Money-Saving Secrets
My jaw dropped when I read Michelle Crouch's tip about canceling an online order to receive a coupon ("13 Things Your Mall Salesperson Won't Tell You"). After ordering a few things online, I was a bit put off when the retailer offered a discount and free shipping after I'd paid! I will definitely use this tip next time—and pass it along.

Cher Miles, Concord Township, Ohio

LET'S PLAY!
OUR PHOTO,
YOUR CAPTION

"Pedal faster, Frank!"  Pam Overmyer

"You said the truck would be out of the shop this morning!"  Jason Strigle

"These budget cuts are getting ridiculous."  Ruth Raney

"You always get to be in the front—that's not fair!"  Carolyn Landrey

"Where'd you put the ladder?"  Beth Breckenfeld Hartzell
Heroes

Teen vs. Deer
When high school student Alexis Vaughan saw a buck attacking a woman, she took matters into her own hands

by Melody Warnick

Alexis Vaughan, 17, slouched in the passenger seat of her dad's Excursion, wishing fervently she were still in bed. Alexis was grounded, and the early Saturday morning wake-up call to run errands with her father, Michael, was part of the punishment. She stared glumly out the window at the Preston, Idaho, overfields.

A seasoned hunter, Alexis let her eyes lazily scan the landscape for wildlife. Still, she was startled when a deer came into view about 200 yards in front of them, just a few feet off the road. Male deer never appeared in plain sight ten days before hunting season. "Dad, there's a..."
a deer there!” Alexis said, rolling down the window for a better look. It was a three-point buck—a male deer with sharp, three-pronged antlers on each side of its head.

As the car moved closer, Alexis saw that the deer’s head was bent toward the ground. Then she heard

**When the Vaughans pulled up, the buck was tossing Sue like a rag doll.**

A scream. A few seconds later, she saw an arm fly up near the deer’s head. Alexis realized the buck was attacking a woman.

Sue Panter, a 44-year-old mother of four, had been out for her morning run. The buck had emerged from the tall corn and begun following her. Having lived in rural Idaho for years, Sue knew that most deer got spooked by humans. But this deer edged closer, even when she pelted it with a handful of gravel. “I knew I was in trouble,” she says.

Sue Panter went to pick up a log to use for self-defense, and the buck charged. It hoisted her with its antlers and tossed her into the air. Sue could feel the horns puncture her thigh and blood seep down her leg. Within seconds, the deer had pushed her off the road and into the cornfield.

When the Vaughans pulled up, the buck was tossing Sue like a rag doll. Alexis looked into the woman’s terrified eyes, and before her father had even stopped the car, the five-four, 104-pound teenager bolted out of the car and down the slope toward the buck. “I was kicking and punching it to get its attention,” she says. The animal was undeterred by the pounding. Then Michael, who had followed his daughter, wrestled the buck away from the women by the antlers.

- Alexis helped Sue up the slope and into the Vaughans’ car, then applied a tourniquet to Sue’s right thigh. Her neck was gashed; her legs were covered with puncture wounds. “We’re going to get you to a hospital,” Alexis said. Then she heard her father holler.

Michael had been knocked to the ground, his right calf speared by the buck. Alexis grabbed a hammer from the car and ran to where Michael lay on his back in the dirt. She beat the buck’s head and neck, but the blows didn’t faze it. “I was losing faith,” she says. Standing over her father, Alexis could see that he was struggling to breathe.

“A couple more strikes, Lex,” said Michael. “You can do it.” Turning the hammer around, Alexis squeezed her eyes shut and took a whack at the deer’s neck with the claw end. When she opened her eyes, the deer was running away.

Alexis got in the driver’s seat and sped toward the hospital in Franklin, hearing her dad’s breathing grow ragged and watching the blood from his wounded leg seep through the T-shirt he’d wrapped around it. In the backseat, Sue looked hardly >>

readersdigest.com 2/3
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Laughter, the Best Medicine

My girlfriend and I worry about different things. One day, I was like, “What do you fear the most?” And she was like, “I fear you’ll meet someone else, and you’ll leave me, and I’ll be all alone.” And she was like, “What do you fear the most?” And I was like, “Bears.”

Comedian Mike Birbiglia

I quit [the medical profession] because... I truly believed that laughter was the best medicine. Turns out penicillin works a lot better.

Comedian Matt Iseman

A worried man goes to the vet with his goldfish. “I think it has epilepsy,” he says. The vet takes a look and says, “It seems calm enough to me.” The man says, “Well, I haven’t taken it out of the bowl yet.”

Submitted by Adam Joshua Smargon, Newark, Delaware

I’m not speaking from experience or anything, but I’m guessing “by the toe” would have to be the worst possible way to catch a tiger.

Comedian David Gunter, on humorhab.com
STOP, ALREADY!
A lot of times, I’ll drive for miles with the emergency brake on. That doesn’t say a lot for me, but it really doesn’t say a lot for the emergency brake.
Comedian Mitch Hedberg

Marshmallows have a Buddhist quality. If you leave a whole bunch of them in a bag for a long time, they become one again.
Comedian Costaki Economopoulos

TWEETER’S DIGEST
The best way to prepare cauliflower is by throwing it in the trash while ordering a delicious pizza.
@NickYoussef

It’s a ten-minute walk from my house to the pub. Weirdly, it’s a two-hour walk from the pub to my house.
@jontaylor180

The couple at the table next to me thinks some really weird girl is eavesdropping on their conversation, but I don’t see her anywhere.
@capricecrane

OLD JOKE WE LOVE
A woman was having a passionate affair with an exterminator when her husband arrived home unexpectedly.
“Quick,” she said to her lover, “into the closet!” And she pushed him into the closet, stark naked.
The husband, however, became suspicious. And after looking high and low, he discovered the man in the closet.
“Who are you?” he demanded.
“I’m an exterminator,” said the man.
“What are you doing in there?”
“I’m investigating a complaint about an infestation of moths.”
“And where are your clothes?”
The man looked down at himself and cried, “Those little bums!”

Your favorite new joke, funny anecdote, or crazy news story might be worth $$$.
See page 84 for details.
readersdigest.com 2013

Universitas Sumatera Utara
Weighty News

What's Bigger in 2013

Americans' ever-increasing waistlines are beefing up some surprising things:

Ambulances
American Medical Response, the largest ambulance company in the United States, introduced bariatric ambulances in 2001. Their cots can accommodate up to 1,600 pounds, compared with older models that hold only up to 800 pounds.

CT Scanners
Imaging companies such as Siemens and General Electric are building new equipment to accommodate Americans' growing girths. Siemens's CT scanner went from a 60-centimeter (23.6-inch) diameter in 1997 to an 80-centimeter (31.5-inch) diameter in 2011, a 25 percent increase.

Caskets
A standard-size casket for adults used to be 24 inches wide, but 28-inch-wide models are becoming more common, according to the

Illustration by Mark Matcho
Casket & Funeral Supply Association of America (CFSA), a trade association for the funeral-supply industry, based in Lake Bluff, Illinois. One company, Gollath Casket, began making 29-inch caskets in the 1980s (the new models hold up to 1,000 pounds) but sold only about one per year. Now they ship half a dozen oversize models every month.

**Fuel Usage**
Extra pounds cause cars, trucks, and planes to use more gasoline and jet fuel. Americans consume at least one billion more gallons of fuel today than they would if they weighed what they did on average in 1960.

**Santa Costumes**
In 1996, santasuits.com’s largest offering was size 2X, and oversize suits accounted for just 12 percent of sales. Today, santasuits.com estimates that size 3X suits account for up to 20 percent of sales.

**What Hasn’t Changed but Needs to: Airline Seats**
Based on testing standards designed almost 50 years ago, airline seats are meant to restrain a 170-pound passenger, but today the average American man weighs 195 pounds, and the average woman, 165. These seats may not be as safe for heavy passengers during a crash.

**ODD-BODY NEWS**

**WHY CERTAIN SOUNDS CREEP US OUT**

Turns out that some sounds are irritating because they trigger activity in the amygdala, the area of the brain that regulates emotions. The auditory and emotional parts of the brain work together to produce our negative reaction, explains a recent study published in the Journal of Neuroscience. Here, the sounds we find least and most unpleasant, based on the brain activity of 13 volunteers who listened to 74 different sounds.

**MOST ANNOYING SOUNDS**
1. Knife on a bottle
2. Fork on a glass
3. Chalk on a blackboard
4. Ruler on a bottle

**LEAST ANNOYING SOUNDS**
1. Applause
2. Baby’s laughter
3. Thunder
4. Flowing water

Source: *Biology*
SAVVY SUPPORT

When a Friend Gets Sick

A rheumatoid arthritis patient shares her pet peeves about how we discuss chronic illness by Lisa Copen from CNN

When people you care about aren't feeling well, you want to help ease their pain and offer hope. But common words of cheer or empathy can have unintended effects. Here's what to never—or always—say to someone coping with chronic illness.

