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RESPONSE + ABILITY
Lessons From Truman and Hemingway

Last spring, in what now feels like a very different time, my family and I took a trip to the Florida Keys. Not one to miss out on the opportunity to see parts of our nation's history, I took us to see Truman's "Winter White House" as well as the Ernest Hemingway Home and Museum in Key West. To my surprise, the statesman and the author had more in common than just sharing a zip code; they shared an uncanny tenacity in difficult times.

Hemingway's hard work — had disappeared. But from this tragedy, came greatness.

Rather than wallow in the loss of his writings, Hemingway got to work. He still had publishing deadlines to meet, after all. This time crunch forced him to, as he later said, "strip the language clean." He altered his style from long rambling prose to crisp, punchy sentences. This style is what made Hemingway's published works so popular among readers and solidified his status as one of the great innovators in American literature — all thanks to a missing suitcase.

Touring the homes of both Truman and Hemingway made a lightbulb go off in my head. Here were two examples of men who, when presented with daunting challenges, didn't pass the buck, curse the universe, or give up in despair. They responded to the best of their ability. In other words, they took responsibility.

Truman's story may be one of the most well-known examples of personal responsibility in modern history. He famously kept a sign on his desk declaring "The buck stops here" — a sign that still sits on his desk in Key West. The message was simple: As the leader of the free world, he ultimately accepted responsibility for the state of things in this country and beyond. During the turbulent days of the early Cold War, making such a declaration was a bold choice but one that reassured our war-weary nation.

Hemingway's story is a little less widespread. It all began in December of 1922 when Hemingway was still working as a reporter. He'd been tasked with covering the Lausanne Peace Conference in Switzerland, requiring him to spend Christmas away from his home in Paris. So, his wife Elizabeth decided she'd take the train to spend the holiday with her husband and brought a suitcase full of his unfinished manuscripts with her.

In what would prove one of the most fateful moments in literary history, Elizabeth left the suitcase unattended at the train station while she went to purchase a bottle of water. When she returned to the platform, the case — and all of



It isn't easy or fair, and sometimes finding that silver lining will feel outright impossible.

But it's precisely when we are faced with events beyond our control that we need to remember our sense of personal responsibility. The world may be a sea of chaos, but we will always remain the captains of our own ships with the power to set a course for calmer waters. With courage and creativity, we all have the power to uphold our responsibility to ourselves and work toward a brighter tomorrow.

This is not to say that the two men didn't mourn their circumstances or put a brave face on everything — Hemingway's letters following the incident certainly show he was distraught over the matter. But what is important is that, when the chips were down, these two American icons did all they could to change their situation for the better.

In these uncertain times of pandemic and market instability, we'd do well to remember the examples of Truman and Hemingway. If someone hurts you, it's a chance to practice forgiveness. If you can't leave your home, it's a chance to practice patience. If your work has changed due to the virus, it's a chance to adapt and find new ways of doing things.

— John Colvin

Punctuation's Problem Child
Why the Interrobang Fizzled Out

It's a punctuation mark that's over 50 years old, but you may not have heard of it before. It's an odd-looking squiggle that denotes a common inflection, but many experts argue it has no place on paper. In an age when thoughts are limited to 280 characters, wouldn't a single punctuation mark that does the job of two be valuable? Some say yes, others say no thank you. So what is this mystery punctuation mark? It's the interrobang!

In 1962, advertising agent Martin K. Speckter believed ads would look better if rhetorical questions were conveyed using a single mark. He merged the question mark, also called an interrogative point, with the exclamation point, known in the jargon of printers as a "bang," and the interrobang was born.

In the first few years of its existence, the interrobang made some mild headway, appearing in some dictionaries and even on some typewriters in the late '60s and early '70s. And while it was used

in magazine and newspaper articles for several years, it wasn't meant to last.

There are a few explanations for why the interrobang never took off, but the most prominent one says that as writing styles changed, there was



less use of rhetorical questions in writing, especially formal writing. Because the interrobang was originally intended to denote rhetorical questions, it faded from use.

Today, using the two punctuation marks that make up the interrobang is still popular, especially in nonformal writing like social media copy. Any variation of "!?" denotes a sense of excitement, urgency, or disbelief in the form of a question, rhetorical or not. But the reason people don't use the interrobang to serve the same purpose is simple: It's not a key on keyboards. There are still certain fonts that are equipped to display the nonstandard mark, but if you want to use it, you have to go digging for it. It's just much quicker to write two punctuation marks than search for a single one.

But who knows what the future will bring? Language is in an ever-changing state, and the interrobang may rise again. Or will it?

Health Benefits of Family Gardening

Give Your Kid the Gift of a Green Thumb

Yes, there will always be football season, basketball season, and soccer season, but right now, it's gardening season. That means it's time to roll up your sleeves and play in the dirt. If you've been searching for a way to get the kids away from technology and engaged with the real world, gardening is the perfect activity for the whole family to enjoy. Not only is it fun, but it's also beneficial for your kids' development.

For example, gardening can improve your children's analytical abilities. As Dr. Wendy Matthews says, "Gardening exercises important reasoning, initiation, planning, and organization skills." Furthermore, several studies, including one at Texas A&M University, suggest that gardening improves a child's attitude toward fruits and vegetables and may make them more likely to choose them as snacks. Gardening helps kids identify with where their food is coming from, and nothing tastes better than a freshly picked strawberry or pea pod they grew themselves.

