

The Geese and The Gardener

Medical missionary Albert Schweitzer once wrote a fable about a flock of wild geese that humbled a man with their behavior.

As the geese rested near a pond one day, a gardener captured one and clipped its wings. When the flock started to resume their flight, the wounded bird tried frantically to fly off with them but it couldn't get off the ground.

Instead of flying off without the bird, the flock settled back on the pond and they waited. Fortunately the gardener's clipping hadn't inflicted permanent damage, and after several days the damaged feathers had grown back well enough to allow the goose to



The flock's loyalty to its wounded member touched the gardener's heart and made him realize that he had been very wrong to hurt a bird from such a noble breed that had done him no harm. In fact, as

Schweitzer wrote, the gardener "gladly watched

People say that money is not the key to happiness, but I always figure if you have enough money, you can have a key made. — Joan Rivers

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The Richest Characters in Fiction

Dreaming of being the next Warren Buffett is one thing, but have you ever fantasized about having as much money as Scrooge McDuck?

Forbes magazine, which tracks the world's richest real people, also looks at the accumulated wealth of fictional characters. Here's a look at how much money you might have if only you lived in the imagination of a famous novelist, cartoonist, or screenwriter:

Scrooge McDuck. The long-lasting Disney character's net worth is calculated at \$44.1 billion, thanks to his passion for mining and treasure hunting.



Tony Stark. Those *Iron Man* suits aren't cheap. The CEO of Stark Industries in the Marvel Universe is worth \$9.4 billion.

Carlisle Cullen. The 370-year-old vampire from the Twilight saga is worth an estimated \$36.2 billion.

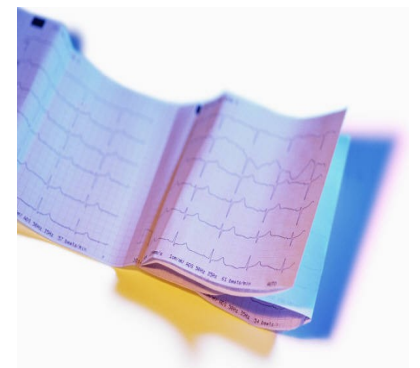
Artemis Fowl. A child criminal mastermind featured in a series of best-selling novels for young adults, Fowl's ill-gotten gains amount to \$13.5 billion.

Jed Clampett. The patriarch of *The Beverly Hillbillies* TV show has \$9.5 billion in Milburn Drysdale's bank.

Richie Rich. The "poor little rich boy" of cartoons and comic books controls assets of \$9.7 billion.

We've Always Done It That Way

A management consultant was hired by a manufacturer in Britain to help improve its general operating efficiency. At one plant on the outskirts of London, she spent weeks reviewing reports that tracked productivity, absenteeism, machine failure, et cetera, that were kept by the day, week, month and year.



The reports were filled out by hand (the plant was small) on photocopied forms. At the top of one of the daily forms, the consultant noticed a small box that was always filled out with the number zero, but the form had been photocopied so many times that the instructions beneath the box were just small black spots that were impossible to read.

One day, she asked the plant manager about the form. He shrugged and said, “When I started here they told me to put a zero in that box, and I tell everyone I’ve trained to put a zero in that box. So there’s always been a zero in that box. I don’t really know why, but there must be a good reason.”

As the consultant finished her work, she was looking through a dusty file cabinet when she discovered what looked like the original form. She saw that it dated back to World War II.

Intrigued, she looked at the form to see what important data the box was meant to track, and how it might be relevant to the plant’s current operations.

Then she realized the flaw in “We’ve always done it that way.”

Underneath the box were clearly printed the words: “Number of air raids today.”

Fall Begins September 23

The Autumnal Equinox occurs on September 23rd, ushering in a new season. The equinoxes (both Autumnal in the fall, and Vernal in the spring) mark the points in the year when the sun crosses the equator, so that every place on earth experiences an equal amount of daylight and darkness. On these days, the sun rises exactly due east on the horizon in the Northern Hemisphere, and it sets exactly due west.



The equinoxes have been observed and celebrated for thousands of years and have significance for many different cultures.