DON'T SAY

"You look so good!" Though this may be intended as a compliment, it can imply you can't really be sick. You look fine to me," which invalidates a person's pain.

"At least you can stop working! That must be nice." Being physically unable to work can cause serious depression. Those with illness may have high medical bills and financial worries. They also don't have as much free time as you think. Medical appointments, paperwork, and pain symptoms take up a lot of hours.

"Illness is caused by stress. If you relax more, you'll feel better!" While illness can be exaggerated by stress, it's rarely the sole cause, which is likely a mix of genetic and environmental factors. Comments like these can make people feel even more stressed.

DO SAY

"I don't know what to say, but I care about you." You don't have to fix things. It may be better to just admit, "I have no idea what you are going through, but I am here if you need to vent."

"If you need to cry, I've got plenty of tissues." Between the emotions certain medications cause and the stress of illness on our families, careers, and finances, we occasionally just need a good cry. Instead of being one more person who says, "Don't cry," be the friend who sits with us as we let it out.

"I'm going to the store. What can I get for you?" if you're running errands, let your friend know in advance so she can write a short list. Picking up heavy groceries, like a gallon of milk or laundry detergent, may be especially helpful.
RELATIONSHIPS

Love Letters of Famous Couples
Let these smitten scribes inspire your own Valentine's note.

From Johnny Cash to June Carter Cash
Hey June,
The fire and excitement may be gone now that we don't go out there and sing anymore, but the ring of fire still burns around you and I, keeping our love hotter than a pepper sprout. Love, John

From Napoleon Bonaparte to Josephine de Beauharnais:
I don't love you, not at all; on the contrary, I detest you. You're a naughty, gawky, foolish Cinderella. You never write me; you don't love your own husband; you know what pleasures your letters give him, and yet you haven't written him six lines. Of what sort can be that marvellous being, that new lover that tyrannizes over your days and prevents your giving any attention to your husband? Some fine night, the doors will be broken open, and there I'll be. [November 1796]

From Marilyn Monroe to Joe DiMaggio:
I don't know how to tell you just how much I miss you. I love you till my heart could burst. All I love, all I want, all I need is you—forever. I want to just be where you are and be just what you want me to be. I know it's lousy of me to be so late so often, and I promise to try a million times harder, I promise. Love, Marilyn [1954]
From: Richard Nixon  
To: Pat Nixon  
Dearest Heart,  
... And when the wind blows and the rains fall and the sun shines through the clouds (as it is now) he still resolves, as he did then, that nothing so fine ever happened to him or anyone else as falling in love with Thee—my dearest heart.  
Love, Dick

From John Keats to Fanny Brawne  
My dearest girl,  
I cannot exist without you—I am forgetful of everything but seeing you again—my life seems to stop there—I see no further. You have absorb'd me. I have a sensation at the present moment as though I was dissolving—I should be exquisitely miserable without the hope of soon seeing you. I should be afraid to separate myself far from you. My sweet Fanny, will your heart never change? My love, will it? Love is my religion—I could die for that—I could die for you. Yours forever, John Keats [October 13, 1819]
Present for My Future Daughter-in-Law

A mother gives her son a crash course in home ec.

BY MARCIA DESANCTIS @ ECOMO, the Oprah Magazine

If I've served pasta twice a week since my 17-year-old son, Ray, first gummed solid food, that comes to roughly 1,768 pots of the stuff. So one evening last summer, when I asked him for help with dinner, Ray's response surprised me.

"What's a colander again?" he said.

That night, as I explained with a touch of panic that the colander is the thing with the holes in it, I wondered what else I hadn't prepared for. I felt confident that I'd raised a self-reliant boy. But could he boil water? Sew on a button? Wash his clothes without turning them pink? No, no, and no. Suddenly, it hit me like a ton of boiled rigatoni. He'd be leaving the house in a year to attend college. No way was I going to unleash a spoiled princeling into the world.

As parents, we focus on our child's confidence and character, but we don't always consider that we are also raising someone's future roommate, boyfriend, guest, husband, or father. I wanted to know that I'd reared a boy who would...
HOW TO

Speed Up Surfing

Clear your browsing history. Internet browsers store information about each website you visit. After a few days, this data can begin to slow down how fast pages load. To delete your history in Internet Explorer, hit Tools, Internet Options, and the General tab. Then, under Browsing History, click Delete. In Firefox, choose Tools, Clear Recent History. In Google Chrome, hit the wrench icon, choose History and Clear All History.

Pare down bookmarks. Limit yourself to 20 or so bookmarks. In Internet Explorer, go to File, then choose Export to a File. Choose Favorites, and open the HTML file it saves. Copy and paste the links into a Word document. In Firefox, open Bookmarks, copy the ones you want, and paste into a Word doc. In Chrome, go to Bookmarks, Bookmark Manager, Export. Open the HTML document it saves, copy all, and paste into a Word doc.

Trim toolbars. The toolbar at the top of your browser window that offers options such as back or forward can slow down your surfing. If you don’t use a tool several times a day, delete it. In Firefox, go to Tools, Add-ons, and Disable Toolbars. In Internet Explorer, click Toolbars on the View menu, then clear the check box for the tools you want to delete.

WORD OF THE MONTH

“Oversharenting”

Sharing intimate details about your children on social media. The practice can begin before birth with ultrasound images posted to Facebook and extend to first-person Twitter feeds sure to cause adolescent embarrassment.

Source: Wired
NEW from Neutronic Ear
For the FIRST TIME ever...
Introducing Soundwave

THE MOST AFFORDABLE AND DISTINCTIVELY
DIFFERENT HEARING SOLUTION IN THE
WORLD - AND IT'S RECHARGEABLE!

With over 20 years in business, Neutronic Ear has been the innovator in sound amplification technology. Neutronic Ear has done it again with the SOUNDWAVE, the world's first personal sound amplification product with a uniquely removable and rechargeable power tip.

SOUNDWAVE is delivered discreetly to your door, ready to use right out of the box. This eliminates the need to see a hearing specialist, have hearing tests and have numerous fitting appointments.

The SOUNDWAVE is so small and lightweight that when worn it's invisible. With the greatest of ease you can turn the volume control down to cheer with the crowd at a sporting event, and turn it back up for the car ride home - no matter where your adventures take you, you are in control. With a full 8 hour charge life, you can recharge the patented power tip at your convenience and rest assured your SOUNDWAVE will always deliver clear crisp sound. Multiple tube and tip sizes are provided for proper personal fitting while leaving the ear canal open.

It works... but don't take our word for it. Why pay thousands to make everything sound louder when all you really need is Personal Sound Amplification? We're so sure you'll be absolutely thrilled with the quality and effectiveness of your SOUNDWAVE, that we are offering it to the public at a LOW introductory price with our exclusive in-home offer. If, for any reason, you are not amazed by how this product improves your life, simply return it for a refund within 30 days.

Call our Customer Care Specialists TOLL FREE for lowest prices ever.
Please mention code 13SW007

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NeutronicEar
www.neutronicear.com
“This medical alarm may save your life”

Lifeline can provide you the help you need in any emergency. It’s simple, reliable and affordable – one of the best values on the market today. Don’t wait until it’s too late!

Millions of seniors are concerned about their safety. There are products out there that claim to help, but they are difficult to use and even more difficult to afford. Why mess with complicated installations and long term contracts when there’s a service that’s simple, reliable and affordable? The service is the Lifeline, read on and we’ll explain why every senior in America should have one.

What will you do in case of an emergency? If you have Lifeline, all you do is push a button, and you can get the help you need quickly and reliably. That’s because it has been “designed for seniors” by the industry leader in providing helpful and affordable solutions for millions of aging Americans.

First of all, it’s simple to install and use. Unlike other products that require professional installation, this product is “plug and play.” The unit is designed for easy use in an emergency, with large, easy-to-identify buttons.

It’s reliable. From the waterproof pendant to the sophisticated base unit to the state-of-the-art 24/7 call center, the entire system is designed to give you the peace of mind knowing you are never alone in an emergency. You get two-way communication with a live person in Philips Lifeline state-of-the-art Emergency Response Center, and there’s a battery backup in case of a power failure.

Best of all, it’s affordable. There is no equipment charge, no activation fee, no long term contract. Call now and within about a week you or someone you love will have the peace of mind and independence that comes with this remarkable system.

Lifeline
Call now for a special introductory price. Please mention promotional code 46236.
1-888-420-8791
Ask us about AutoAlert!

