

JUNE 2023

Piece Of Mind

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ALL THE WORLD'S A CLOCK *We Keep Each Other Ticking!*

This spring, my wife and I flew to Utah to surprise my sister, Polly, for her 80th birthday. We wanted to keep our presence secret, so we snuck into town and stayed with my other sister, Peggy, and her husband Tony, in what I like to think of as their "clock museum."

The house isn't really a museum, but that's certainly what it feels like! It's filled with more than 500 clocks, all displayed as neatly and lovingly as any exhibition at the Smithsonian. There are miniature clocks, grandfather clocks, cuckoo clocks, and every other type you can imagine hanging precisely on walls and sitting atop mantelpieces. All of the clocks belong to my brother-in-law. He's a physical therapist by profession, but buying, selling, and rebuilding clocks is his passion.

As I wandered the "museum," I discovered a big three-ring binder sitting on the counter. It must have been 500 pages thick! My curiosity got the better of me, and I opened it to find page after page of clock photographs, each one captioned with the name of a family member or friend who would inherit it one day.

"Those aren't all of my clocks," Tony explained, "But they are the most important ones." He spoke about each clock in the book as if it were one of his children — whether it was worth \$10 or \$10,000. When I expressed interest in a clock with my middle name on it (Martin), he even made me call my son, JM, to confirm he'd willingly inherit it! Only then would he write my name in the book.

Tony didn't say it, but these clocks were as near and dear as family to him. He'd built and nurtured them just like he'd nurtured his kids. At one point, he took me into his office to show me the intricate inner workings of a clock. It was incredible! He handled each piece as delicately as if he were rocking a baby.

"See this, John?" he said, pointing to a shiny bit of metal. "Every piece is important. They all work together to make the whole."

I was still thinking about Tony's clocks when I arrived at my sister's 80th birthday party. It wasn't the usual affair. Instead of giving her presents, Polly asked that everyone in attendance share a memory of what she meant to us. After every person shared their recollection, she offered a story about them in return. At first, the family all grumbled about the memory game. But as soon as Polly's son stood up to speak, everything changed.

He explained that when he was a kid, he wanted to follow the crowd, but his mom told him, "I don't want you to be like everybody else — I want you to be special!" Many years later, when his then-girlfriend made almost the exact same comment. He knew immediately that he'd found his wife.

By the time my nephew finished his story, the whole room was in tears. They kept flowing as we ticked around the circle, sharing memory after memory about my sister. And suddenly, something wonderful occurred to

me: My family is a clock! Every person in that room was connected to each other, spinning perfectly in sync as parts of the same whole.

Have you seen the movie "Hugo," or read the book it's based on, "The Invention of Hugo Cabret"? It tells the story of a clockmaker's son who continues to fix Paris' clocks after his father dies. He sinks into sadness until one night, perched high above the city, he looks out across the sea of lights and sees a pattern! Every pedestrian carrying a lantern and every set of car headlights is moving in rotation — just like a clock.

"I'd imagine the whole world was one big machine," he says in the book. "Machines never come with any extra parts, you know. They always come with the exact amount they need. So I figured, if the entire world was one big machine, I couldn't be an extra part. I had to be here for some reason. And that means you have to be here for some reason, too."

Here is the truth that Tony, Polly, and Hugo helped me see: God does not make extra parts any more than the clockmaker does. Each of us is here for a reason. We all have something to contribute — even if we don't realize our significance.

You are not a spare part. Now, please go out and discover the work He made you to do!

— John Preston

‘My Mom Is in the Hospital — Can I Pay Her Bills?’

J.M. ANSWERS A CRITICAL QUESTION

A few months ago, our client’s daughter, whom I’ll refer to as “Valerie,” received distressing news. Her mother, “Sue,” had suffered a severe stroke and fallen into a coma.

Valerie rushed to her mother’s side at the hospital, where the doctors explained that they couldn’t predict when Sue might awaken. It could happen the next day, or she could remain unconscious for months. Valerie was overwhelmed with fear for her mother’s well-being and desired to be there for her throughout the recovery process. However, the reality hit her hard — Sue had financial obligations to fulfill. In a panic, Valerie called our office, hoping against hope that we could assist her. We arranged a meeting for the next day to address Valerie’s concerns.

“J.M.,” she said, “my mom is sick, and nobody knows when she’ll recover. She has upcoming bills, such as property taxes, mortgage payments, and insurance. I need to support her in the hospital and ensure these payments are made. Can I access her bank accounts?”

As I listened to Valerie’s worried voice, I felt grateful that her mother had chosen Preston Estate Planning to establish her trust.

If Sue had settled for the industry standard when establishing her trust rather than engaging our services, I would have had to deliver unfortunate news to Valerie. I would have said, “I’m sorry, Valerie, but you can’t handle those bills from the hospital. Your mom is the sole Trustee of her Trust, granting her exclusive access to her funds. As a Successor Trustee, your role is contingent upon providing written proof of her incapacitation. You would then need to personally visit each of her banks and financial institutions, carrying that proof with you. Finally, if you’re fortunate, you might gain access to her accounts after several weeks.”

This traditional estate planning standard results in situations that are both stressful and time-consuming. It involves acquiring



signatures from two different doctors (who are often reluctant due to medical privacy laws), submitting the doctors’ notes and a copy of the Trust to the banks, and waiting for their legal departments to process the new information.