Pagans call the fall equinox Mabon and they consider it a time for thanksgiving and for reflecting on the past season. In the Middle Ages, it was a time of great feasting. Christians celebrate Michaelmas, in honor of the Archangel Michael, shortly after the Autumnal Equinox. Autumnal Equinox Day is a national holiday in Japan, when people mark the change of the seasons and pay respects to deceased family members.

The Britons situated Stonehenge in relation to the spring and fall equinoxes and the winter and summer solstices. A shadow hit the center stone at sunrise on the equinoxes when it stood completed. It was a “monumental” development for these Stone Age people to be able to predict where

the sun would rise. It gave them power over nature, which was the beginning of the end of the Stone Age.

Ability to Read Emotions

Botox doesn't just remove wrinkles and lines from a person's face; it may also impair one's ability to read the emotions of other people.

A study published in the journal *Social Psychological and Personality Science* found that people who had received Botox injections were less accurate in identifying the emotions on the faces of people in photographs than others whose faces had been injected with a cosmetic filler. Researchers at USC and Duke University theorize that without the ability to subconsciously mimic expressions we see in others, we have more difficulty recognizing those feelings—suggesting yet one more way in which our bodies affect how our minds operate.

The best car safety device is a rear-view mirror with a cop in it. — Dudley Moore

Frugality Endures Across the Generations

An accountant's thriving London business had been in the family for generations. His main office was in an old building, and his clients walked up a single, elegant marble step to reach the front door. Over time, the marble step had worn away until it developed a deep dent that was increasingly hazardous to his clientele.

One day, the accountant asked a stonemason to take a look at the situation and give him a quote on how much a new marble step would cost. The stonemason examined the step and then scratched his head.



"It's a big job," said the stonemason. "But I suppose I could give you a new step for 500 pounds." The accountant frowned. "That's a bit more than I wanted to pay." They both looked at the step, and then the accountant asked: "What if you dug up the step, turned it over, and put it back into the ground? Then it would be good as new." The stonemason nodded. "50 pounds." "Do that," said the accountant, and he went back inside the office.

A few hours later the stonemason rang the bell. The accountant walked to the door, opened it, and saw the stonemason standing next to the marble step that he'd dug out of the ground. A nearly identical dent gutted the other side. The stonemason chuckled. "From the looks of it, I'd say your great-great-great-granddaddy thought of the same thing about 150 years ago."

Bipolar Disorder Symptoms and Treatment

When actress Catherine Zeta-Jones revealed this year that she'd been treated for bipolar disorder, she brought attention to a mental health condition that affects millions of people—not just the sufferers themselves, but their families, friends, and employers.

People with bipolar disorder are sometimes referred to as “manic-depressive” because of the mood swings that are the major symptoms of the disease. The disorder includes three specific conditions: Bipolar I disorder, in which patients and their relationships (manic phases can be severe and dangerous); Bipolar II, a less-acute condition with generally more manageable symptoms, and Cyclothymia, a milder form in which manic and depressive periods are less disruptive.

Symptoms of the manic component of the disorder include feelings of euphoria and extreme optimism mixed with poor judgment, rapid speaking, racing thoughts, and aggressive behavior. In the depressive phase, patients experience sadness and depression, suicidal thoughts and behavior, sleep problems, increased or diminished appetite, and feeling of anxiety or guilt. Seasonal changes seem to affect the mood swings in some patients.

Patients are commonly treated with a combination of psychotherapy and medication, which has been shown to have a positive impact on most subjects.

If you suspect that you or a loved one is suffering from more than the occasional mood swing, discuss it with your doctor.

They say that time changes things, but you
actually have to change them yourself.

~ Andy Warhol

Only an Empty Cup Can Be Filled

A young man traveled a great distance to study with a much-respected sage. He explained that he wanted to learn from the master's wisdom, and began telling him how much he'd learned from other gurus.

The sage listened. When the would-be disciple paused for breath, the elder man offered him a cup of tea.

"Yes, thank you," said the young man. "And so then I went to study with . . ."

The master brought cups and poured tea. The young man kept talking. The sage kept pouring. Suddenly the young man realized his cup was flowing over, and the tea was spilling onto the floor. And the master still kept pouring. "Master, stop!" cried the younger man. "The cup is full—it will hold no more!"

"Ah," said the master. "So we cannot add something to a container that is already full? Perhaps first we must empty the cup."