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How easy would it be for someone to guess your PIN—you know, the four-digit number you use at ATMs and when you make a purchase with a debit card? Researchers at the data-analysis firm DataGenetics scrutinized a database of 3.4 million stolen passwords and uncovered some startling statistics.

For example, a hacker's odds of randomly guessing the correct number is one in 10,000. If he has three tries, odds increase to one in 3,333. If your PIN is your birth date, a year in the 1900s, or an obvious numerical sequence, the odds go way up.

The group found that the three most popular combinations—1234, 1111, and 0000—account for close to 20 percent of all four-digit passwords. Every four-digit combination that starts with 19 ranks above the 80th percentile in popularity. Month/day combinations—those in which the first two digits are between 01 and 12 and the last two are between 01 and 31—are also popular. So choosing your birthday or your birth year makes your password significantly easier to guess.

On the other hand, the least popular combination, 8068, appears less than 0.001 percent of the time. Probably because it's so random—it follows no discernible pattern such as a date or repetition of numbers. Other unpopular PINs are 8093, 9629, 6835, and 7637.

DataGenetics discovered that the combination 2850 was the 22nd-most-popular PIN (most likely because those four numbers appear in a single column from top to bottom on a phone or ATM keypad), that people prefer even numbers to odd (2468 ranks higher than 1357), and that far more passwords start with 1 than any other number.

*As least it was until we published this story.*
Glee
Helped Boost the Record Industry

Fox scored a sleeper hit with the musical series in 2009. But the show's real impact came between airings. As most of the record industry failed, the Glee recordings found staggering success on iTunes. By the end of 2011, the cast had sold more than 11 million albums and another 36 million single tracks. Meanwhile, the 2011 concert tour grossed more than $40 million.

Sex and the City
Encouraged Teens to Communicate

A 2011 Ohio State University study found that undergraduates who viewed an episode of Sex and the City were more than twice as likely to talk to their partners about sexual-health issues. This is especially important considering that, in 2008, a Rand Institute study reported that girls between 12 and 17 who watched the show and other shows with “high sexual content” were more than twice as likely to become pregnant—a ringing endorsement for enforcing the Mature Audience rating.

ER
Made Us Healthier

ER did more than make George Clooney a superstar. It also changed the way America ate. In three 2004 episodes, the show focused on the doctors' orders for a teenager with high blood pressure: exercise, and eat more fruits and vegetables. While the plot sounds humdrum, it scared viewers straight. In 2007, researchers from the University of Southern California's medical school found that viewers who caught these episodes had started walking or exercising more, eating more fruits and vegetables, or getting their blood pressure checked. How can anyone say watching TV is bad for you?
All in a Day’s Work

My client had a problem with the Scottish narrator chosen for a video I was editing.

Client: The voice-over sounds too Scottish in this part. Can we edit it to make him sound less Scottish?

Me: Well... he’s Scottish. Do you want us to get him to record it again?

Client: No, no. Can you just make it less Scottish?

Me: You mean by using a de-Scottish setting?

Client: Yes! Can you do that?

Our supervisor, a saintly grandmother, was rolling away in her cubicle when the human relations specialist dropped by and asked her, in a voice loud enough for all to hear, “Do you have time to discuss your STD?” The room went uncomfortably silent, before she explained, “You know, your Short Term Disability.”

Bernd Schott, West Linn, Oregon

Hmm, Sounds Familiar

Jimmy Fallon asked his viewers to tweet him tales of crazy coworkers. He wasn’t disappointed:

- She acts like she’s on the phone to avoid certain customers. One time, it rang.
- Office was silent, then I hear the guy in the cubicle next to mine go, “Oh, crap, I’m wearing my wife’s socks again.”
- She assigned every chair in our...
Heart-Healthy Nutrition Tips

Eating healthier doesn't mean giving up everything you love; just eat smarter. Instead of an ice cream bar, try sweet fruits, such as a banana. Instead of soda, try a half cup of fruit juice with sparkling water.

Many of us over-indulge in a big portion of meat and a little portion of vegetables. Instead, fill half your plate with fruits and veggies, one-quarter with high-fiber whole grains (like brown rice or whole wheat pasta), and one-quarter with protein, such as beans, poultry, fish, or lean meat. For poultry, eat leaner light meat (breasts) instead of fattier dark meat (legs and thighs), and remove the skin.

Watch your salt intake: over 75% of the salt we consume comes from packaged foods. To eat healthier, read the product's Nutrition Facts Panel to learn how much sodium (salt) it has. The American Heart Association recommends consuming under 1,500 mg per day. Drink only two 12-ounce sugary soft drinks a week.

Eat at least 4 fruits and 2-3 vegetables every day, in a variety of colors and types. For example: 1 piece of fruit, ½ cup of dried fruit, ½ cup of fresh or canned or frozen fruit, and ½ cup of fruit juice.

Select fat-free or low-fat dairy products: for example, fat-free milk instead of whole milk.

When you're craving something sweet, eat raisins, a baked apple, or fresh or frozen fruit. If you're craving something crunchy, eat apples, carrots, celery, radishes, raw broccoli or cauliflower. Eating healthy saves money, too—each of these costs less than $1: an apple, a banana, an orange, a pear, 6-10 baby carrots, a hard-boiled egg, a 6-oz yogurt, and a half cup of cooked oatmeal.

For more healthy diet tips and recipes, see heart.org/nutrition.
conference room a name. The other day, she asked me, “Don’t you usually sit on Tim?”

**Don’t Call Us, We’ll Call You**

Looking for a job? Learn from these miscues made by real job applicants.

- Candidate specified that her résumé was set up to be sung to the tune of *The Brady Bunch* theme.
- Candidate’s résumé was decorated with pink rabbits.
- Candidate claimed to be able to speak Antarctic when applying for a job to work in Antarctica.
- Candidate listed “to make dough” under her objective on her résumé.
- Candidate’s cover letter talked about her family’s being in the mob.

Wanting to look my best for the office party, I splurged on a new dress, strappy high-heel shoes, and, to add a fashion statement to my newly pedicured toenails, a toe ring.

That evening, I sashayed into the club, head high, and approached my boss’s wife. Pointing to my painted, bejeweled toes, I asked, “Notice anything?”

“Yes,” she gushed. “That’s quite a bunion you have.”

*Zoe Schreiber*, Sun City West, Arizona

**When I worked at a video store,**

I mentioned to a customer that her son already had a film out.

“What film?” she asked.

Realizing that it came from the adult section, and too embarrassed to tell her the title, I mumbled, “Uh ... I’m not sure.”

“That’s all right,” she said, putting her movie back. “I’ll just watch whatever he got.”

*Paul Breon*, Northumberland, Pennsylvania

**THINK BEFORE YOU GIFT**

Looking for that perfect Valentine’s Day present? Nothing says love like this beautiful beaded necklace and matching earrings. From etsy.com

Your favorite new joke, funny anecdote, or crazy news story might be worth $$$.

See page 84 for details.
Answers
The first-quarter lead proved transient, as the Ravens racked up 42 points in the second.
2. vignette—[B] short literary sketch or scene. Dickens created characters from prose vignettes like little photographs.
4. scintilla—[B] minute amount. There’s not one scintilla of evidence against my client.
5. myopic—[B] short-sighted. Rim’s myopic view of the project surely led to its collapse.
6. irascible—[C] marked by a short temper. If Jack were any more irascible, he’d have smoke coming out his ears.
7. expeditiously—[A] promptly and efficiently. As a pick-me-up, a triple espresso works expeditiously.
8. tabard—[A] short-sleeved coat. My equestrian costume consists of a wooden sword and this tabard.
9. arietta—[C] short melody. The goldfinch trilled an arietta, reminding us that spring would come soon.
10. nigglings—[A] petty. Mom, you’re driving me bonkers with your nigglings complaints!
11. aphorism—[A] concise saying. My father has an aphorism for any situation.
13. nib—[B] point of a pen. A faulty nib, Beth complained, ruined her first pass at her final drawing project.
14. exiguous—[A] inadequate, scanty. Ever a big eater, Art found even the jumbo burger a bit exiguous.
15. truncate—[C] shorten by lopping off. According to mythology, the gruesome Procrustes would truncate his guests if they were too long for the bed.

VOCABULARY RATINGS
- 9 and below: Came up short
- 10–12: Short and sweet
- 13–15: Made short work of it

TABLET BONUS
To play an Interactive version of Word Power on your iPad or Kindle Fire, download the Reader’s Digest app.