Knowing that informing Valerie she couldn’t stay by her mother’s side in the hospital would devastate her, I was relieved to have a different answer.

“You can remain exactly where you are, Valerie,” I reassured her. “When your mom established her Trust, we advised her to appoint you as a Silent Partner Co-Trustee. Consequently, her banks and financial institutions are already familiar with your role. You can immediately endorse checks, pay bills, transfer funds, and manage all of her financial matters.”

As I spoke, it all came rushing back to Valerie — she remembered working with her mother to become a Silent Partner Co-Trustee years ago. By the time our meeting ended, I could hear a bit of relief in her voice.

I hope you’re never in Valerie’s situation. But if you are, you can focus your attention on your loved one knowing that as a Life Plan member, we have set up your Trust in the best way for your family.

-J.M. Preston

Cut the Financial Umbilical Cord

HOW TO RAISE FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE ADULTS

Adulting is all about doing your own laundry, cooking, and grocery shopping. It means making informed decisions about time management, organizational skills, and understanding how to be financially responsible.

But how do you teach your teenager financial responsibility? Let's explore five important lessons your child needs to gain financial independence!



Help them find opportunities to earn money.

Before your teen can learn to properly manage their finances, they must first make their own money! If they don't have a job, encourage them to begin the hunt. If your teen is still too young to hold a job, consider paying them for chores around the house or yardwork. Once your teen has a cash flow, you can then teach them how to separate it into spending money and cash to save.

Open a bank account.

If your child doesn't have a bank account yet, it's time to set up a checking and savings account for them. It's a great way to provide them with financial independence while they still have access to your guidance. While credit cards can be scary to trust your learning teenager with, you should consider a prepaid credit card they can use to learn the ins and outs of how credit cards work while still having a safety net to protect their credit.

Introduce them to the concept of interest.

Interest can be beneficial or a disastrous hindrance, so your teen needs to understand how it works. While it can be beneficial for certain savings accounts, it can wreak havoc on credit card debt. Demonstrate interest with different real-life scenarios to show your teen how they can grow their money or rack up tons of debt.

Whether your teen has just started earning their own money or is preparing to handle finances on their own, these simple tips can help you start training a fiscally responsible adult.

Sudoku

1			8	7			6	
	2			4	5		8	3
9			3					
		2	4		7			
				8	2			
	6	9	5	1				8
2	3	4	9	6	1	8	7	
6	9				8	4		
8		5	7	3	4			2

Solution on Pg. 4



Goat Cheese and Thyme Stuffed Chicken

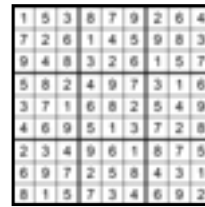
Inspired by BBCGoodFood.com

Ingredients

- 2 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
- 3.5 oz firm goat cheese
- 1 tsp fresh thyme
- 4 pieces of thin-sliced bacon
- Olive oil
- 2 zucchinis, thinly sliced
- 1 large tomato, thinly sliced

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 F.
2. Split the chicken breasts almost in half along the long side, open them like a book, then flatten the sides out.
3. Put the goat cheese on the "open book" side of the chicken and sprinkle with thyme leaves. Fold the chicken over to enclose the cheese, then wrap each breast in 2 slices of bacon.
4. Lightly oil a shallow gratin or casserole dish, then arrange overlapping rows of zucchini and tomatoes on the bottom. Drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper, then set chicken on top. Place thyme sprigs on chicken.
5. Bake for 40–45 minutes until the bacon is crisp and golden and the zucchini is tender.



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Monkey Around This Summer CHECK OUT SOME OF AMERICA'S BEST ZOOS

Summer is one of the best times of the year to travel. Kids are out of school and want to do something fun every weekend, which can be difficult to accommodate if you've already exhausted your local options.

If you're looking to travel, you can visit a beach, take in the sights and sounds of an amusement park, or spend some time with animals while visiting a zoo. Nearly every state in our country has a handful of zoos or aquariums, but some stand above the rest.

Here are three of the best zoos you can visit in the U.S.

Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium

The Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium in Omaha, Nebraska, is consistently ranked as one of the top five zoos in the world. It prides itself on

hosting rare, endangered animals you can't see elsewhere. It has the world's largest nocturnal exhibit, and one of the major highlights is the Desert Dome, an 84,000-square-foot indoor desert that maintains an authentic desert ecosystem. This is a must-visit for any animal lover in your family.

The Bronx Zoo

You don't usually think about seeing exotic animals when you visit New York City, but the Bronx Zoo is one of the best places to view animals in America. Opened in 1899, the Bronx Zoo is responsible for many of the advancements relating to animal captivity. This was one of the first zoos to ditch cages for natural environments and create an animal hospital. With over 6,000 species, there's an animal for everyone at the Bronx Zoo.

The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens

While the San Diego Zoo is often boasted as California's largest and best zoo, another zoo is worth checking out. The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens outside Palm Springs has entertained visitors for decades. There are events at this zoo every day, one of the most popular being the keeper connections and animal encounters, where you get up close and personal with the animals while learning more about their habitats and lifestyles.