And the young man understood. Before he could learn anything new from this teacher, he had to empty himself of what he believed was important.



A Clean Computer Is a Joy Forever

When you're cleaning the junk out of your computer's hard drive, one misguided action can destroy important files that can't easily be retrieved. This could be especially disastrous if you are the only one with those files on his or her PC and you don't have a backup disk. As scary as even attempting to clean up your computer may seem, you can't afford to let digital dust bunnies overrun your hard drive. If you use the Windows operating system you can do a basic clean-up of your hard drive by yourself with just a few easy steps.

First and foremost, back up your important pictures and files to discs. Then, under the Start menu, go to Programs, then Accessories, then Systems Tools. Here you'll find the Scan Disk application. It looks for partial files and binary detritus on your hard drive. Run the program.

When Scan Disk is finished (it may take an hour or more), go to Disk Defragmenter in the same menu. This will make your hard drive run smoother by reorganizing and cleaning it.

If your PC's CD/DVD player won't run some discs, it's time to clean it up, too. Sometimes the lens in the CD/DVD drive needs cleaning. But be careful: The plastic lens is vulnerable to scratching. Use a cleaning disc designed for this task, which you can pick up at any store that sells computers or computer software.

There are more disc cleaners online that take care of viruses and “malware,” and many of them are free if your use is limited. Every computer needs virus protection running on a constant basis which updates daily. That service does require a paid subscription, but it is essential if you use the Internet and it is well worth it for the peace of mind.

Can You Give A Speech Without Panicking?

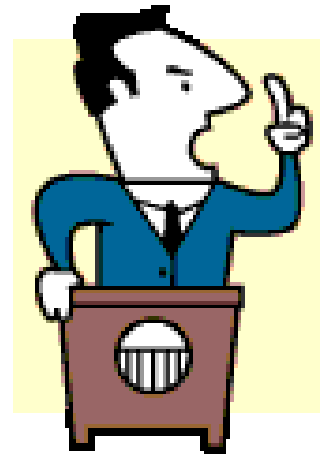
Giving a speech needn't be terrifying. Here's how to stay calm:

Know your subject. The more you know your topic, the more secure you'll feel. Do your homework; anticipate questions; be ready with additional information.

Practice! Rehearse thoroughly before addressing the audience. You'll get used to your own voice, and to standing up and talking for 20 minutes. Practice also gives you the opportunity to make changes ahead of time, such as removing awkward sentences or changing words.

Arrive early. Walk around, check out the facilities, familiarize yourself with the layout, and rehearse again at the venue.

Loosen up. Do some relaxation exercises. Take a short walk. If you're sitting down, wiggle your toes – it eases anxieties. Take slow, deep breaths. And avoid caffeine.



It's all right letting yourself go, as long as you can get yourself back. — Mick Jagger

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How To Train Your Brain

If you want to keep your brain fit, it isn't enough just to read a master tome like *Ulysses*. Researchers believe that the most effective way to keep your brain in top shape is to do activities that pull you out of routines and expose your senses to new things. Here are simple three brain exercises:

These People Need Help

As you know, for the past three years there's been a shift in the real estate market, and many people have been caught off-guard. I imagine you may know people who are in a dilemma like never before, and they don't know what to do. As you read below ask yourself, "Who do I know that's in one of these three situations?"

(1) People who bought their homes within the past five years, or refinanced, or took out an equity line, who now find that their homes are worth less than what they owe on it; (2) Homeowners facing financial difficulties: job loss, loss of a spouse, divorce, or possibly heading into foreclosure; (3) Home sellers who wish they had sold a year or two ago. Now they feel trapped and don't know what to do.

These people need help, and they need it NOW! The next time you're in conversation with someone who is in any of these situations, stop, pick up your phone, look up my number (253.670.6269), and call me immediately. You can count on me to be empathetic, to be there for them, exploring all options, and treating them with the utmost dignity and care. More than ever before, we need each other. And together, *we can make a difference!*



P.S. As you read this message ask yourself, "Who do I know that's in one of these three situations?" Be sure to give me a call so we can help someone who needs it *now*.

September Quiz Question

Citizens of Switzerland are prohibited from serving in any foreign army, with what notable exception?

Everyone who faxes, emails or calls in the correct answer by the last day of this month will be entered into a drawing for a \$25 gift certificate

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