FEBRUARY:
FEB-YOO OR FEB-ROO?
Merriam-Webster says either: The commonly heard “Feb-yoo-ary” and the seemingly more precise “Feb-roo-ary” are both correct (the dictionary lists the “yoo” version first, in fact). The loss of the “r” is by a process called dissimilation, when a speaker changes or omits one of two identical or closely related sounds.
Here are dozens of activities that help your heart. Take a walk to the park, establish a daily cardio, or simply do some yoga. The key is to move and get your body moving at least 30 minutes a day. Always start slowly and gradually increase your activity level. It's also important to eat a healthy diet, rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy. Drink plenty of water and limit your intake of sugary drinks and unhealthy fats. Make sure to get enough sleep and try to manage stress, as it can negatively impact your heart health. Overall, maintaining a healthy lifestyle is crucial for a healthy heart.
Humor in Uniform

Our tour guide at historical Arlington National Cemetery thought he had an answer for everything... until he met our students.

"Excuse me," said one kid. "Are the graves in alphabetical order?" William Cullem, Lincoln, Nebraska

Classic We Love

On the first morning of boot camp, our unit was dragged out of bed by our drill sergeant and made to assemble outside. "My name is Sergeant Jackson," he snarled. "Is there anyone here who thinks he can whip me?"

My six-foot-three, 280-pound brother, who had enlisted with me, raised his hand. "Yes, sir, I do."

"We must act before daybreak—by noon, it may no longer be trending!"

Our sergeant grabbed him by the arm and led him out in front of the group. "Men," he said, "this is my new assistant. Now, is there anyone here who thinks he can whip both of us?" Robert Norris

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See page 97 for our Reads section.
Do the **FOODS** you eat

**HARM OR HEAL?**

Discover the best foods to help you get healthy, look better, live longer, and fight disease.

Cut through the food confusion with the ultimate A-Z guide.

Do you really know what’s good for you? With so many conflicting health stories in the news, Reader's Digest is proud to bring you the definitive, up-to-date guide to food and your health. The original, mega-selling edition transformed the way we look at food, and this latest edition is something no home should be without! For your free 14-day preview, visit www.rd.com/foodsthatheal.

Preview it FREE for 14 days. Only at rd.com/foodsthatheal
Understanding Cholesterol

Cholesterol itself isn’t bad—it’s simply a substance the body produces and uses. There are two types: “good” (HDL, high-density lipoprotein) and “bad” (LDL, low-density lipoprotein). Cholesterol becomes a problem if you have too much of one or too little of the other, which increases your risk for coronary heart disease, heart attack, and stroke. High cholesterol has no symptoms, so get a blood test—every five years; more often if you’re at risk.

What’s the ideal level? Less than 200 total HDL and LDL. A total of 200 to 239 means higher risk of heart attack and stroke. More than 240 total is considered high cholesterol—more than twice the risk as the desirable level. Keep in mind:

- The higher your HDL, the better.
- Women’s HDL should be 50 and higher.
- The lower your LDL, the better.
- The ideal LDL is less than 70.
- More than 190 LDL is very high.

If your HDL is less than 50, you’re at higher risk for heart attack.

Your body produces about 75% of cholesterol in your liver; the other 25% comes from what you eat—mostly from animal products, such as meat, eggs, dairy, as well as tropical oils like palm and coconut oil. To reduce your cholesterol, lose weight (if you need to), become physically active, and eat healthful foods:

- Deeply colored fruits and vegetables
- Lean meats and poultry without skin
- Fatty fish (such as salmon)
- Fiber-rich grain products (cereals, brown rice, whole-grain bread and pasta)
- Fat-free or low-fat milk products

Some people may do everything right—but still have high cholesterol because of their genetic inheritance. If that’s you, your physician may prescribe medication to help you lower your cholesterol. To learn more, go to heart.org/cholesterol.
Caregivers and Support

With heart disease and stroke patients, caregiving often arises from a crisis. If you are someone’s caregiver, you have many new responsibilities to help your loved one heal and adapt to a different lifestyle. One of these is communicating effectively with family, friends, and healthcare professionals, because the relationship you build with them can make a big difference. Be sure the medical team understands your role; learn as much as you can about your loved one’s condition; take notes to stay organized when meeting with staff; keep records about your loved one’s treatments and changing conditions.

Taking care of someone who has had a heart attack or heart disease can be stressful in its own way. Research shows that caregivers who devote themselves to their loved ones but forget about their own needs become ill. To be an effective caregiver, you need to first take care of yourself:

- Recognize that caregiving is a marathon, not a sprint. Don’t try to do too much all at once.
- Eat right (this also sets a good example for your loved one).
- Get enough exercise—and enough sleep.
- Don’t be afraid to delegate or ask for help from others: it’s not a sign of weakness. Suggest specific things others can do.
- Don’t isolate yourself: stay connected to the outside world, even if only online. Talk to other caregivers, too: they understand what you and your loved one are experiencing.
- Watch for signs of caregiver burnout: excessive drinking, use of sleeping pills, changes in appetite, depression, insomnia, difficulty concentrating, neglecting your loved one.

For more resources that can help you (so you can help your loved one), see www.heart.org/caregivers.
Talk about proven weight-loss success—just look at the thousands of Facebook fans who post daily to brag about how the Digest Diet helped them get slim, or check out Adrienne Farr (previous page; see her story on page 105), who went from a size 18 to a size 6 after following the diet for ten months.

But the plan doesn't just drive the scale down—it also makes your whole body healthier (readers have lowered cholesterol, blood pressure, and blood sugar; improved sleep apnea; and reduced chronic pain, to name a few of the benefits). That's because it relies on whole, healthy foods and promotes habits that are naturally "detoxifying." Unlike fad detoxes and cleanses—which most experts agree are best avoided—this plan packs your body with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and essential fats while helping you fight stress, get active, and snag restorative sleep.

So if you're looking for a fresh start to 2013, we've got a one-week plan inspired by our Digest Diet to help you achieve your health and weight-loss goals. In addition to helping you drop a few pounds—testers lost an average of six pounds in four days, and our top loser dropped ten pounds!—the natural fat-releasing foods and behaviors detox your body and revitalize your energy safely, with no gimmicks.

*Check with your doctor before starting a new eating or exercise plan.*
Your One-Week Health Jump Start

On days one through three, you'll coax your body into weight loss with key science-backed habits. Once you start a healthy habit, try to follow it every day of the jump start. Also use this time to stock up on the foods you'll be eating on the plan from days four through seven (visit rd.com/digestdiet for a printable shopping list).

DAY 1
Sleep eight hours
If you're skimping on sleep, you're sabotaging your weight-loss efforts and your health, plain and simple. Like a magic eraser that undoes the day's damage, sleep lowers levels of stress hormones and other inflammatory chemicals. A large body of evidence links too little sleep to an increased risk of high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, depression, and obesity. Sleep also balances the appetite hormones leptin and ghrelin, which is why you feel hungrier and indulge in poorer eating behaviors when you're tired.

DAY 2
Hydrate with every meal
Our bodies are about 60 percent water, so it's no wonder we need lots of it to function optimally. Water aids in digestion and circulation, maintains body temperature, fuels muscles, and more. It helps your kidneys—one of your body's main detoxifying organs—filter and cleanse blood of toxins. It may promote weight loss by helping you distinguish thirst from hunger and by quenching cravings for junk food. A recent study in Appetite found that children ate more veggies when they consumed them with water than with a sugary drink. Aim for an eight-ounce glass every time you eat.

FAT-RELEASING SNACKS
These nutritious bites quash hunger and are part of the daily meal plan (see page 102).

Ricotta Boats: Cut a green bell pepper into quarters, and seed. Top each with 2 tsps. fat-free ricotta cheese and a couple of good grinds of black pepper.

Cheesy Roll-up: Roll up 1 reduced-fat mozzarella stick in 2 large, crunchy romaine lettuce leaves.

Tomato Cream Spread: Stir 4 finely chopped grape tomatoes into ⅛ cup fat-free cream cheese. Season with a pinch of oregano and black pepper to taste. Spread on pieces of celery or fresh fennel.

Tangy Yogurt Dip: Stir together ½ cup 0% Greek yogurt and ⅛ tsp. olive oil. Season with a pinch of curry powder or chili powder and black pepper to taste. Serve with raw or lightly steamed broccoli or cauliflower florets or green beans for dipping.
The Nurses and Their Babies

When the power died, the nurses in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at New York University's Lagone Medical Center in Lower Manhattan didn't wait for the backup generator to kick in. They immediately snapped into emergency mode.

Sandra Kyong Bradbury, 30, and the other nurses in the unit knew that for the 20 babies in the NICU, some of whom were dependent on ventilators, even a temporary loss of power could be deadly. Using flashlights and the glow from their cell phones, they tended to each baby, checking vital signs and manually inflating ventilator bags. "Luckily it happened between shifts, so we had additional nurses on the floor," says Bradbury.

Then came worse news. With no power, the nurses would have to quickly move the babies out of the medical center, even though floodwaters covered the streets around the hospital. "Think of Bradbury, "It took a lot of coordination."