Jack Gilbert, a scientist at the University of Chicago and a parent himself, and his co-author, Rob Knight, emphasize the health benefits of garden time in their book, "Dirt Is Good: The Advantage of Germs for Your Child's Developing Immune System." The two found that exposure to different microbes, like those found in a garden, strengthens a child's immune system and makes them less likely to develop allergies.



If this is your first time gardening, you don't need much to get started. Grab a few shovels, a pair of gloves for each family member, and fresh potting soil, and you'll be set. Then, you can decide together which plants you'd like to grow! Carrots are fun because of the surprise factor — just imagine your child discovering that the part they eat grows below the ground! Peas are tasty and fairly easy to grow, as are strawberries. The options really are endless. Depending on the growing season in your area, you can choose to buy seeds or opt for rooted plants.

Last but certainly not least, the best part of gardening as a family is the healthy, fresh produce you'll get to enjoy all summer long!

Forest Bathing

An Outdoor Practice With Health Benefits

At the time of writing, social distancing measures are being put in place in response to the recent COVID-19 outbreak. All indications suggest these important public health precautions will last for some time — so it may be safe to assume that by the time this newsletter reaches you, your household may be feeling a little stir-crazy. However, unless state and CDC guidelines have changed, you can still enjoy the great outdoors while protecting your health. A prime one among them is "forest bathing."

No, we aren't advocating you take a bath in a river or pond somewhere out in the wilderness. Forest bathing is actually a term borrowed from a longstanding Japanese tradition (shinrin-yoku) that is meant to aid body and soul. The practice is all about taking time to simply be immersed in nature — something many of us already consider to be a calming experience but now has the attention of medical experts.

In fact, as The Guardian reported in 2019, Britain's National Health Service has been considering prescribing the activity, citing the growing body of evidence that forest bathing offers tangible health benefits. Beyond the known

psychological rewards of enjoying some peace, quiet, and fresh air, some medical experts suggest the practice may even boost your immune system and help you get better sleep.

The best part is you don't need a prescription to become a forest bather. Just find your favorite quiet place out in nature, be it at a state park, nature reserve, or other public outdoor area that has remained open, and relax. You can go for a walk or simply sit and absorb the sounds of birds and the wind through the trees. Of course, you should still exercise caution.

Read up on the latest health and legal advisories before leaving home and check to make sure your chosen destination is still open to the public. While outside, maintain 6 feet of distance from anyone who doesn't live in your home (something that shouldn't prove too challenging in a large park). Finally, if you are feeling under the weather or are at a heightened risk of infection, don't risk the trip. You can use this time to plan out a more extensive forest bathing session once local governments sound the all-clear.



A Big Change to Disability Evaluations Many May No Longer Be Eligible

Within a month's time, the Trump administration is expected to release a new Social Security regulation that will significantly affect Americans who were previously eligible for disability benefits. This upcoming change is part of a larger effort to cut Social Security disability insurance and Supplemental Security Income spending, but it may come at the expense of those who are unable to earn a living for themselves. If you receive disability benefits or are in the process of applying for them, here's what you need to know.

REDEFINING 'FULL TIME'

The change in question will change the definition of "full-time employment" the Social Security Administration (SSA) uses when evaluating a disabled person's ability to work. In the past, if you weren't able to work 40 hours a week, the

SSA would strongly consider your claim. Now, that threshold is being dropped to 30 hours — a change that could be disastrous for many with legitimate disabilities.

WHO THIS AFFECTS

Many people with disabilities are unable to work 8-hour days five days a week. This lower threshold for work hours will cause many of these individuals to lose their benefits — without the guarantee of finding employment. While the SSA's definition of full-time work may have changed, that doesn't mean businesses will follow suit. As the Huffington Post reported on March 13, there may not be ample employment opportunities for less than 40 hours a week — at least when it comes to jobs that can pay the bills.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

This change is part of a larger shift in SSA policy overseen by the current administration. Other proposed changes include increasing the frequency of Continuing Disability Reviews (CDRs) and reducing the extent that age will be taken into consideration when awarding benefits. Proponents claim these reforms will modernize the SSDI system and reduce the cost of the program, while opponents point out that many people unable to earn substantial gainful employment will now be left out in the cold.

At the time of writing, the change in what the SSA considers full-time employment is set to take place this June, though it is unclear whether the current COVID-19 crisis will affect the timing of this decision.



Avocado Mayonnaise

Your entree is only as good as the seasonings and sauces that accompany it. We guarantee you'll be looking for excuses to pair this vegan avocado mayonnaise with all your meals!

Ingredients

- 2 ripe avocados
- 1 tsp chipotle peppers in adobo sauce
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp lemon juice, freshly squeezed
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup olive oil

Directions

1. In a food processor, blend avocados, chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, Dijon mustard, lemon juice, and salt for 1 minute.
2. Scrape the mixture down the sides of the bowl.
3. Turn the processor on again and slowly pour in olive oil.
4. Blend for 1 minute or until smooth.

Inspired by The Kitchn

SUDOKU

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