritize tasks.

If you have trouble managing projects to the point where you feel you don't have enough time, begin prioritizing specific tasks. It's essential to complete the highest priority tasks



3. Be curious.

One way to mute boredom and implement more creativity is by setting daily learning goals. These goals can be anything you want! Setting small goals and accomplishments will keep you curious, motivated, and focused. They also give you something to look forward to each day. Ask yourself what you want to learn today. Do you want to learn about a new culture? A language? If there is something you've always wanted to know, now is the time to put your thinking cap on!

Boredom and busyness derive from the same source — there is a lack of quality in how you focus your attention. Luckily, the same strategies apply to both boredom and busyness. These tips will help you create a balanced mindset and allow you to push through your day without feeling overwhelmed or uninspired.

so you won't be up late in the day trying to finish something important. If you plan ahead, you can number your tasks from most important to least. This will help ensure high-priority tasks are completed on schedule.

Understanding the Streisand Effect

Don't Throw a Fit

If you want to avoid getting unwanted attention in a situation, it's best to not make a big deal out of it. But if you're an international superstar, like Barbra Streisand, a seemingly small reaction can become much more than intended.

The Streisand Effect

The Streisand Effect is a phenomenon that occurs where an act of suppressing information can make the information more widespread.

In 2003, photographer Kenneth Adelman of California Coastal Records Project took an aerial photograph of Barbra Streisand's Malibu estate. Adelman was documenting California's coast for a project that would provide over 12,000 photos for researchers and scientists to study coastal erosion. But at the time, Streisand believed the photos explicitly showed people how to gain access to her private residence, so she sued Adelman for \$50 million.

The photo of Streisand's residence was originally seen a total of six times — twice by her lawyers. Her outburst brought in news outlets who reported her outrage, and in turn, the photo of her residence got blasted everywhere. Not only did she do the exact opposite of what she wanted, but she also lost the lawsuit and had to cover all of Adelman's legal fees.

Examples of the Streisand Effect

During the 2013 Super Bowl, Beyonce executed an energetic show and BuzzFeed posted photos of the "Fiercest Moments" from her performance. Beyonce's publicist asked BuzzFeed to remove some of the unflattering photos, and instead, they created a new post titled, "The Unflattering Photos Beyonce's Publicist Doesn't Want You To See."

Ralph Lauren has fallen victim to the Streisand Effect. An image of a horribly photoshopped model was posted on two blogs: Photoshop Disasters and Boing Boing. Ralph Lauren caught wind of this and took action by sending cease-and-desist letters to the blogs, claiming that it was a violation of copyright law and should be removed. But the image fell under fair use, which allows usage for news and commentaries. Ralph Lauren apologized for the distorted ad but still received backlash.

The best way to counter the Streisand Effect is to avoid aggressive tactics when faced with negative information and think carefully and calculatingly in your response. So, if we learned anything from Barbra Streisand, don't throw a fit if something doesn't turn out the way you want it to.

TAKE A *BREAK*



TASTY BRUSCHETTA CHICKEN

Ingredients

- 4 boneless and skinless chicken breasts, pounded to even thickness
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp lemon juice, divided
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- 3 tomatoes, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp fresh basil, chopped
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 4 slices mozzarella cheese
- Parmesan cheese, grated

Directions

1. Add chicken to a large resealable bag.
2. In a small bowl, combine olive oil, 1 tbsp lemon juice, pepper, and Italian seasoning. Pour over chicken and seal. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.
3. Turn a grill to medium-high heat and add the chicken. Discard the marinade. Grill chicken 5–7 minutes per side or until fully cooked.
4. Combine the remaining lemon juice, tomatoes, garlic, and basil. Add salt and pepper, to taste.
5. Before taking the chicken off the grill, top each breast with a slice of mozzarella cheese. Cover and cook 2–3 minutes, then serve topped with the tomato mixture and grated Parmesan cheese.

Inspired by Delish.com

GET OUTSIDE WITH GEOCACHING

Tracking Down Treasures



International Geocaching Day takes place on the third Saturday of the month of August. It's a chance to experience an adventure-filled day that will get you out of the house and into nature. People of all ages gather to commemorate the placement and discovery of geocaches across the world, and there's no telling what kind of surprise you might discover if you participate!

What is geocaching?

Geocaching is basically a high-tech version of a treasure or scavenger hunt. It is inspired by the older treasure hunt called letterbox, where you plant clues in various locations that lead to the letterbox. For geocaching nowadays, you use a GPS to track down caches. These are typically waterproof containers — and inside there is a logbook for you to sign. These caches can be filled with trinkets such as coins, pins, or even miniature figurines, but if you take anything, be sure that you replace it with something else. It doesn't have to be anything expensive, just a token of sorts for someone else to discover.

It's time to get started.

To begin your geocaching journey, first visit Geocaching.com and sign up for a new account. From this, you will be able to create a unique geocacher name that people in the geocache community can call you by! This will also come in handy when you sign the logbook.

You can also download the Geocaching app to your smartphone and use it as a GPS receiver. Once you open the map on your phone, it will show a map of your location with bubble icons to see all the geocaches near you. There will be an arrow icon that you can click on that will find the specific geocache you are searching for. It will then open a compass that shows you which direction to go in and how many feet you are away from the final location.

This treasure hunt brings an entire community together from all around the world. It encourages people to challenge themselves and get outside. The act of hiding and finding a geocache is thrilling, and you never know what you might find next.