With police officers, medical students, and firefighters helping to illuminate the stairwells, Bradbury slowly descended nine flights of stairs with a four-pound baby boy wrapped in a blanket in her arms. She repeated to herself: Take it slow. Be steady with every step. Don't slip. Don't fall. After the nurses reached the lobby, they climbed into waiting ambulances with the babies, doctors, and the babies' parents. "Because they were in our arms, we were able to constantly monitor the babies' color and heart rates," says Bradbury.

Thanks to her and the other NICU nurses, all 20 infants were moved safely to one of three area hospitals. "We care for these babies every day," says Bradbury. "This experience shows that we protect them as if they're our own children."
The Little Engine That Could

Before Hurricane Sandy slammed the East Coast, Jennifer Kaufman, 47, had used her little 2005 silver Vespa just to zip around Washington Township, New Jersey, where she lived. Kaufman, a high school English and computer teacher, had never thought of the scooter as an emergency vehicle.

The day after the storm, though, Kaufman heard reports of the devastation in her area and quickly decided to volunteer in nearby Little Ferry.

39.67 FEET
Height of the tallest wave recorded during the storm

where the Hackensack River had flooded the town. And she knew, with the roads nearly impassable and an impending gas shortage, that her Volkswagen wouldn't navigate the tough conditions as well as her fuel-efficient scooter. So she headed toward Little Ferry, with the scooter's tiny under-seat trunk stuffed with blankets and warm clothing.

When she got there, "huge piles of drywall, carpeting, and people's personal belongings were out on the curb," says Kaufman. She helped a woman clean out her ruined home and pitched in to collect food and warm clothing for needy residents.

In the frigid days following the storm, Kaufman used her scooter in a resourceful way. Because of gas rationing, local police, ambulance workers, and rescue volunteers were having a hard time getting to the...
but O’Day and several hundred others decided to stay put in their houses in spite of a mandatory evacuation order from the mayor.

O’Day, a veteran firefighter, had planned to keep watch on the house during the worst of the storm. But as Sandy bore down, a surge of water overtook the neighborhood from two sides: the Atlantic Ocean to the south and Jamaica Bay to the north. O’Day and Dowdell’s home flooded immediately. “The water just kept coming,” he says. “It was mayhem. And then the fire came.”

Wind gusts of 70 mph quickly spread the blaze—thought to have started when a transformer exploded—igniting the bungalows and two-story houses built only a few feet from one another, in rows. Flooded streets prevented firefighters from getting close enough to douse the flames.

His house filled with five feet of water, O’Day gathered what he knew were some of Dowdell’s most precious things: photographs of her late husband with their sons. After gathering the photos, O’Day sought refuge at a nearby evacuation site.

Dowdell and O’Day’s home was spared from the fire, but many in the community weren’t as fortunate. Within three hours, the blaze leveled 31 homes, leaving scorched foundations in its wake and displacing hundreds of people. Miraculously, no one died.

“Add together all the fires and disasters I’ve seen. They don’t compare with this,” says O’Day.

Still, one of the few structures that remained untouched was the memorial to the 30 Breezy Point firefighters lost on 9/11. A cross made of steel from the World Trade Center, near O’Day and Dowdell’s house. Says O’Day, “It’s right near the edge of the beach, but it’s standing.”

190

Number of firefighters deployed to Breezy Point, Queens
as a regulator of blood sugar, cueing muscle, liver, and fat cells to extract sugar from the blood and use it for energy or store it as fat. We now know that the hormone is a master multitasker. In the brain, it helps neurons take up glucose for energy and regulates neurotransmitters crucial for memory and learning. It also encourages plasticity—the process by which neurons make new connections. And it is important for the function of blood vessels, which supply the brain with oxygen and glucose.

As a result, reducing the level of insulin in the brain can immediately impair cognition. Spatial memory, in particular, seems to suffer when you block insulin uptake in the hippocampus. Conversely, a boost of insulin seems to improve its functioning.

How “Brain Diabetes” Develops
When people frequently gorge on fatty or sugary food, their insulin spikes repeatedly. Muscle, liver, and fat cells stop responding to the hormone and don’t mop up glucose and fat in the blood. As a result, the pancreas desperately works overtime to

sum up to control the glucose, and levels of the two molecules skyrocket. The theory:

These constantly high insulin levels also overwhelm the brain, which then becomes less responsive to insulin, impairing the ability to think and form memories, before leading to permanent neural damage.

De la Monte’s study on the rats with dementia was one of the first experiments to confirm that a disrupted insulin system can lead to Alzheimer’s symptoms. There are others: William Klein at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, has found that triggering diabetes created Alzheimer’s-like brain changes in rabbits. Ewan McNay of the University at Albany in New York and Suzanne Craft at the University of Washington in Seattle fed rats a high-fat diet for 12 months, which destroyed their ability to regulate insulin and led to diabetes. They also had trouble navigating a maze and looked “much like an Alzheimer’s patient,” says McNay.

Animal studies can reveal only so much about human disease, but an

“The epidemic of type 2 diabetes is likely to be followed by an epidemic of dementia.”

Ewan McNay of the University at Albany in New York
most Frankensteinian demonstration confirms that the brains of people with Alzheimer's are insulin-resistant. Using cadaver brains, Steven Arnold at the University of Pennsylvania bathed various samples in insulin; tissue from people who had not had Alzheimer's seemed to spring back to life, triggering a cascade of reactions suggestive of synaptic activity. In contrast, the neurons of those who had Alzheimer's barely reacted at all. "The insulin signaling is paralyzed," says Arnold.

Another line of research suggests how: insulin and beta-amyloid are both broken down by the same enzyme. Under normal circumstances, that enzyme can deal with both, but if too much insulin is washing around, the enzyme gets overwhelmed. The beta-amyloid gets neglected and begins to accumulate, perhaps into the toxic plaques that kill brain cells.

By studying rat neurons, Klein has found that toxic clusters of beta-amyloid attack and destroy brain tissue covered in insulin receptors, which would result in immediate cognitive impairment. Worse still, this insulin resistance encourages cells to make even more beta-amyloid, which then goes on to harm more brain cells, triggering a vicious circle.

**Insulin Innovation—Treating and Preventing Dementia**

Researchers are keen to point out that this research is still in its early days. Klein, for example, thinks that lack of insulin in the brain may be just one of many triggers for beta-amyloid toxins, so he's searching for other culprits. After all, most people with Alzheimer's don't have full-blown type 2 diabetes, though many do have some insulin resistance.

Even so, the research should ring warning bells for the future. In the United States alone, 19 million people have been diagnosed with diabetes, while 79 million are considered prediabetic, showing some of the early signs of insulin resistance. If Alzheimer's and type 2 diabetes share a similar mechanism, levels of dementia may follow a similar trajectory.

But even if someone doesn't develop diabetes, a bad diet might set the wheels in motion for brain degeneration, according to an ongoing study led by Craft. For one month, volunteers—none of whom had diabetes—are fed high in saturated fat and sugar, while a control group ate a diet low in sugar and saturated fat. In just four weeks, the former had higher levels of insulin in their blood and significantly higher beta-amyloid levels in their spinal fluid. The control group showed decreases in both.

On the plus side, a new understanding of the disease might lead to new treatments. Craft, for instance, is investigating whether a boost of
ON HANGERS

The whole thing didn't start out very romantically. One day in the mid-1950s, Jo Ellen (Joey) Schwanke brought home a long, black dress for a formal event and eagerly modeled it for her husband, Mel.

"He looked at it, and he said, 'Ye gods! You look like Kate Smith.'" Joey laughs now. But for anyone who has forgotten the very full-figured Ms. Smith, Joey adds, "That's bad."

Mel, who owned a florist business with his wife in Fremont, Nebraska, took charge. He had always admired Joey's beauty (still does!), and he wanted others to appreciate her.

"So Mel went out and got some orange brocade and gold lame, and then he had a dress made with a [loose-fitting] Empire waist so I didn't look as big—because I've always been a good size," says Joey. "He even found a shoe man who would cover my shoes in orange brocade."

But that's not all. Ever since then, the Schwankes have gone to work dressed like salt and pepper shakers: They match. That's because Mel made sure that his tie or shirt was made from the same material as her dress.

"We just do everything together," says Joey, who seems to do the talking for both of them. "We go out for lunch at noon, and everybody knows us, and they check out our outfits."

Most, not surprisingly, are floral. Right now, they have 146 matching combos in the closet, all made by the seamstress they depended on until her death in 2008, Valiere "Mother" Hubbard.

When Joey met Mel, she was 15, and he was a 20-year-old Marine who'd been shipped home from Okinawa, Japan, after being hit by a hand grenade. Mel had planned to be an undertaker, but Joey had a happier idea: "I want you to go work for my daddy," a florist.

What a perfect fit.
As a Hardcover

Come high school graduation, parents can get a little weepy—especially fathers over their daughters. But Bryan Martin wanted to make sure his daughter, Brenna, didn’t leave their Selma, North Carolina, home for college without understanding just how much she meant to him. So he gave her the ultimate present: her own childhood in hardcover.

Beginning with Brenna’s first graduation, the one from kindergarten, Bryan took the Dr. Seuss book Oh, the Places You’ll Go to his daughter’s teachers and had them claim a page to write down their comments about Brenna at the end of each school year. Her elementary school teachers’ notes mentioned pigtails and giggles. Her high school teachers wrote about her “wit and sharp thinking.”

“Yes, the intended effect occurred,” Brenna wrote on her blog. “I burst out in tears. It is astounding to receive something this thoughtful and nostalgic.”

In the Mail

“It’s too pretty to wear!” or “Too expensive!” That’s what Jean Tiffin of Hancock, Maine, always said upon receiving a gift. So her daughter Carol was stumped as Jean approached her 89th birthday. “There’s little she needs except food, medicine, attention…”

Aha! Attention. But how could she shower her mother with that? Then it came to her. “Mom craves mail so much that she thinks she’s hit the jackpot when I bring her the Vermont Country Store catalog from the mailbox!” Carol says. So Carol posted an appeal for birthday cards on Facebook. She wrote to Jean’s home church in Memphis and e-mailed Jean’s
On a Tree

For 44 Christmases, Ann Padmos had a deal with her husband and their three kids. They could decorate one side of the tree, but one side was hers alone. Too busy tinseling the tree, nobody questioned the arrangement. But what they never noticed is that every year she added one new ornament to it. A glass pony, a clutch of feathers, a gold-painted egg—each ornament for the son she’d lost touch with.

In the 1950s, a young woman unwed and pregnant had few options. Ann’s was to take the train from her home in Michigan to Kansas City, Missouri, where “girls like her” gave birth and were not even allowed to sneak a peek at their babies. Ann not only insisted on peeking—for ten otherworldly days, she also took care of the boy.

And then she was back on the train. Her mother, sick with cancer, died soon after Ann came home—but not before whispering, “If you ever find him, tell him I loved him too.”

Forty-four years later, that’s exactly what Ann did.

Jeffrey Quibell had been adopted by a family in Kansas City. He is married with kids and owns a software company in Missouri. For fun, he sings in a barbershop quartet at nursing homes. One day, he was doing just that when a visitor said, “Sing happy birthday to me and my birth mom!” Intrigued, Jeffrey asked how the two women had been reunited.

“Forty-eight hours later, I had my birth records too,” says Jeffrey.

After some intensive sleuthing, he tracked down Ann in Michigan. Soon, she and her husband were on a 12-hour road trip for the reunion. When they got to Jeffrey’s house, there he was, on the porch. Ann leaped out to hug him—but her husband yelled, “Stop!”

“He was trying to get the camera working so he could take a picture of our first hug,” recalls Ann. “Finally we just said the heck with it!” And after a lifetime of thinking it would never happen, she held her son in her arms.

Years were lost, but the love wasn’t. It was stored in a box of ornaments and never missed a Christmas.
ON THE ROAD

Kevin Adkins had always wanted to go to Montana, so just before his 20th birthday, his dad took him there. Sadly, it was in an urn.

Kevin had died almost two years earlier, a few weeks after he'd moved out of his childhood home in Gilbert, Arizona. He worked as an electrician, a truck driver, and a chef. People showed up for a house-warming party. Around midnight, Kevin started doing shots, and at one point, he left a voice mail for his sister, crowning, "See you guys tomorrow?" Then he passed out.

It wasn't until around 4 a.m. that his buddies got worried enough to call 911. Paramedics tried to revive him at the scene, then transported him to the hospital. A few hours later, the cops knocked on his parents' door. "It didn't even click in," says his father, Barry Adkins. He thought the officers were looking for a lost dog.

One year later, Barry carried Kevin's ashes in a lightweight, handmade urn for 1,000 miles from Arizona to Montana. He'd stop at schools and talk about Kevin's last night—and that knock on the door. He called it Kevin's Last Walk.

Barry spoke to as many as 10,000 kids, some as young as eight, some as old as his son, who was 18 when he died. Barry liked it when audience members spoke up, and many admitted that they saw themselves in his stories. "The most you can hope when you lose a child is to make something good come from it," he says.

Then he got an e-mail about another party and another boy who passed out drunk. One kid present had heard Barry speak a month earlier, and when all the other partygoers were too scared to call an ambulance, the kid threw the drunk boy in his car and drove to an urgent-care facility. From there, the barely breathing boy was helicoptered to a hospital and put on a ventilator. Barry later received a call from that boy's father, a doctor.

"I'm not very good at this," said the doctor, choking up. "But you saved my kid's life."

STICK TO THE McNUGGETS

"We'll have a cheeseburger with no ketchup, please," I told the person taking my order at McDonald's.

"But the ketchup is the best part," she said.

"I know, but my son is allergic to tomatoes."

"In that case, don't worry," she assured me. "The cheeseburger doesn't come with tomatoes."

Kimberly Deane, West Sacramento, California
July 1963, rock-and-roll legend Elvis Presley went to Hollywood to make his 15th movie, Viva Las Vegas. The plot revolved around Elvis as a guitar-playing race-car driver whose life is upended after meeting Rusty, a swimming instructor with show business aspirations.

With the casting of the dynamic Ann-Margret as Rusty, Elvis found the first costar who could match him in looks, musicality, and screen appeal. They were an electrifying pair—Viva Las Vegas, directed by George Sidney, who had directed it, introduced Ann-Margret to Elvis. Simultaneously, the two stars started to say, “I’ve heard a lot about you,” then stopped in mid-sentence and broke into nervous laughter. They were dressed like young professionals, she in a white knit, double-breasted jacket and A-line skirt, and he in a suit and tie. Their conservative appearance hid the fact that they both shared a devil within.

“We were quiet, polite, and careful,” Ann-Margret wrote in her autobiography. “But I knew what was going to happen once we got to know each other. Elvis did too. We both felt a current that went straight through us. It would become a force we couldn’t control.”

Ann-Margret was the female Elvis, all beauty, sex, and talent. The 22-year-old redhead spoke in a breathy, morning-after voice and projected a paradox of Midwestern reserve and raw sensuality. On day one, they realized the relationship would be serious. “It was like discovering a soul mate. ... stay on the outside, but unbridled within.”

Ann-Margret wrote. “Both of us, despite fame, had remained childlike and emotionally dependent. We wanted to find that same unqualified love that our parents gave us. ... He touched something deep within my psyche.”
Double Take
When they began to rehearse their dance routines, they saw mirror images. It was uncanny, she wrote.

"The minute they looked into each other’s eyes, they clicked," says Joe Esposito, who worked for Elvis. "You could just feel the energy."

Elvis asked Joe to find out if Ann-Margret was single. Learning she was, Elvis picked up the phone. "Rusty," he said, using her character’s name in the film, "how about going out with me and the guys to see a show?" It was a group date, innocent and friendly. But in time, Elvis took her to his rented Hollywood house. Their late-night talks revealed a shared love of motorcycles, music, and performing.

Soon they were wheeling through Los Angeles on their Harleys and pedaling around Bel Air "on a bicycle built for double takes."

"People honked, we wrote," Ann-Margret.

His Inspiration
It was the worst possible time for Elvis to fall in love—only four months earlier, he had installed his teenage girlfriend, Priscilla Beaulieu, in his Memphis home and in bed. But neither Elvis nor his kittenish costar could deny what was happening.

"Ann-Margret really was the love of his life," says Marty Lackey, the sole female member of Elvis’s entourage, known as the Memphis Mafia.

"They were like kids, laughing and having fun," she recalls.

They spent a lot of time together, and as Lamar Fike, another of the Memphis Mafia, remembers, "it blew our minds" that he was with her alone so much. "He’d jump in that Rolls-Royce and stay gone. Nobody knew where he was, except that he was with her."

Part of the time, he was visiting her parents, an indication of how serious he was about the girl he called Rusty Ammo and Thumper, the code name she would later use when she called his Memphis home, Graceland. As for what she called him: "When I like someone," she told a magazine, "I say scoobie. Elvis is scoobie."

The Memphis Mafia, half in love with her themselves, could hardly stand the thought of the two of them together. When they were on location in Las Vegas, Elvis and Ann-Margret secluded themselves.

The guys "aggravated them" as much as they could. Marty Lackey recounts, playing pranks like stuffing newspaper under the door and lighting it. "They tried everything. But Elvis and Ann-Margret would not come out of that suite."

Viva Las Vegas became Elvis’s highest-grossing film. The title song became one of his most popular songs. The movie resuscitated Elvis’s spirits after a string of films with lightweight plots and embarrassing production values failed to challenge him as an actor. The press picked up on Elvis’s relationship with Ann-Margret, the inspiration for his creative renewal. "They held hands."
They disappear into his dressing room between shots. They lunch together in seclusion," reported the Associated Press.

They likely talked marriage. But Elvis had some stalling to do. Earlier, he had described Ann-Margret to Priscilla as merely "a typical Hollywood starlet." Then one afternoon Priscilla read a Memphis headline: "Romance for Elvis and Ann-Margret."

That evening, she grilled him on the phone. "Is there anything to it?" she demanded.

"Hell, no," Elvis lied. "She comes around here mostly on weekends on her motorcycle. She hangs out and jokes with the guys. That's it."

But Priscilla's intuition told her otherwise. She knew he had little affairs all the time, but the fact that everybody called Ann-Margret "the female Elvis" and that she had the same effect on men that Elvis had on women scared her.

"She was very concerned that Elvis was not going to marry her," says Joe Esposito. "I can't even think what was going through her mind. That had to be tough for her."

Mistrust and Jealousy

According to Elvis's cousin Billy Smith, Elvis and Priscilla had many arguments about Ann-Margret, usually upstairs at Graceland. Then Priscilla came up with a new strategy. She watched Ann-Margret's movies and learned some of her dance moves, then began dressing like her and doing her hair like hers too.

When Elvis began his next picture, Kissin' Cousins, Priscilla insisted on accompanying him to Los Angeles. She went to size up the competition, knowing that Ann-Margret was still in his life. Priscilla made sure to wear her five-star diamond ring.

But Ann-Margret stunned the entertainment world with an interview from London, where she was attending the premiere of Bye Bye Birdie. She was in love with Elvis, she announced.

She didn't know if they would marry. Priscilla was humiliated by the London interview. Elvis suggested she go back to Memphis until the publicity died down.

"I'm tired of these secrets," she fumed. She picked up a flower vase and threw it against a wall. "I hate her! Why doesn't she keep her ass in Sweden where it belongs?"

Elvis went on the offensive. "Look! I didn't know this was going to get out of hand. I want a woman who's..."
because I want a wife who isn't in show business.

But Elvis couldn't shut down his feelings or even tell Ann-Margret to her face, so he did nothing.

It confused her. She thought about the time when her parents were living with her. Her landlords were a Danish sea captain and his wife by the name of Jorgensen. Elvis had met them, and after Mr. Jorgensen passed away, Elvis suggested they go see Mrs. Jorgensen to cheer her up.

"He was so sensitive and considerate, he knew about honor and manners," Ann-Margret would say. So where was he now?

Marty and Joe ran into her one day.

"What the hell is wrong with your boss?" she asked. "One minute we're in love, and the next minute, I don't hear from him again. He won't even take my calls."

As time passed, she rationalized it: She was independent and wouldn't take orders from anyone, and Elvis required slave-like devotion.

For many reasons, as Ann-Margret later put it in her autobiography, "both of us knew that no matter how much we loved each other, we weren't going to last."

Ann-Margret began dating actor Roger Smith. Eventually, they got engaged. When Elvis found out, he was upset. Elvis knew they were seeing each other but refused to believe it was serious.

The pressure mounted on Elvis to follow through on his implied promise of marriage to Priscilla. His manager, Colonel Tom Parker, felt that at 32, Elvis was too old for his free-spirited lifestyle and should settle down. Meanwhile, Priscilla, now 21, thought that if Elvis had a ring on his finger, it might put an end to his philandering.

On the morning of May 1, 1967, Elvis and Priscilla said "I do" before a Las Vegas judge. Three days later, the newlyweds flew back to Memphis. Priscilla conceived Elvis's only child, Lisa Marie, nine months after the wedding.

On May 8, exactly one week after Elvis and Priscilla tied the knot, Ann-Margret married Roger Smith, also in Las Vegas. When she opened an engagement in the same city on June 7, Elvis sent her flowers in the shape of a guitar.

He would do so for each of her Vegas bookings until his death. ten years later, on August 16, 1977.

LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE  137

Did you hear that the world's biggest optimist fell out a window on the 79th floor? As he sailed past the 20th floor, he was overheard saying, "Doing OK so far!"
You stand a much better chance of mentally withstanding war if you can visualize it.

to try out for the legendary program, a candidate must be exceptionally tough, in body and mind. The chosen few must then survive up to 18 months of training so physically and mentally arduous that nearly 80 percent of this superior group of sailors never get past the fourth week.

So who makes it, and who washes out? The answer lies not in biceps size or speed but in a cognitive test the would-be SEALs take on induction day. The test measures 24 different personality traits, but the results of the "adversity tolerance" section, which explores how the candidates respond to extreme stress, are what best predicts who makes the cut.

"There are people who make a negative loop about the situation they are placed in," says Potterat, the SEAL psychologist. "Those are people who can't cope." It's the people who take control of stressful challenges "in any environment," he says, who will eventually wear the SEAL uniform.

"Clearly something Darwinian is happening with the SEALs," adds Potterat. "These are exceptional human beings." Nevertheless, it's the intense stress-management training, he says, that turns a tough sailor into a SEAL. Weeding out the less resilient candidates is just the first step.

Potterat describes the classified SEAL training program as highly mental. It uses techniques you can find in self-help books, such as breathing exercises that reset the fear system, calming self-talk, and compartmentalization of trauma until the job is done. Of course, SEAL candidates have to apply these methods while sleep-deprived and physically exhausted, during live-fire combat exercises; and much of the SEAL training is performed underwater, with instructors intentionally creating obstacles and cutting off the air supply to panic the recruits.

"Our training is all about worst-case scenarios and pushing us to the limits," says Lu Lasra, director of mentorship for Naval Special Warfare and a 30-year veteran of the program. "You stand a much better chance of mentally withstanding war if you can visualize it and prepare your brain for it than if you've never thought of it, never been able to picture
The U.S. military insists that soldiers are made, not born.

emotional responses to that experience of battle, triggering a cascade of stress responses that were helpful in battle but not now, in real life.

After initial brain scans showed the Marines "overresponding" to the negative images and other stressors, Paulus put them through an eight-week mindfulness course. The program included "refocusing exercises" in which the vets were taught to mentally recast their traumatic battlefield memories and treat them simply as feelings or as obstacles to overcome. They also learned controlled breathing, meditation, and other relaxation techniques.

Early results from follow-up testing and scans point to improved resiliency among the Marines, or something closer to the warrior brain response, with a less reactive stress circuit and more control from the cognitive part of the brain. "This isn't a new idea," Paulus says, citing a historical precedent. "Samurai war-
riors famously used meditation, likely to balance the experiences of war.

Science Makes Soldiers

While some of the research the U.S. military has commissioned suggests that there are those who simply do not belong in the armed forces, it adamantly believes that good soldiers and sailors are made, not born. That's why it has spent millions rebooting boot camp and basic training to include high-tech simulations like the Trajex and Battlemind that closely mirror the chaos of the battlefield.

"We have always been of the mindset that we can make a good sailor out of anyone who comes through that front gate," says Michael Belanger.

And science supports the idea. Huda Akil, PhD, who studies the neurobiology of fear and anxiety for the Navy at the University of Michigan, has coaxed resilience and "hardiness" from the most timid animals. Akil works with rats, which have a stress response somewhat similar to our own; they either cower and hide or become aggressive and proactive.

"This is genetically predetermined," Akil says. "We can breed curious, brave rats or timid, anxious rats. And after a few generations, they are very predictively one way or the other."

But Akil found she could make an anxious rat braver by slightly stressing the animal. Making males fight or enriching the environment, with a toy, for example, can change them from timid to curious. "The brain is very plastic," she says. "We found we can't encourage a timid rat to be a high-risk taker, but we can move him off the timid side of the scale into average territory."

The War on Fear

Back on the Trajex, the attack continues. Operating from a command center in the belly of the vessel, special effects engineers orchestrate the sights, sounds, and smells of naval warfare, pressing buttons to create explosions and fires and to trigger the screams of the wounded. Ceiling fans blow ocean-scented breezes, and recordings of gull cries echo above the bridge. Inside the ship, scattered around a blasted hull modeled after the real-life bombing of the USS Cole, mangled mannequins, wired for sound, call for help in the eerie red glare of the emergency lights.

It all seems so real, as if it were an actual maritime siege. But it's not. Except for the enemy, that is. The enemy—fear—is real.

GO FOR IT!

Whenever someone says, "And don't worry, there are no wrong answers here," I see that as a challenge. —Comedian Adam Hess
9 We adore rebates and warranties.

Now that I've told you that consumers try to avoid additional payments, I should add that there are two additional payments we love: rebates and warranties. The first buys the illusion of wealth ("I'm being paid money to spend money!"). The second buys peace of mind ("Now I can own this thing forever without worrying about it!"). Both are basically tricks. "Instead of buying something and getting a rebate," Poundstone writes, "why not just pay a lower price in the first place?"

"[Warranties] make no rational sense," Harvard economist David Cutler told the Washington Post. "The implied probability that a product will break has to be substantially greater than the risk that you can't afford to fix it or replace it." Spending $400 isn't all that risky for most consumers, Cutler notes, so a warranty isn't worth the extra money.

10 We're obsessed with the number 9.

Up to 65 percent of all retail prices end in the number 9. Why? Everybody knows that $20 and $19.99 are the same thing. But the number 9 tells us a simple story: This thing is discounted. This thing is cheap. This thing was priced by somebody who knows you like things discounted and cheap. What 9 conveys is a silent understanding that a product is priced competitively and fairly. Putting a 9 on a shellfish platter at a high-end restaurant is ridiculous. Nobody spending $170 on lobster is looking for a discount. But the same person shopping for underwear is (research has shown, again and again) more likely to buy a product that ends in 9.

STOP THE PRESSES!

Some mistakes make the headlines; others are the headlines:

- Wisconsin Woman Takes Husband to Police for "Talking Stupidly"
  La Crosse Tribune (Wisconsin)

- Poverty, Hunger Go Together
  Advertiser (Bastrop, Texas); submitted by Jeneva LeFaster, Bastrop, Texas

- Self-Proclaimed Invisible Man No-Show at Court Hearing
  Daily Herald (Provo, Utah)
out what they are, why they live within us, and what’s normal will help us understand disease, according to Rob Knight, PhD, associate professor at the BioFrontiers Institute at the University of Colorado Boulder. The Human Microbiome Project has already turned up a few surprises. “Lean and obese people have markedly different communities in the gut,” Knight says. “We don’t know if microbes contribute to weight gain or if they change when people become obese.” Further research will explore how bacteria affect a wide variety of conditions, including allergies, Crohn’s disease, esophageal cancer, and psoriasis. “It’s a very exciting time,” says Knight.

AN EASIER COLON CANCER TEST

An experimental new test may soon replace the dreaded colonoscopy as a way of screening for colon cancer and its precursors. The test searches for two DNA cancer flags along with traces of blood in a stool sample. Together, these three markers identified 98 percent of cancers and 77 to 83 percent of cancer precursors in a preliminary study presented to the American Association for Cancer Research. The company behind the test plans to apply for FDA approval soon.

“The test detects even small signs of disease at very early stages—and early diagnosis is the key to good outcomes,” says Cory Abate-Shen, PhD, associate director of Columbia University’s Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center in New York.

DOCTORS WHO PRACTICE WHAT THEY PREACH

A new Patient Promise campaign has so far gathered 673 signatures from doctors at 57 medical institutions around the country. What are these doctors promising? They’re vowing to become healthy role models for their patients by agreeing to statements like the following:
- “I will consume a balanced and nutritious diet.”
- “I will engage in regular physical activity.”
- “I will diminish personal stressors and make time for mental well-being.”

Research shows that physicians who eat poorly or don’t exercise may be less likely to encourage healthy habits in their patients. Yet five or six of every ten clinicians are overweight or obese,” says Shiv Gagliani, a second-year student at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. That’s why Gagliani and his roommate David Gatz began the Patient Promise campaign. Gagliani says the majority of signers are students, but some of the first adopters are already working at hospitals. “We’re training a new generation to lead by example.”

readersdigest.com 2/13
As an undergraduate studying molecular biology, Lukas Wartman was fascinated by leukemia and the prospects for even better treatments. In medical school, he decided to make the disease his life's work. But while gearing up for his residency in 2003, at age 25, he fell ill. One of Wartman's med school professors diagnosed him with ALL (acute lymphoblastic leukemia), a common and treatable cancer in children that's rarer and tougher to vanquish in adults. "We looked at the biopsy slides together," Wartman recalls. "My bone marrow was filled with leukemia. It seemed too strange to think I'd have the very disease I was so interested in."

It was the start of a long journey that brought Wartman's case to the forefront of leading-edge research at Washington University in St. Louis. Traditional chemotherapy led to a remission—but five years later, the cancer came back. By then, Wartman was a doctor working in the university hospital's oncology department. He opted for a bone marrow transplant in addition to chemotherapy, and six months later, he began working in the hospital's leukemia lab. But the cancer returned again in 2011. At a conference, Wartman learned that only 4 percent of adult ALL patients survive a relapse.

"It seemed too strange to think I'd have the very disease I was so interested in."
“Hey, man,” Stroman said on the phone, “thanks for for me. You are inspiring.”

“I forgave Stroman many years ago,” Bhuiyan wrote. “I believe he was ignorant and not capable of distinguishing between right and wrong. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have done what he did. I believe that by sparing Stroman’s life, we will give him a chance to realize, through time and maturity, that hate doesn’t bring a peaceful solution to any situation. Perhaps, if given the opportunity, it might generate such a positive influence on him that he may want to become a spokesman against hate crimes.”

There was only one problem: Stroman was due to be executed in exactly two months. The date was set: July 20, 2011.

Overnight, Rais Bhuiyan became internationally known—the subject of articles, TV interviews, blogs, and news reports. Yet he got nowhere in his quest. With the clock ticking down toward Stroman’s execution, Bhuiyan bounced back and forth between Stroman’s lawyers and state officials. Mired in law and red tape, Bhuiyan finally found an attorney, Khurrum Wahid, who took his case pro bono.

Together with an anti-death-penalty group called GRACE, Wahid pushed Bhuiyan’s case through the state courts on grounds of victims’ rights. But as it became clear that any thought of commutation in Governor Rick Perry’s Texas was folly, Bhuiyan’s team sought at least to engineer a face-to-face meeting with Stroman.

On the day of the scheduled execution, with eleven-hour legal wrangling still proceeding in the courts, Bhuiyan made one last, unsuccessful attempt to call the prison in Huntsville and speak to Stroman.

Moments later, he called an Israeli filmmaker, Ilan Ziv, who’d been following Stroman for years. Ziv was on the prison grounds, talking with Stroman, and said that Stroman had been expressing remorse for his crimes, his racist beliefs. He’d been especially touched by Bhuiyan’s unselfish campaign to have his sentence commuted.

Ziv offered to facilitate a conversation via speakerphone. Bhuiyan accepted. His legal team gathered around. This is part of their exchange, as taped by Ziv:
Playing Favorites
I have been dating an amazing guy for almost two years, and I can say without hesitation that he is the one I want to marry. The problem is that my parents seem to be less than enthusiastic about him. As they 'shower my siblings' significant others with gifts and cute Facebook posts, my boyfriend gets nothing. It's embarrassing that his family welcomes me with open arms, while my family can't seem to do the same for him. I'm worried it will be like this forever, so what can I do to improve this situation before we decide to tie the knot?

Embarrassed Girlfriend

Dear Embarrassed,
This calls for some head-to-head confrontation with your family. Ask them, outright, to explain the discrepancy between their treatment of your boyfriend and the others. Give them a chance to speak up about any red flags they sense in the relationship. Be sure to listen to what they have to say. Then tell them about your feelings for this man, and be clear about your intentions. If they go on to snub him, well, you will have all the information you need to make a decision about the direction of your life if you choose to share it with this man. And it may not include them.

Send questions about manners, parents, partners, or office politics to advice@rd.com. Sending gives us permission to edit and publish.

YOUR WORDS OF WISDOM
In our December issue, we asked you to help Too Nice deal with her bothersome neighbor. Most of you urged caution:

It seems creepy because it is creepy. Your intuition is warning you, so trust that feeling and deal with this pronto. Tell the guy not to come over unless your husband is home. And if you can't do that, tell your husband about this guy and how you've got a creepy feeling about him.

Tim Shoemaker

Politely inform him that you feel it is inappropriate for you to be entertaining him while your husband is gone. There's nothing rude about that! Let him know that if he wants to spend time with you and your husband together, he is welcome to do so. If he can't accept that, then you don't want to be friends with him anyway.

Auntie Emma

GIVE YOUR BEST ADVICE
Write your answer to this problem at rd.com/february.

It seems like every word that comes out of my mother-in-law's mouth is either a criticism or a complaint directed toward me. My husband says that's just her way of making conversation, but I think otherwise. How do I bring this up with her to clear the air?

Distressed Daughter-in-Law